



EXECUTIVE BRIEF

WHY PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS BROKEN AND THREE WAYS TO FIX IT

HOW DO YOU FIX PROJECT MANAGEMENT?

Imagine canoeing upstream with a broken paddle. That's effectively what today's project managers and IT directors, like you, are doing. Whether you're managing the corporate IT application development group—tasked with delivering the systems that keep the business running—or some other enterprise team, manual processes, disconnected tools, numerous methodologies, and scattered stakeholders have most likely left you scrambling to control projects and deliver successful business solutions.

In the United States, more than \$250 billion each year is spent on IT projects.¹ Project managers are key to ensuring these projects deliver a return on that investment. But, 62% of projects are delivered late,² and 49% of projects are over budget.³ Project management is clearly broken.

\$250
BILLION

More than \$250 billion each year is spent on IT projects in the U.S.

It's not that project managers lack the skills to manage projects. Actually, most are very good at it. Finding resources, coordinating task deliverable dates, and tracking budgets—the skills are there. What's different is the speed and sheer complexity of business. Heightened competition, rapid advances in technology, and a global economy have organizations operating at a dizzying pace.

These changes have impacted the environment that project managers and IT directors have to work in. In response, companies have invested in a variety of project management tools. But these tools are restrictive, take time to learn, are rarely adopted, and don't solve the bigger issues. So, team members and stakeholders resort to familiar habits of phone calls, email threads, and hallway conversations that inhibit productivity and imperil project timelines and budgets.

*"I want to learn the ways of the force and become a Jedi, like my father."
- Luke Skywalker, Star Wars*



62% of projects are delivered late and 49% of projects are over budget.

Yet without a solution, enterprise teams face countless obstacles: redundant work, hours of unnecessary meetings, manual reporting that eats into actual work time, and a continuous cycle of hurry-up-and-finish-this-today projects that lack scope, direction, and quality checkpoints.

Fortunately, there are some things you can do to successfully manage projects in this rapidly changing environment. It starts with understanding the underlying issues and then working to improve your processes.

Here are the three leading reasons why project management is broken and ways to fix the problems.

1 HERDING THE CATS

“The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency. The second is that automation applied to an inefficient operation will magnify the inefficiency.”

- Bill Gates

You know how to manage projects. Schedules, budgets, tasks, dependencies—you’ve got it. But, you still have to manage all of the other daily work, and it comes at you from every angle. No doubt, you’ve seen changes in project scope buried in email threads, executives making special requests in hallway conversations, and status updates left on sticky notes. Getting a handle on all of these activities is like herding cats. Add the time wasted on manually updating status reports and time spent in status meetings, and projects can fall dangerously behind before you even realize it.

The average IT organization spends 45% to 55% of its time on unplanned (and urgent) activities.⁴ Non-project work like ad hoc requests, maintenance, and fixes can distract resources and derail project plans in a hurry. Without visibility across the entire lifecycle of work, it’s nearly impossible to assess the real impact of these requests. Until you take a broader view of enterprise work, you put every project at risk of failure.



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THE FIX: SEE THE BIG PICTURE.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to more effectively manage all of your team’s work—not just projects—and get the visibility you need. Begin with a single place for intake of new requests and changes, whether that is a specific email address or point person. No back doors, no end-arounds. Period. Now, with all of your team’s work requests in one place, you can compare them, and prioritize them strategically so you can always make sure your team is doing the right work at the right time.

Build trust by providing visibility into the process. By creating access to project and activity information in one place, your customers can see for themselves the status of their requests without having to bombard you with emails and phone calls. And, you’ll have an easy way to demonstrate your value and results to your executive team.

When the time is right, invest in technology that can manage the entire lifecycle of work from end to end in real time. The solution you choose should be easy to use and provide additional features that make your team more productive, such as social collaboration and mobile access.

2 MANAGING THE MIX OF METHODOLOGIES

“You cannot change your future, but you can change your habits, and surely your habits will change your future.”

– Dr Abdul Kalam

Lately, Agile is all the rage. Its more responsive approach can bring better, faster results to certain types of projects. But Agile can disrupt the traditional processes of budget forecasting, performance benchmarking, and accountability. For project managers, it means rethinking how these types of projects are managed.

Project management methodologies and frameworks come in all flavors, from vanilla to spumoni. Each of your project teams has its favorites, and you are left trying to manage them all. Whether it's storyboards in Agile or critical dependencies in Waterfall, it can be difficult to track the various stages, let alone manage them all. You can end up with several different tools to manage each kind or, even worse, limit your team to the methodology you can support.

Even then, you still have to figure out how to manage the one-off, ad hoc requests that always make their way to you.

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THE FIX: EMBRACE THE CHOICES.

Don't let the tool choose or limit your work methodology. For your project teams to be as effective as possible, they need to use the best methodology for the job. It's up to you to figure out a way to support them and help them be successful.

Often, the choice of methodology is pinned on company culture. However, culture can easily be confused with capabilities. Improving the ability to support various methodologies, like Agile, will often ease cultural acceptance. Building this mixed-methodology support requires the following capabilities:

- A common understanding of the steps and rules
- Visibility, not just across multiple projects, but the entire workflow
- The ability to communicate across methodologies by understanding relevant terms
- Collaboration in the context of work, not buried in email threads and frequent meetings
- Metrics and benchmarks that are common across projects
- The ability to prioritize across a variety of ad hoc requests and projects

Like learning a foreign language—once you can understand and speak it, you expand your world. Break down the language barriers and watch your project and development teams excel.

3 ENFORCING THE TOOLS.

13 DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES

The average person uses 13 different methods to control and manage their time.

You rely on your team members to update you on the status of their deliverables. You thought a bright, shiny, new project management tool would do the trick. But, you still get hallway updates, voicemails, and drive-bys. That's if you're lucky. Usually, it's you spending the time tracking down team members for updates.

"We are the Borg. Lower your shields and surrender your ships. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Your culture will adapt to service us. Resistance is futile."

- Borg, Star Trek: First Contact

Getting your users to embrace your project management tools can be very difficult. It doesn't help that the average person uses 13 different methods to control and manage their time.⁵ To make things worse, a recent survey by PMP Research shows that very few companies think their project management tools are very effective. Nearly half (49%) view them as only moderately effective, and 26% saw them as not very effective.⁶

When any of those tools are not easy to use and not seen as effective, people simply don't use them. And, that doesn't leave you with a whole lot of options.



49% of users view project management tools as only moderately effective, and 26% view them as not very effective.

THE FIX: MAKE THE EXPERIENCE EASY

In order to get your users back on board, managing their own updates and project communication, you need to meet them where they are. That will require a change in mindset. It may sound crazy, but a spreadsheet is far better than a multi-million dollar solution if that's what your team members and stakeholders want to use. Sometimes, simple is better.

When project management solutions are easy, you'll find your team members become active participants. And, when solutions are as intuitive and interactive as social media or mobile apps, your team members will happily engage—ensuring quality conversations and updates happen automatically.

GOING BEYOND FIXED: GETTING TO FABULOUS

“Sometimes, in order to see the light, you have to risk the dark.”

- Dr. Iris Hineman, *Minority Report*

When it all comes together—a broader view of work, an intuitive experience, and support for mixed methodologies—organizations like yours can begin to transcend traditional project management in favor of true, comprehensive Enterprise Work Management. That’s what happened with Peregrine.

Peregrine Semiconductor moved away from a patchwork of project management tools and selected an Enterprise Work Management solution to provide greater visibility across all types of work. This solution has become the single point to intake new requests, schedule and manage projects, provide collaboration on tasks, and produce accurate and detailed reports. Peregrine was able to shift its model from one where project managers manually updated the timeline and completion status to one in which this data flowed up from the team automatically. This shift saved enough time to increase their project capacity by 200%.



“With Workfront, our team is hugely more productive and we’re able to handle a workload that we simply wouldn’t be able to handle without it. Our project throughput increased by 200%.”

PEREGRINE SEMICONDUCTOR

Workfront Enterprise Work Management

Workfront is a cloud-based Enterprise Work Management solution that helps IT application development groups and other enterprise teams conquer the problems associated with traditional project management. Using a combination of technology and expertise acquired from observing the customers we’ve served, Workfront provides a single system of truth that eliminates work chaos, provides global visibility, and increases productivity. It offers a complete, adoptable solution—powerful enough for technical users, intuitive enough for business stakeholders, and flexible enough to utilize Agile, Waterfall, or a mix of the two.

To learn more about Workfront Enterprise Work Management and how it increases enterprise visibility, please contact us at the following:

 workfront.com  + 1-866-441-0001  + 44 (0)845 5083771

Endnotes

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