



NJ PMI Chapter May 6th Symposium 2013

Leadership Is Taken, Not Given Establishing, Maintaining, and Regaining Control of Projects

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Leadership Is Taken, Not Given *Establishing, Maintaining, and* *Regaining Control of Projects*

Agenda

Project Managers As Enablers of Change

Project Leadership

- The Project Manager's Paradox
- The "Bridge Project"
- Maintaining Control through Risk Management

Practical Application

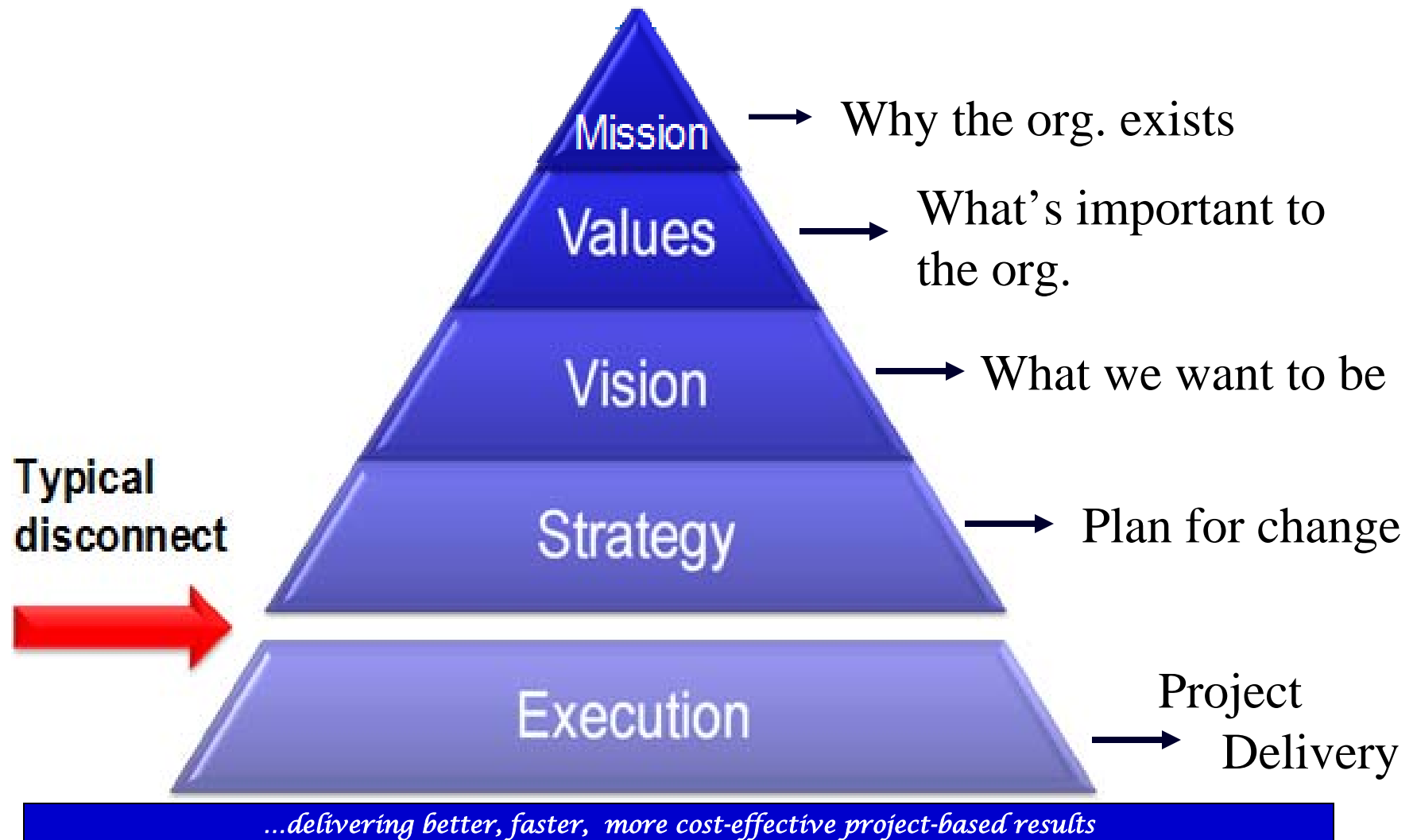
- Hot Spots for Leadership Skills
- Navigating the Hot Spots

Summary

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Project Managers As Enablers of Change



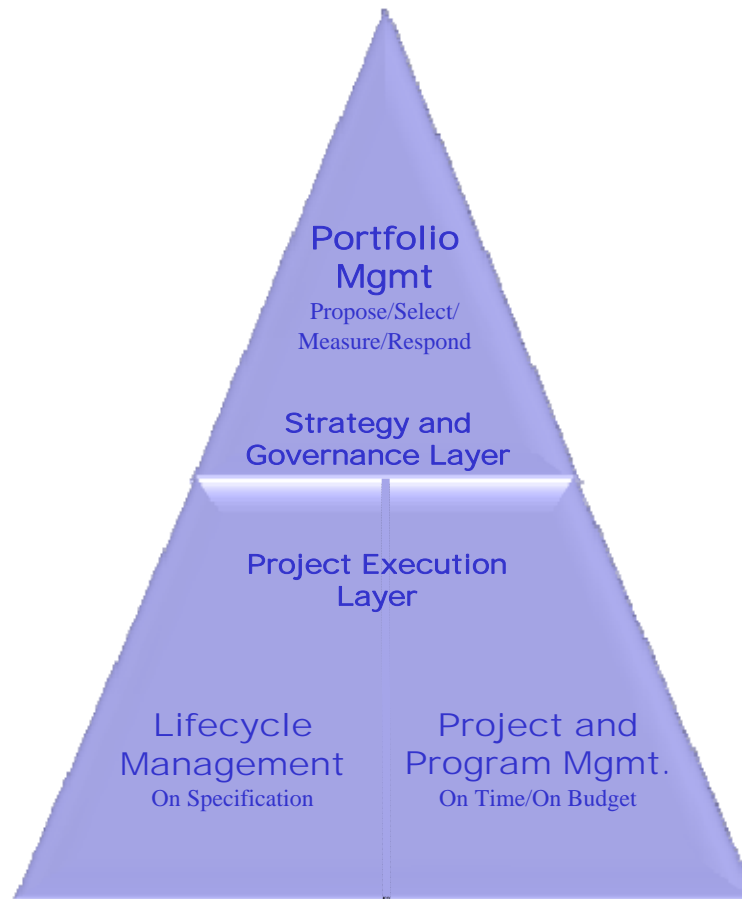
Project Managers As Enablers of Change



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Project Managers As Enablers of Change



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Project Managers As Enablers of Change



With ineffective projects, you're not making the changes necessary to carry you to the vision on the horizon.

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Project Leadership

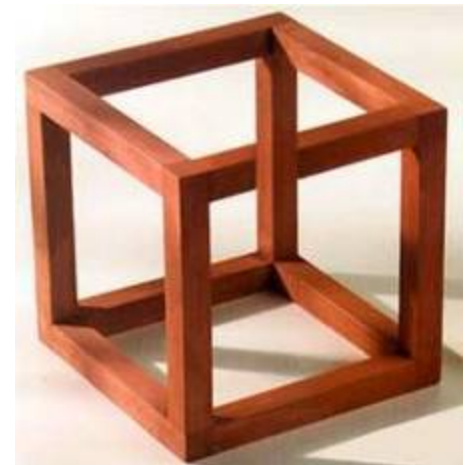
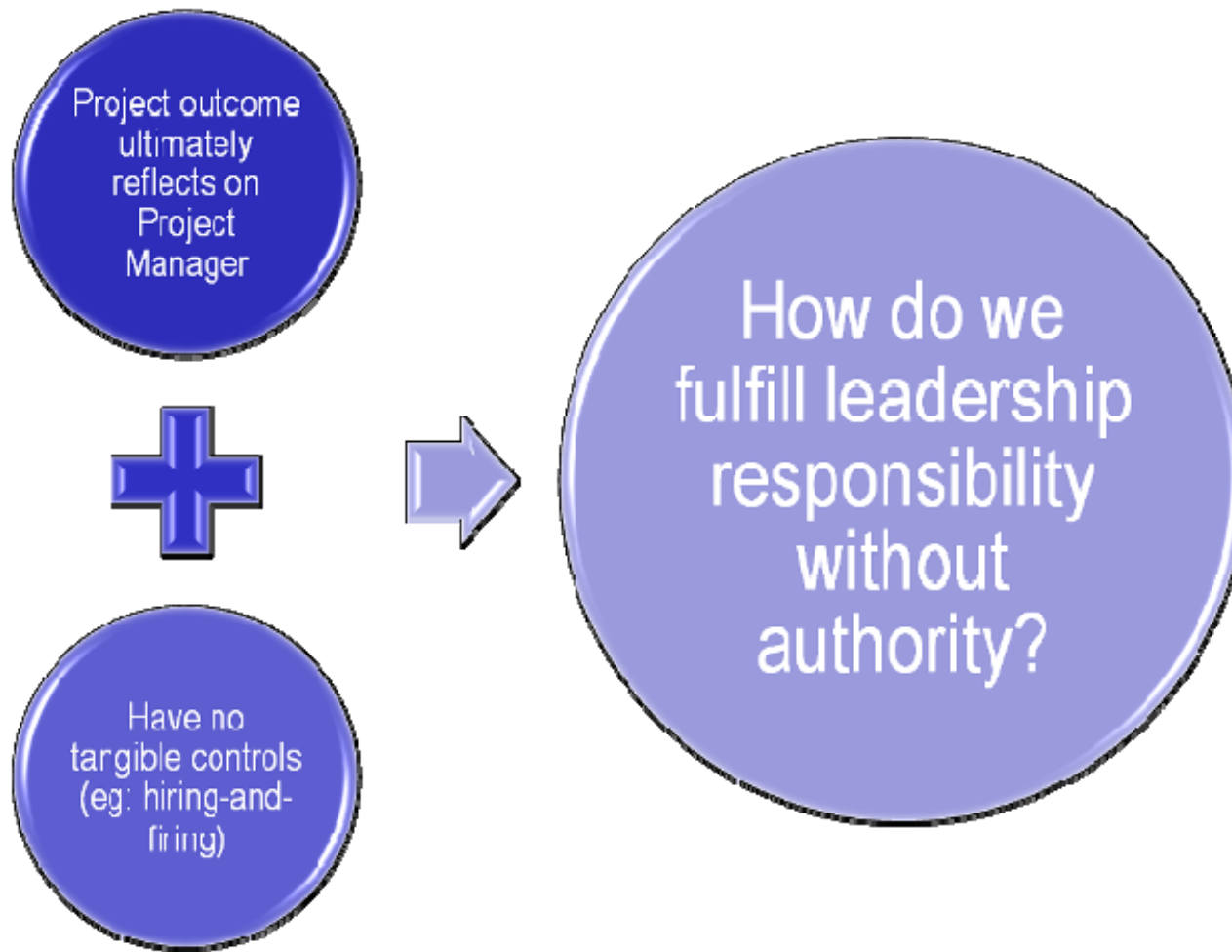
“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

- Will Rogers

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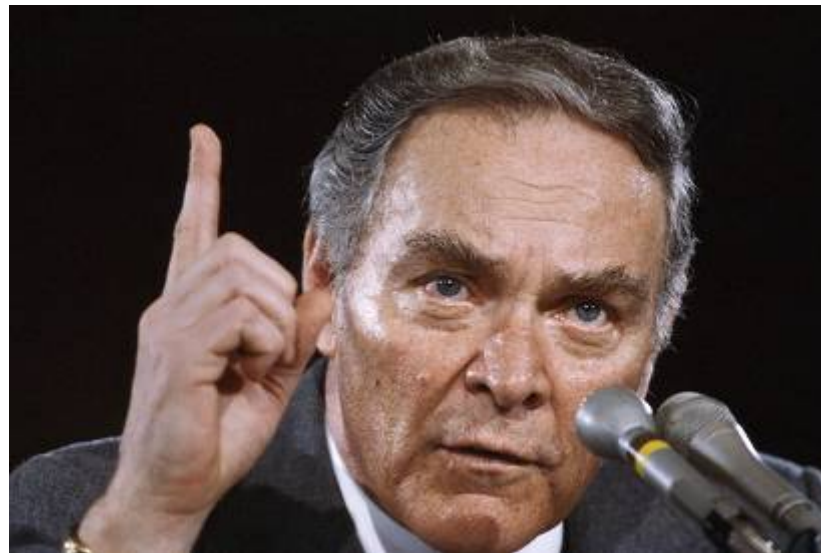
Project Leadership: The Project Manager's Paradox



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Taking Authority



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Establishing Control through Rhythm and Cadence



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The "Bridge Project":

A Case Study in Learning from Project Failure



Infamous: Still being used in training two decades later

Doomed from the beginning

- Scope only covered 67% of necessary budget
- Crucial scheduling problems

Overly-generic specs for a fixed price contract

- End-of-project mess (even after satisfying specs)
- Open action items remaining before client's implicit expectations were met

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The “Bridge Project”: Solutions

Before: Client dominated with an outside consultant being paid on a T&M basis (scope creep = rich consultant)

Weekly team meetings with sponsoring executive

“Projects are like tennis matches” ...left every meeting with growing list of “clarified” specs that often included technology designs that were still in basic R&D (e.g. “WORM” device)

Going into next several meetings, I made sure all the balls were on their side of the net.

Took control of scope by developing master list of open action items

Outlined next steps for every single item

Took care of our own next steps; bared down on them about their next steps

After: We dominated meeting by listing all the next steps that they were neglecting that held us back from success.

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The “Bridge Project”:

Lessons

The project team naturally fell into the cadence we set.

When we clearly laid out action items, owners and due dates, the activities fell into regularity.

So long as I made sure to keep up with a weekly cycle for collecting, analyzing and communicating the key status data, the project team fell into rhythm with the process.

Solving the paradox of control without leverage:

Setting and leading the cadence allows the project to run smoothly with minimal intervention.

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Practical Application

“Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex It takes a touch of genius ... and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction.”

- Albert Einstein

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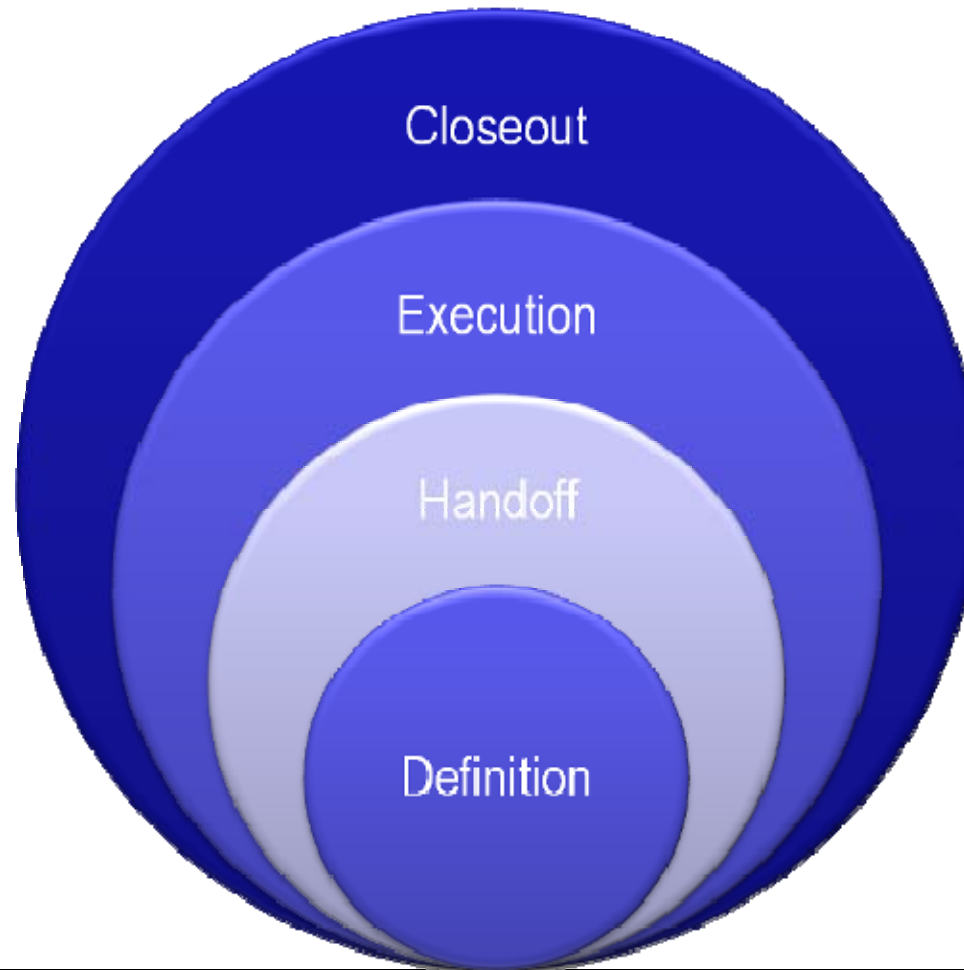
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Practical Application: Hot Spots for Leadership Skills



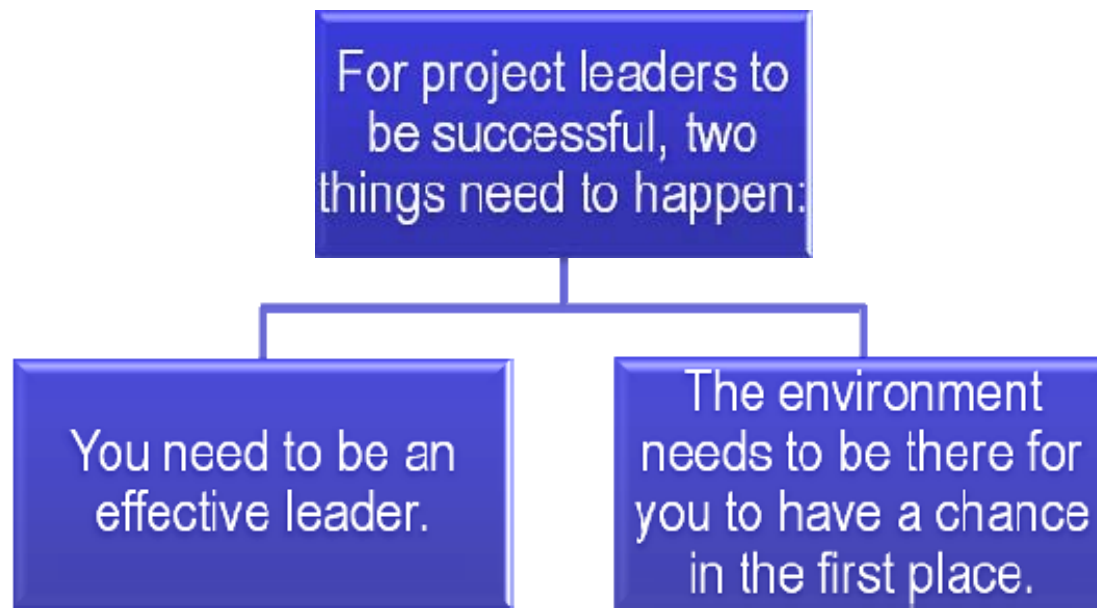
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Practical Application:

Scope Definition

- ❑ Portfolio managers are the parents of projects.
 - ❖ They “raise” the projects from their business case until you touch them.



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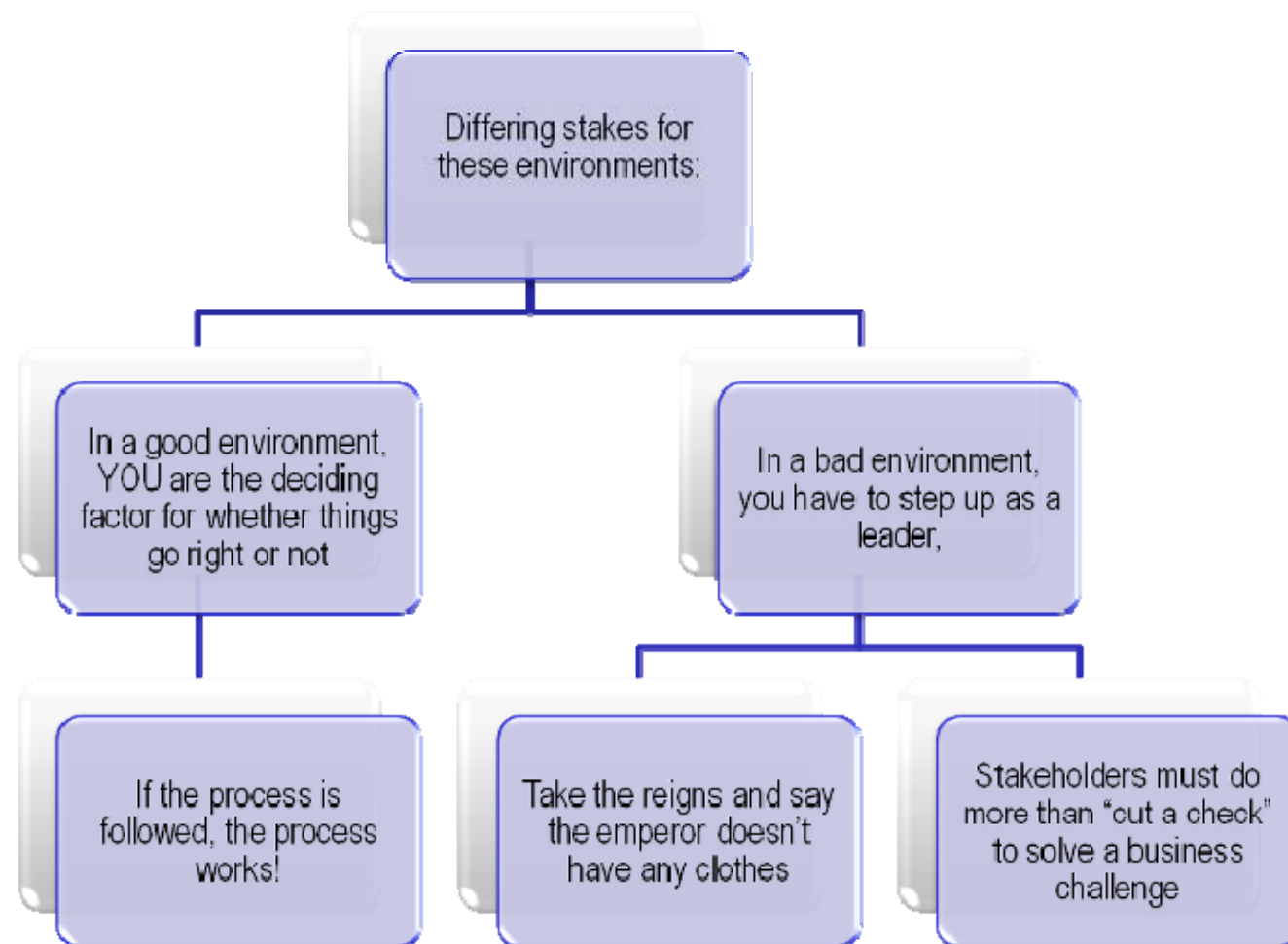
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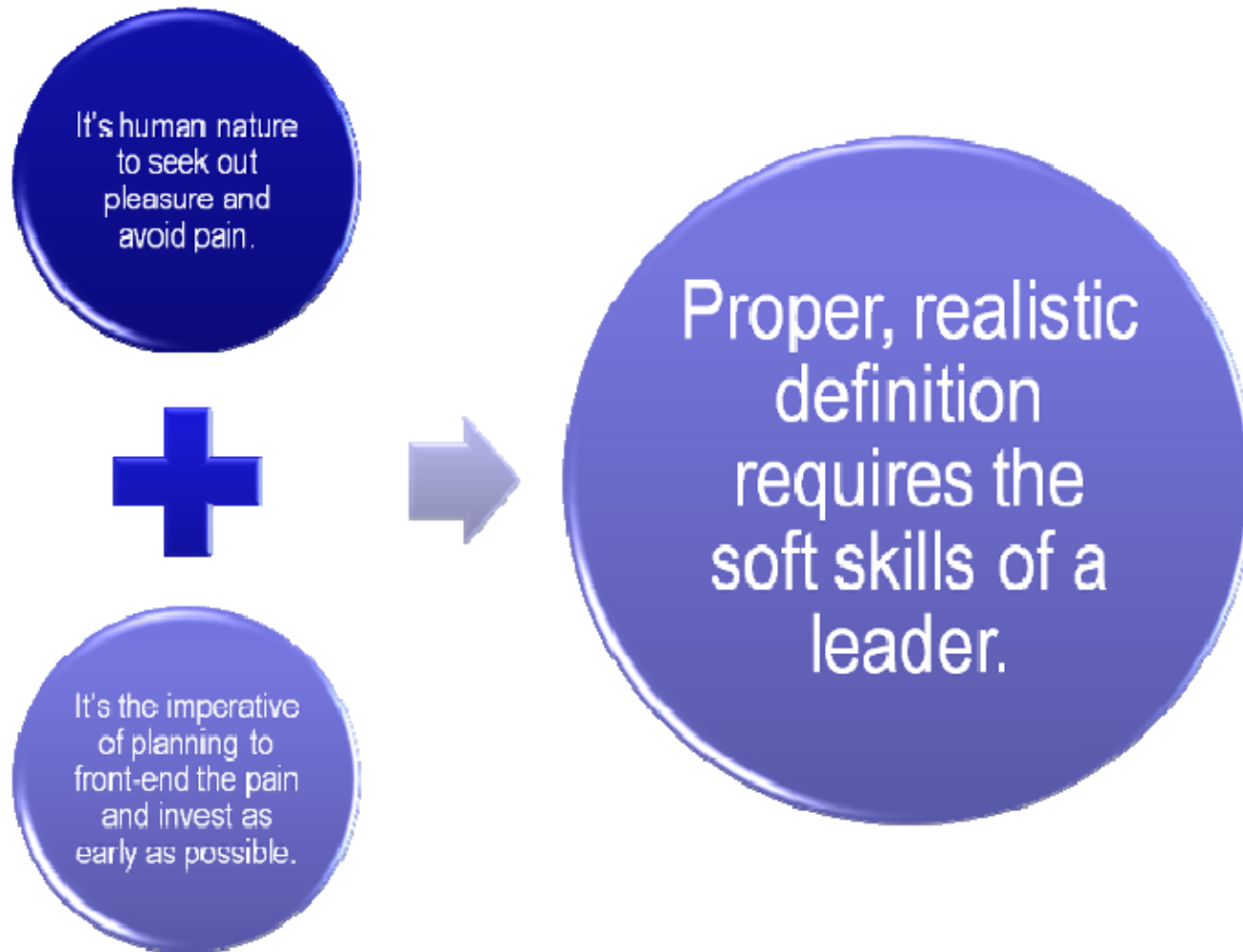
Practical Application: Scope Definition



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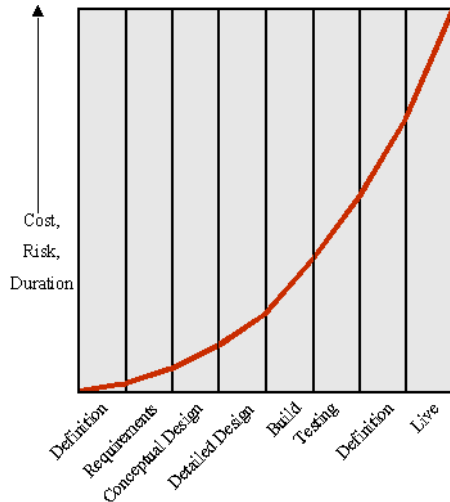
Practical Application: Front-ending the Pain



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Practical Application: Front-ending the Pain



Analysis inevitably reveals potential problem areas; Procrastinating the pain of confronting those risks becomes costly fast.

Organizations seldom appreciate managers asking for investments in things that only *might* become problems.



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Practical Application: Front-ending the Pain



Some powers of persuasion are necessary if you want your organization to invest in the kind of planning that mitigates risk.

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Practical Application: Front-ending the Pain



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Leading the Transition to Project Execution

“The most important and difficult part of the project is its beginning If done carefully, the project has a chance of success. If done carelessly, or not at all, the project is doomed to failure”

*- Wysocki, Beck and Crane
Effective Project Management*

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Leading the Transition to Project Execution



**Harvard
Business
Review**

The Execution Trap

“...if you run a Google search for ‘A mediocre strategy well executed is better than a great strategy poorly executed,’ you will get more than 42,600 references.”



A mediocre strategy well executed is better than a great strategy poorly execu

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Practical Application: Control As an Objective Measure

Being in control of a project is not subject to opinion

You either are or are not doing
the following:

Keeping the
balls off your
side of the net

Holding the
execution
processes to a
regular, cyclical
basis

Maintaining a
weekly/monthly
cycle for
collecting
actuals of cost,
labor and
schedule

Enacting
incremental
completion

Analyzing
variances to the
baseline

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Practical Application: Control As an Objective Measure



Having control gives you the *best chance*.

- Being in control doesn't mean you're certain it's going well.
- It means you know whether or not it's going wrong and have a plan for what to compromise in the triple constraint



When we are not accomplishing these things, we are asking the projects to succeed *in spite of us*.

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Practical Application: Control As an Objective Measure

- ❑ A human will prefer to go through denial than to be in discord with his instincts



When we are proactive,
we can revise the plan,
re-baseline, plan
contingencies, etc.

When we're reactive,
budgets are exceeded,
deadlines are missed
and specs aren't met.

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Practical Application: Control As an Objective Measure

- ❑ If the train has left the station, and you realize the bridge is out, do you make a modest change and then take a beach day?



**You'd better cancel
the itinerary!**



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Practical Application: Effective leaders drive effective trade-offs

Must understand the meaning of operating well in the “gray area”

- Identify problems
- Come up with the best option
 - It WON'T be a perfect option.
 - Scope, Schedule, Resource tradeoff



The hidden leak is quality.

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Practical Application: Challenges at Closeout

"All endeavor calls for the ability to tramp the last mile, shape the last plan, endure the last hours toil. The fight to the finish spirit is the one ... characteristic we must possess if we are to face the future as finishers."

-Henry David Thoreau

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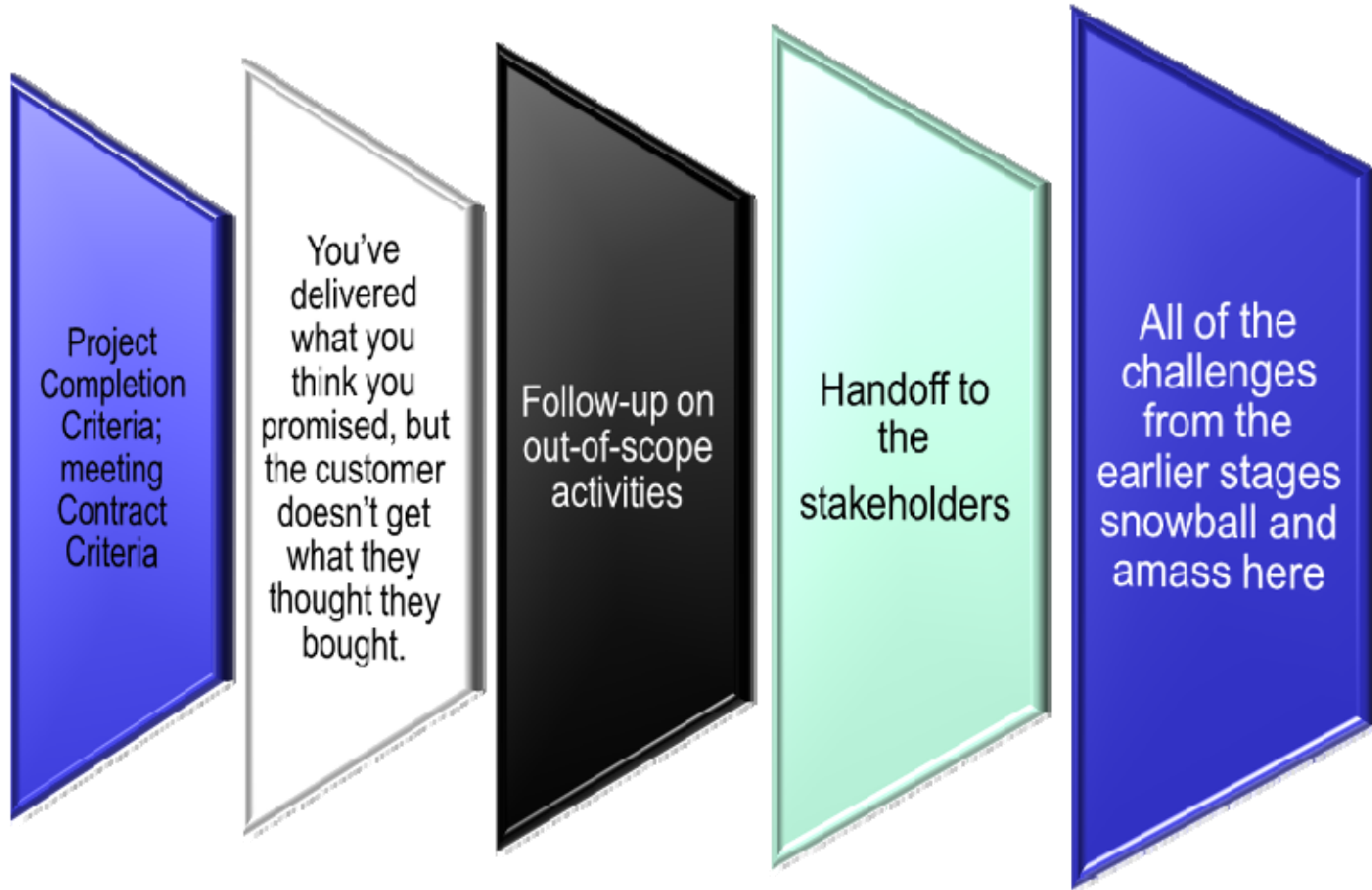
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Practical Application: Challenges at Closeout



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Practical Application:
Challenges at Closeout

Bridge Project Reprise

Large and complex system integration projects were a business goal

Lost sight of what was really needed to perform this type of engagement

- Too much non-IBM technology
- Fixed price integrator, T&M client advocate
- Pouring concrete and living in trailers?

Contract built for bridge not software construction

486 processor in \$50,000 “server”

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Summary

The matrix structure of organizations requires you to “take” the leadership needed to drive project success.



Establish control of the project simply through keeping it in rhythm.



There are some roadblocks to real-world application:

Use leadership skills to drive proaction in definition

Fulfill the objective criteria for control to give execution its best chance

Use incremental completion and explicit action itemization to drive difficult closeouts

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Project Assistant's Solutions



Assessment/Vision/Road Map

Project Assistants emphasizes the low-investment, high-return, oft-forgotten process of planning to ensure that your People, Processes and Technologies realize your goals.



Microsoft® Project Server Deployment

Project Assistants finds the organization-specific, optimal approach for to integrate the Technology with your People, Processes, and Governance. Now Project Server is in the cloud, and Project Assistants can take you there.



Staffing

Assistants fills your open position with the Project Managers who have the skills necessary to lead your projects, even against the tightest deadlines.



Microsoft® Cloud Solutions

Thinking of taking the next step with Microsoft's new hosted platform in 2013? Work with an organization that has 17 years of experience with providing solutions exclusively on the Microsoft platform.

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Microsoft® SharePoint Services

Work with Project Assistants to implement an Enterprise Content Management strategy that establishes and maintains control of provisioning, security, Digital Rights Management, et cetera.



Training

The People in your organization are a crucial pillar for achieving your high-level goals, and training allows them to be enablers of your business processes.



Application Development

Project Assistants provides application development services that enhance and integrate the Microsoft technology platform both with Project Management technologies (like Project Server) and with collaboration technologies (like SharePoint).



Portfolio Management Consulting

Primary to doing projects right is doing the right projects in the first place. Project Assistants' Portfolio Management expertise ensures that you select initiatives that will effectively drive your organization toward its larger mission.



Government Solutions

Project Assistants helps government agencies secure funding, prioritize projects, and deliver them.

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Thank you!

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