



Project Management Solutions

Overview

Project-Based Learning Provides Measurable Business Results

Informal surveys of people attending traditional training find that few, if any, of the students actually put the training to use in their jobs in the next several months. As training budgets get smaller and organization needs for skilled personnel continue to rise (aggravated by the coming “Silver Tsunami” of retirees), the training approach needs to change. Our project management workshops are structured to use the actual projects of the participants incorporate the critical success factors to ensure that training yields results.

Project Success Requires Effective Project Managers

Fewer than 30% of all projects finish on-budget, on-time, delivering results expected by customers. Yet there is no shortage of industry best practices from which to learn. What is missing for most organizations is a tailored version of those best practices, tuned to the culture, embedded in the skills of the people, supported by appropriate technology. Only when all elements of people, process, and technology come together can projects be executed effectively and efficiently. For the past five years, the Sam M. Walton College of Business Information Technology Research Institute (ITRI) has conducted surveys of the top ten concerns for CIO’s of member companies. These companies represent industries such as marketing, communications, banking, energy, retail, and many others and project management consistently ranks in the top ten concerns of these organizations.

Building An Appropriate Solution

Because each organization’s culture and experiences are unique, an organization cannot simply import a set of project management practices from one successful organization or directly implement an industry standard reference model as a working process. Creating a project management capability requires a holistic solution focused on organic development of the people and the processes, with judicious selections of supporting technology. The tough challenge is where to start.

Ensuring & Measuring Business Benefit

Each project management solution is motivated by a business need and captured in business goals and measures of business benefit. As appropriate, the goals and measures are adapted to changes in the business or changes in the solution as it is

deployed. Examples of goals and measures that are often seen include:

- Improved customer satisfaction, measured by regular customer survey responses
- Reduced levels of delivered defects, measured by trends in defect density, cost of quality, maintenance requests, or support center activity
- Improved predictability, measured by schedule estimation accuracy, cost estimation accuracy, or requirements volatility

Many other goals and measures are relevant, driven by specific organization needs. Success with a project management solution is ensured if it is directed at critical business needs. Thus our project management solution starts with identifying the relevant goals, and measurable performance to the goals is monitored throughout the deployment of the solution.

