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Maximinzing Benefits from IT Project Management
Author: José López Soriano
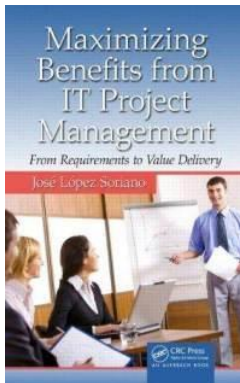Book Review   Reviewer: Johnny Gan

PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: ***Maximizing Benefits from IT Project***
Management: From Requirement to Value Delivery

Author: José López Soriano

Publisher: CRC Press

Format/List Price: Hard cover $71.95; eBook $50.37

Publication Date: 2012   ISBN: 978-1-4398-4156-3

Reviewer: **Johnny Gan**   Review Date: 12/2015

Introduction

Investing in Information Technology is growing every year in today's businesses organization and is reaching astronomical figures. These investments are growing day by day; however, this increase is not always matched by revenue and benefits due to project failures or poor performances.
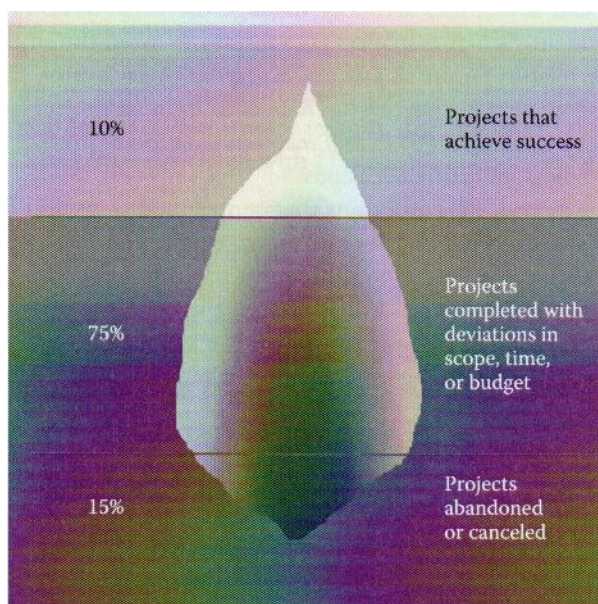

Figure 1. The iceberg of project results (source: original book Figure 1.1)

Especially, when we examine IT project performance, we may be disappointed. According to some international agencies such as the PMI (Project Management Institute) or the APM Group, both dedicated to promoting the project management discipline, no more than 10% of projects end in success. That means a terrible conclusion can be drawn: in most case 90%, IT projects will burn more money than originally planned.

It is clear that IT projects should think about how to maximize its benefits from requirements to value delivery, and this is the purpose of this book we introduced here.

In this book, the Author, José López Soriano, brings his over 30 years of experience in developing information system for customers belonging to all markets and sectors of economic activity in local industries to national enterprises, and international corporations.

The author discussed IT role becoming an important part of the enterprise infrastructure, therefore, IT must be considered as a strategic management tool beyond a supporting tool. This trend is becoming more significant, so project management practitioners should know how to facilitate the provision of higher value-added IT solutions for organizations.

Overview of Book's Structure

Well, the book contains 26 chapters, and touches all possible fields that IT projects related. To make it simple and clear, I grouped all these 26 chapters into 5 parts:

Part 1 Introduction (Chapter 1-3)

At beginning, the author indicated the reflections on the current state of IT project management, introduced the evolution and influence of knowledge management, reviewed perspectives on the history of computing, and also brought the question: how to solve the ongoing issues and problems in today's technical processes and associated project and business interests?

Part 2 The System Development Life Cycle (Chapter 4-9)

Described SDLC (System development Life Cycle), a general methodology approach currently used to develop technological projects. SDLC divides the development process into a few steps, Planning, Analysis, Design, Build/Test, and System Implementation. As the author mentioned, a methodology is not a dogma. It provides an orientation about how to solve the common problems that are encountered, and keep conflict at a minimum.

Part 3 Managing Problems Related (Chapter 10-14)

In this part, the author answered the question from the first part, described how to manage problems related to information systems, to project management, to project budget, to value delivery, and to internal supplier issues. All these related issues are raised almost every day during the SDLC. The lack of management and awareness can cause the project failure very often.

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Part 4 Solving the Problems (Chapter 15-22)

Next, the author discussed how to create a methods approach to work, how to define the role of information systems in generating business value, the value chain and process management. Focus on the opportunities to create value through information systems, and managing the return on investment through the project analysis and the business case, project classifications in the business environment, and so on.

Part 5 Benefits (Chapter 23-26)

Successful IT project will bring bunch of benefits to the enterprise, such as structural benefits, operational benefits, business enhancement benefits, and improved management benefits, etc.

So, you can see this book comprises the business benefits analysis on the body of SDLC methodology associated with various IT project management knowledge areas.

Highlights

An IT project is not isolated within the enterprise environment, so the organization has to consider all aspects related to the IT project, and put IT project into a corporate process. In this way, the company senior management should be aware of the influence of IT project and give more attention to it.

We always are told that the advanced IT system provides an opportunity to apply new techniques to improve and optimize the business operations, but the business process re-engineering should be systematically and rigorously applied. Therefore, before performing any new IT project, we must identify the consequential benefits for the organization in terms of cost, time and resource utilization.

Moreover, by deploying a powerful IT infrastructure, computing resources can be concentrated or distributed across business units according to the desires of the organization. This avoids any easements associated with the physical distribution of employees, facilities or any other factors of production.

Do not copy the IT project from any other "famous" companies; make sure your IT projects meets your business operation needs entirely. The IT project goal and completion date should be considered as a crucial decision in the planning process, because an appropriate project goal and completion date can mean the difference between achieving all of the benefits that are needed to justify the investment.

Highlights: What I liked!

Principles for Team Cohesion, this is one section I like very much. For any project, the practices carried out within the work environment should be based on a set of positive principles that strengthen team cohesion and lead them to achieve project

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goals. Effective team performance ultimately relies on creating an effective project team climate. To that end, positive values should be defined and set forth clearly and specifically. As the book mentioned, the first is a principle of transparency, which means sharing the information in the team; and the second principle is the tolerance of error, that means fixing the error is teamwork.

Get ready for the era of Knowledge Management. For most people, they may still not be familiar with knowledge management. The concept inherently begins with the identification of its three primary components: data, information, and knowledge.
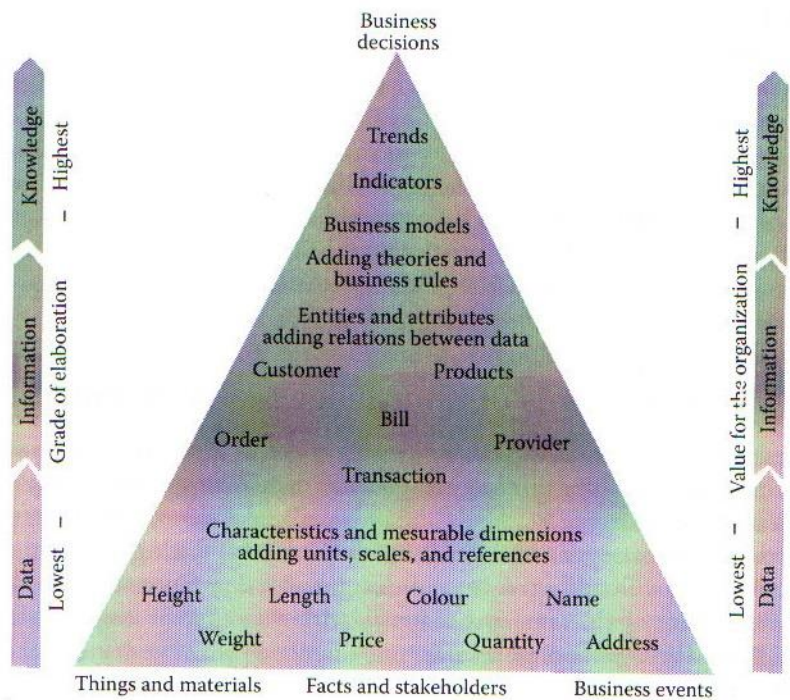

Figure 2 Data, information, and knowledge (source: original book Figure 2.1)

Knowledge is the highest state; it results from processing information, and information is derived from manipulation and calculation applied to raw data. Knowledge management is important because it leads to a new modern information system, artificial intelligence or machine learning.

This is why we say that IT is transforming from Information Technology to Intelligence Technology now.

Who might benefit from the Book?

The purpose of this book is to help directors and managers of IT to examine precisely a systematic and simplified approach for devising and implementing the practices needed for selecting and evaluating IT projects in organizations, improving the project success from requirements and value delivery.

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As an IT project manager or team leader, you will learn the ideas how to approach the decisions in process tailoring, methodology and managing various problems depending on project investment analysis and business/organization benefits return.

Conclusion

Overview the whole book, the author helps you to consider ways of ensuring that the IT project meets its established goals and objectives, always keeping in mind the benefits, and how to maximize them.

The book described attainable practices that can be applied to any IT projects, large or small to improve their final delivery values.

For more about this book, go to: https://www.crcpress.com/Maximizing-Benefits-from-IT-Project-Management-From-Requirements-to-Value/Soriano/9781439841563

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the PMI Dallas Chapter. Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published. Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact editor@pmworldjournal.net.

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Johnny Gan had many years of software R&D experience at HRsmart.com (http://www.hrsmart.com/), and was working as consultant at Yoh (http://www.yoh.com/) Company, which helped industry leading companies get superior value from their investments. Mr. Gan received his MS degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, USA, and is also certified by the Project Management Institute as a Project Management Professional (PMP®). He has been an active member of PMI for several years. Johnny can be contacted at qianggan@gmail.com .