



Project managers are useless

How come that so many projects fail, when we have so many highly skilled project managers?

Thomas Arends



Born 1961

Married 4 Children

- CEO, CPO, Projectmanager, Quality Manager, Task Force Management
 - Software, Hardware, Mechanik
 - Automotive, Aerospace, Industrial, Financial/Legal, Medical, Pharma
 - V-Modell, Agile, SAFe®, LESS, CMMI, RUP, SCRUM, Kanban
- Development of OTSM <http://otsm.thomasarends.de/das-otsm/>
(Organization-, Technology- and Service Management Framework)
(Under Rework)
- Entwicklung SEQ.IST <https://seq.ist>
Organizations-, Project-, Time, Cost- and Ressource Estimation

Projectmanagement (Wikipedia)

- ➔ Project management (PM) is the
 - ➔ Initialization
 - ➔ planning
 - ➔ control
 - ➔ controlling and
 - ➔ completion
- ➔ of projects.
- ➔ Many **terms** and **procedures** in project management are established and standardised.
- ➔ The complementary counterpart to project management is process management.



PMP Frameworks (Excerpt)

Agile

Critical path method (CPM)

Critical-Chain-Project management
(CCPM)

IPMA

Kanban. ...

LEAN

PMBOK®- of Project Management
Institute

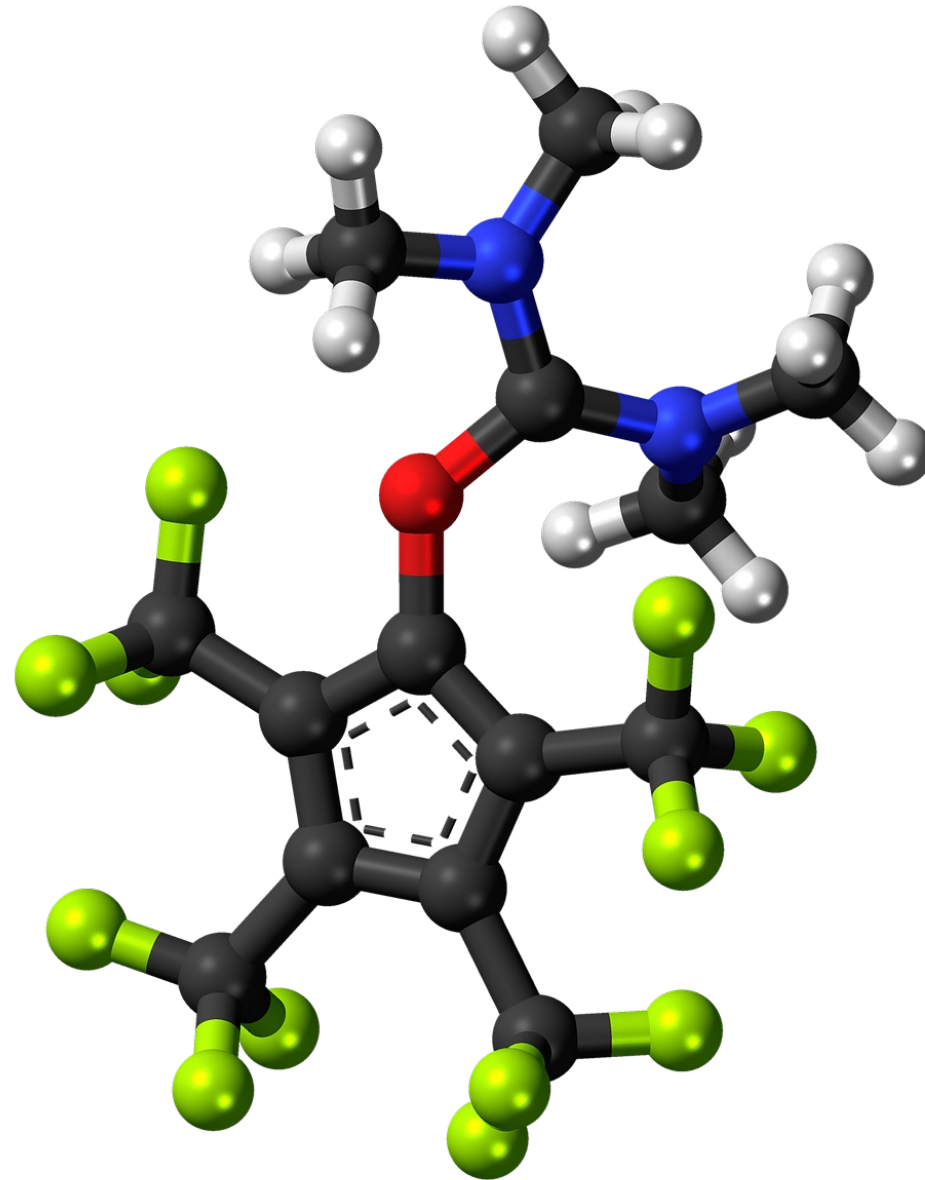
PRINCE2. ...

Scrum. ...

Scrumban. ...

Six Sigma. ...

Waterfall

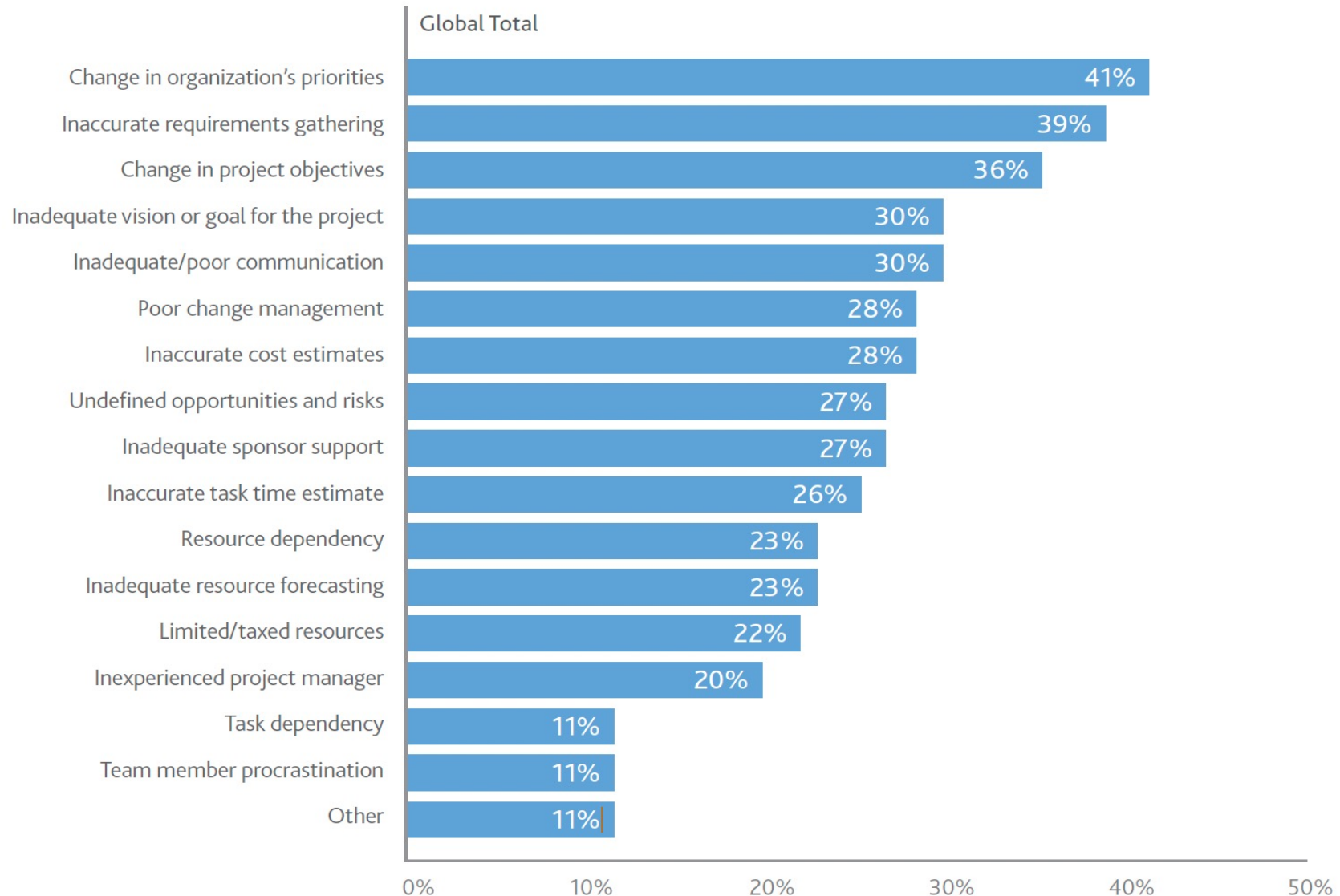


Would you choose an airplane if this would be standard?



83.9% of IT projects partially or completely fail*

Of the projects started in your organization in the past 12 months that were deemed failures, what were the primary causes of those failures? (Select up to three.)



<https://www.opendoorerp.com/the-standish-group-report-83-9-of-it-projects-partially-or-completely-fail/>

<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/thought-leadership/pulse/pulse-of-the-profession-2017.pdf>

If you do not achieve the desired result with what you think is standard – you are doing something wrong



How come that those (presumably) highly trained people fail to achieve their job?

A short RCA Root Cause Analysis

Potential Causes

Frameworks incorrect

- Theory faulty

- No practical relevance but nice pictures

People only have a certificate

- That's how you make money as a provider

PM's are idiots

- I heavily doubt

Basic (physical) laws ignored

Limited Vision

Experience

Human Factors

Others





Ideal Scene

Before Starting to analyze the errors, let us see if we have an idea of how it shall be

Lets analyze some of the reported errors

If you look at the list I have taken of the PMI in combination with the Standish Grup statement > 80% of projects fail, it seems as if projectmanagers do it as shown in the picture.

Lets get trough some of them and see if there is a solution and a common denominator, or if there is something else

A short overview



41%: Change in organization's priorities

- ➔ Ideal Scene
 - ➔ Priorities once set by the organization, are maintained.
- ➔ Reason:
 - ➔ Priority was not set honestly in the first step
 - ➔ Too many „priorities“
 - ➔ Unawareness of the effects of priority change
- ➔ Handling for the Project Manager
 - ➔ Make Management aware of the consequences
 - ➔ If they still do not listen
- ➔ Handling for the customer who is affected
 - ➔ Make better contracts that prevent people withdrawn from your project
- ➔ Handling for the stakeholders
 - ➔ Priorities of projects should be part of the reporting
 - ➔ Rather take a newbie who is able and willing to do it right, but a company that “continues the wrong path”



39% Inaccurate requirements gathering



- ➔ Ideal Scene
 - ➔ Requirements gathered accurately
- ➔ Potential Failure Reason:
 - ➔ Did not read in the first
 - ➔ Workload underestimated
 - ➔ Ability to read and understand requirements and regulatory not existing
- ➔ Handling for the Project Manager
 - ➔ Get a review process of requirements by qualified staff executed
- ➔ Handling for the customer who is affected
 - ➔ Ensure requirements management is done effective
 - ➔ Read and verify requirements derived from your demands are done correctly
- ➔ Handling for the stakeholders
 - ➔ Get a process for Requirements management implemented

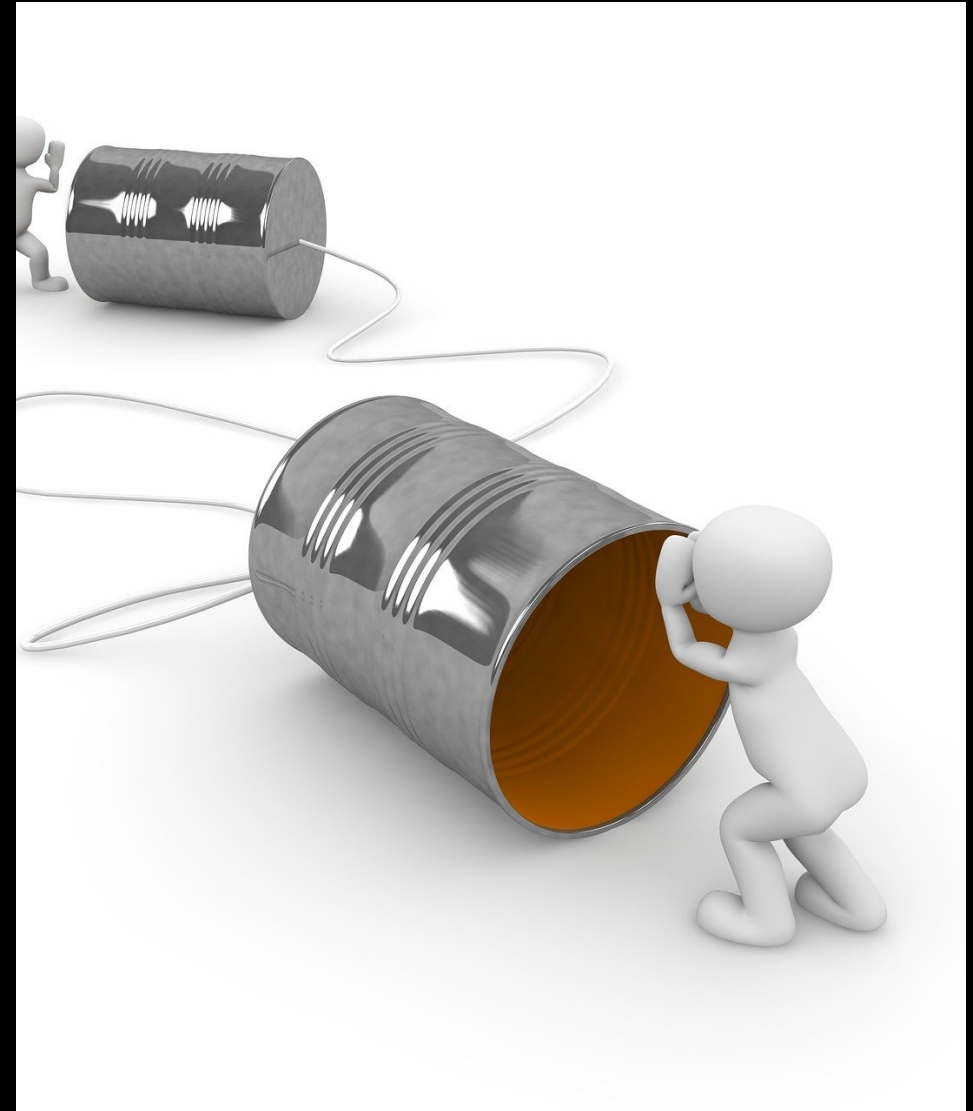
Inadequate vision or goal for the project



- ➔ Ideal Scene
 - ➔ Clear Vision of the goal that met expectations
- ➔ Potential Failure Reason:
 - ➔ No Vision established
 - ➔ as appropriate requirements do not exist in the first place
 - ➔ Making it right for the customer and the fear of losing a contract prevents honest communication
 - ➔ Do not want to know the details
- ➔ Handling for the Project Manager
 - ➔ Establish and communicate the vision
 - ➔ Coordinate with the customer, so you can be sure the vision is correct
 - ➔ Rather stop the project but implement a rocket in a chair
(Have project abandon criteria and execute)
- ➔ Handling for the customer who is affected
 - ➔ Ensure vision is communicated and verify understanding
- ➔ Handling for the stakeholders
 - ➔ Ensure you recheck the plans and you understand the visions

Inadequate/poor communication

- ➔ Ideal Scene
 - ➔ Communication is in a way that the recipient understands the source
- ➔ Potential Failure Reason:
 - ➔ None of the before mentioned executed correctly
 - ➔ “Pressure” to be on time removes clarity
 - ➔ [For more details listen to the lecture “communication” in German](#)
- ➔ Handling for the Project Manager
 - ➔ Written and consistent data shall be the key
 - ➔ Get an agreement
 - ➔ Remove “opinion”
- ➔ Handling for the customer who is affected
 - ➔ Ensure clear communication in writing
 - ➔ Look, don’t listen to what is happening
- ➔ Handling for the stakeholders
 - ➔ Have reliable data and move away from nice presentations, but have reliable insight data



Inaccurate time, cost and resource estimates

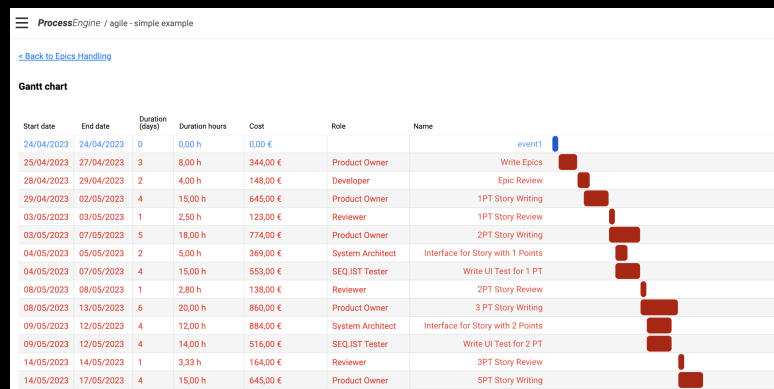


- ➔ Ideal Scene
 - ➔ Plan and reality differ only slightly
- ➔ Potential Failure Reason:
 - ➔ Processes for execution unknown or undefined
 - ➔ Methods for estimation false
 - ➔ Its not wanted to have clear data
- ➔ Handling for the Project Manager
 - ➔ Have the process to a realistic and executable detail
 - ➔ Honest and Experienced Project Manager
- ➔ Handling for the customer who is affected
 - ➔ Check the Plan against your own assumption
 - ➔ Request a detailed plan
- ➔ Handling for the stakeholders
 - ➔ Fool me once – fool me twice

My tool



- ➔ Short sidestep
- ➔ Makes your Processes.
- ➔ Shows interdependencies
- ➔ Plans fast and accurate (to the degree you plan your processes)
- ➔ Adapts changes with ease
- ➔ <https://seq.ist>



Undefined opportunities and risks



Standard Risk List #1

Incorrect code and implementation	Person Hours	Estimated Project Schedule exceeding expectation	Team Size at Peak	Number of Interfaces to Existing Systems Affected	Project Definition
Narrow Knowledge Level of Users	Project Scope Creep	Cost Estimates Unrealistic - exceeding any expectation	Timeline Estimates Unrealistic	Number of Team Members Unknowledgeable of Business	Project Leadership
Steering Committee existence	Absence of Commitment Level Attitude of Management leaves project unattended	Absence of Commitment Level/Attitude of Users	Absence of Mid-Management Commitment	Project Staffing	Project Team Availability
Physical Location of Team prevents effective management	Weak User Participation on Project Team	Not leading in the right direction due to absense of Project Management	Steering Committee existence	Procurement	Methodology Used foreign to team
Change Management Procedures undefined	Quality Management Procedures unclear	Software Vendor	Number of Times Team Has Done Prior Work with Vendor Creates Foreign Relationship	Poor Functional Match of Package to Initial System Requirement	

Standard Risk List #2

Tests Insufficient	Development Management Procedures unclear	Contracts not handled correctly	Electricity Unavailable	Bombing and other Attacks	Reading of Traffic by external unauthorized.
Unauthorized Access	Environmental Protection and setup	Human interference with intent to damage	False Data in the System (Programmers)	Falsche Daten im System (durch den Benutzer)	Insufficient Equipment protection causes loss of data
Data Loss on Testing	Customer Data leaked or accessed by people who are not allowed to access (GDPR Break)	Loss of Data	Misuse of tools	Accesscontrol does not prevent misuse and false data	Release procedure not adhered to
System not accessible	Development process insufficient	Data restore fails	Declined consideration	Data Loss and Data messup due to Cybersecurity attack	Data are non restorable - consistency over time not taken into account
		Unclear Maintenance Process creates errors in product	execution of project impaired		

So, based on that – are Project Managers useless?

My answers

- ➔ It's a tough road
- ➔ PM's are useless, if they continue with these errors
- ➔ But, they are very needed
- ➔ We need those who get the job done
- ➔ We need to challenge the „Certificates“
- ➔ Instead of theory we need logical approach
 - ➔ See as well lecture on consistency and logic (in German)
- ➔ Instead of “lessons ignored “
- ➔ Because only done for the audit
- ➔ we need “lessons learned” , but as a tool to become better.



Vielen Dank / Thank you

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