

Responsibilities for “project” successes/failures?¹

By Alan Stretton

INTRODUCTION

I first discussed project successes and failure in a series of six articles in this journal, starting with Stretton 2014j. In the second article of that series (Stretton 2015a) I assembled a list of 42 different causes of “project” failures, derived from the quite sparse data then available in the project management literature. I emphasised at the time that these causes of “project” failure did not claim to be necessarily representative of projects at large, but that they appeared to be indicative enough to be worth further consideration. Importantly, it was also evident that many of these causes of failure were not due to deficiencies in project management itself, but were actually due to other non-project parties.

I returned to these materials in Stretton 2018a, in which I related these causes of project failure to an organisational strategic business framework. The latter derived from two articles immediately preceding Stretton 2018a, which were expanded on later in a series of five articles on *Organisational strategic planning and execution*, starting with Stretton 2018d.

Stretton 2018a indicated that pre-execution causes of failure (strategy- and project-initiation causes) comprised nearly 40% of the total. It also indicated that project management was seldom involved in these pre-execution activities. However, I did not discuss key decision-making responsibilities in such pre-execution activities – which is one of the topics to be addressed in this article.

Since compiling the original lists of causes of project failure, the most detailed general discussion of such causes I have seen is Jenner 2015. He has researched project failures in much more depth and detail than I attempted, and identified many causes of project failure, including some not covered in Stretton 2018a. This has widened the scope of my enquiries about successes and failures, and associated responsibilities. I therefore propose to relate Jenner’s causes of “project” failure to an upgraded organisational strategic business framework, and then to look at how, and to whom, responsibilities for certain groups of failures could (or should?) be assigned.

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THE NATURE AND INCIDENCE OF PROJECT SUCCESSES/FAILURES

First, it should be said that there is very little validated data on project successes and/or failures in the project management literature, as I discussed in Stretton 2014j. Additionally, criteria for defining project success or failure vary very substantially.

Project failures tend to be expressed in terms of cost over-runs, late completion, and/or failure to deliver expected outcomes. However, acceptable tolerance levels in relation to what constitutes failure appear to vary widely. For example, as indicated in Stretton 2014j, in the cases of the two types of projects about which we have the most information on incidences of failure, tolerance rates for mega-projects appear to be substantially more liberal than for software development projects.

However, there are also other substantial differences in criteria used, including a category in the Standish Group data for software projects between “success” and “failure” which they call “challenged”, by which they mean completed and operational projects which are over budget, late, and with fewer features and functions than initially specified. So, overall we are far from having consistent criteria for defining project successes and failures. Currently, as Jenner 2015 puts it, “‘Success’ and ‘failure’ are often contestable notions”.

None-the-less, irrespective of the criteria used, there is wide-spread agreement that the incidence of failed projects and programs is much higher than could be reasonably expected. However, when it comes to quantifying these, we simply do not have sufficient validated information to be able to make confident assessments. Jenner 2015 summarises many contributions on the subject, which appear to indicate an overall failure rate of 50%-70%. But he then comments as follows:

....how do we know that 50%-70% of projects and programs fail? Without a comprehensive evidence base derived from comparison of forecast against actual costs, benefits and time taken, there’s no way we can reliably know the scale of success or failure.

After further discussion, including notes on failures associated with project size, duration and complexity, Jenner assesses the situation as follows.

So whilst we may lack solid evidence on the exact scale of project/program failure, we do know the failure rate, scale and impact is greater than should be expected.

In summary, we simply do not have consistent criteria for what constitutes project success or failure. We have some information about success/failure rates in software development projects and mega-projects (albeit with different criteria), but virtually nothing on other project types, or projects in different application areas, etc. There is an urgent need for much more comprehensive data than currently exists, covering the widest possible range of project types and application areas.

We now go on to look in more detail at Jenner’s discussion on causes of failure.

JENNER’S CAUSES OF “PROJECT” FAILURE

Jenner 2015 has two particular groups of causes of failure which I will draw on. The first is his Table 1, which derives from NAO/OGC (National Audit Office/ Office of Government Commerce), as follows. (This follows Jenner’s numbering, but he did not suggest that this implied any order of importance).

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Lack of clear link between the project and the organisation’s key strategic priorities (2) Lack of clear senior management and ministerial ownership and leadership (3) Lack of effective engagement with stakeholders (4) Lack of skills and proven approach to project management and risk management (5) Too little attention to breaking development and implementation into manageable steps (6) Evaluation of proposals driven by initial price rather than long-term value for money (7) Lack of understanding of and contact with the supply industry at senior organisation levels (8) Lack of effective project team integration between clients, the supplier team and chain |
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Table 1: From Jenner 2015, Table 1 – The NAO/OGC list of common causes of project failure

The second listing below comes mainly from Jenner’s text immediately following his Table 1, plus item (h) which was originally in the form of a question from his Table 2, and which I have reworded as a cause of failure (my alphabetical identification).

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The separation of strategy formulation (‘choosing’) from implementation (‘doing’) (b) Adopting activity-based rather than results or benefits-led change (c) Failure to adequately address transition management (d) Failure to include all required business changes within the scope of the initiative (e) Poorly defined requirements (f) Governance failures (g) Unrealistic cost estimates and/or benefits forecasts (h) Failure to develop a range of credible & genuine options to address the problems/opportunities |
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Table 2: From Jenner 2015 – Some other causes of project failure

As indicated in the Introduction, I will be mapping Jenner’s causes of failure on to an organisational strategic management framework, and will be allocating all the causes in both Tables 1 and 2 in doing this.

The organisational strategic management framework which will be used here is essentially that used in Stretton 2018a, and later in the series on organisational strategic planning and execution starting with Stretton 2018d, but with modifications to specific headings for each stage, and to the descriptors used for some of them.

I have assigned Jenner’s causes of failure into four major groups which appear to me to best describe their relationship to the strategic framework, as shown in Figure 1 below. The two smaller groups, *Top-level strategic management*, and *Top-level general management*, apply to the framework at large. The two larger groups are related specifically to *Strategy development* and *Strategy execution*. All the components of both sets of Jenner’s causes of failure are included, but these causes have been mixed, and are now simply bullet-pointed.

RELATING JENNER’S FAILURE CAUSES TO AN ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

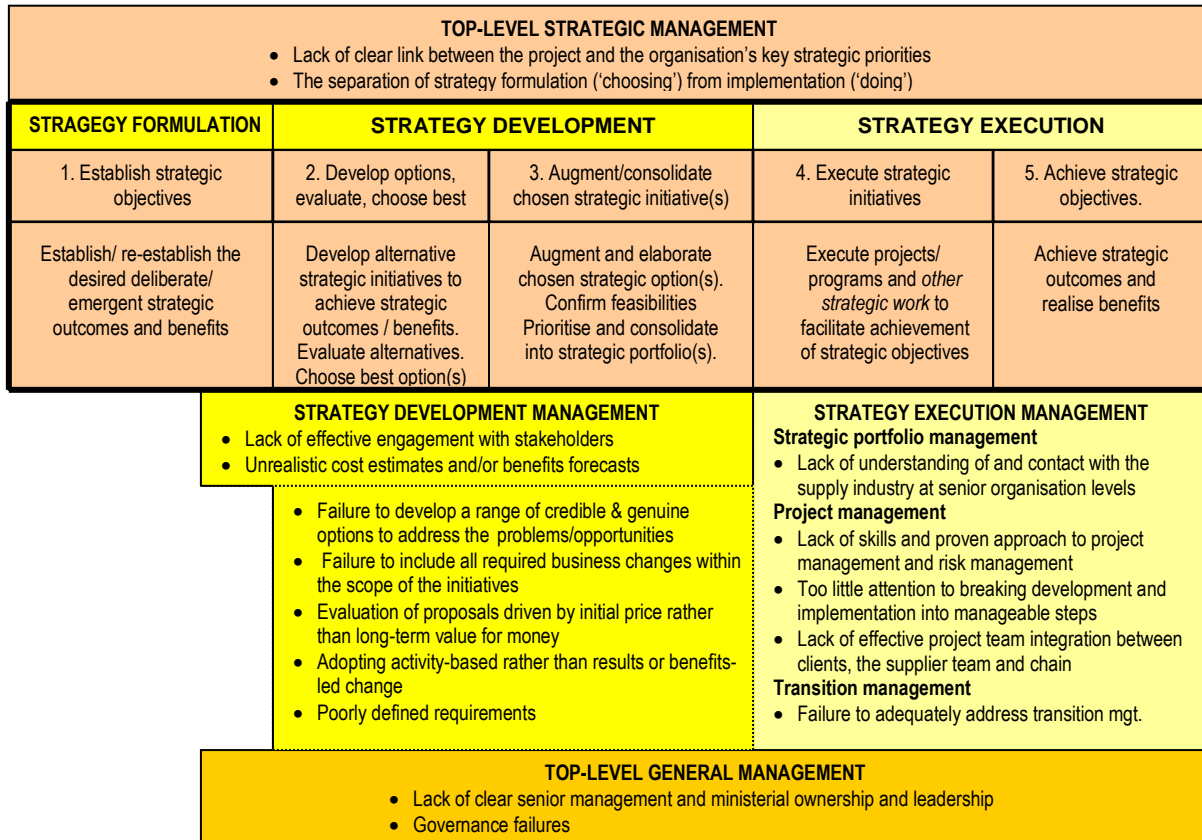
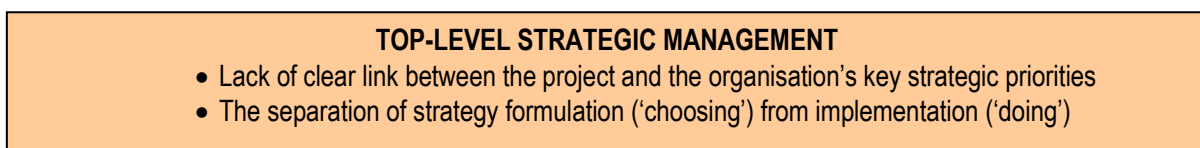


Figure 1: Relating Jenner’s causes of project failure to a strategic management framework

I will now discuss each of the four groups of causes of project failure in turn.

TOP-LEVEL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT



I have indicated how the above two causes of failure relate to the basic strategic framework by simply having them cover all stages, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Lack of clear link between the project and the organisation’s key strategic priorities

This is mentioned as an important issue by many authors in the project management literature. In Stretton 2017k & 2017l I demonstrated how all projects, however originated, can be directly related to a broad organisational strategic management

framework. We are adopting this approach in this article, as shown above. With regard to “lack of clear link”, this relational approach makes all such links quite clear.

Separation of strategy formulation (‘choosing’) from implementation (‘doing’)

This is touched on indirectly by other authors as well, including Butler 2008 and Dalcher 2018c, who note that many organisations pay more attention to strategy formulation than strategy execution. This could also be seen as an example of the second cause of project failure posted in Table 1 above, namely **(2) Lack of clear senior management and ministerial ownership and leadership**. However, I will be allocating the latter to a separate group later - but it does illustrate how many of these causes of failure tend to overlap.

Both of these causes of failure can certainly be mitigated by making the organisational strategic framework, and the on-going management of its attendant strategic initiatives, central to considerations of how projects and *other strategic work* contribute to the achievement of strategic objectives.

Responsibilities for these causes of “project” failure

These causes of failure have been described as examples of “project” failure. This descriptor is rather obviously a misnomer, on two counts. The first is that these failures could certainly be more accurately described as “strategy” failures. The second is that “project” failure is commonly taken to imply that project management is at fault. This is clearly not the case with these causes of failure. So, who is responsible for the above causes of failure?

I have used the generalised descriptor *top-level strategic management* as being responsible. However, the actual entity which is responsible in each specific case will depend on the way in which the organisation’s strategic management team is set up, and how they relate with company directors (or their equivalent) who have ultimate responsibility for establishing/monitoring/re-establishing the organisational strategic objectives.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

- Lack of effective engagement with stakeholders
- Unrealistic cost estimates and/or benefits forecasts

- Failure to develop a range of credible & genuine options to address the problems/ opportunities
- Failure to include all required business changes within the scope of the initiatives
- Evaluation of proposals driven by initial price rather than long-term value for money
- Adopting activity-based rather than results or benefits-led change
- Poorly defined requirements

In Figure 1 I have described the responsible unit for all these causes of failure as *Strategy development management*, but will have a little more to say about this later. It will also be seen that I have overlapped the first two causes in this group back a little

into *Strategy formulation*, because they typically also need to be considered in initial formulation of strategy.

Lack of effective engagement with stakeholders

In the project management literature, effective engagement with all stakeholders is virtually universally regarded as essential for success. This cause of failure is relevant to all stages of the strategic management framework, but starts in its first stages, which is why it appears in this responsibility area in Figure 1. I discussed this in some detail in Stretton 2018h in the context of Stage 5, so do not propose to expand further on that material in this article.

Unrealistic cost estimates and/or benefits forecasts

Jenner 2015 has a good deal to say about cost estimates and forecast benefits in the project context, including the following:

....a fundamental cause of project failure is that too often we build on the (unsafe) foundations of unrealistic forecasts. If costs estimates are understated and benefits forecasts overstated (which they too often are), it should come as no surprise when the final outcome indicates (often massive) benefit shortfall and budget overspends.

Jenner goes on to note that this forecasting failure can be due to cognitive bias – which Kahmeman calls the ‘planning fallacy’ (as does Prieto 2015). Even worse is ‘strategic misrepresentation’, which Flyvbjerg et al 2005 define as the “*planned, systematic, deliberate misstatement of costs and benefits to get projects approved*”.

There is not a great deal of specific guidance on indicative estimating in the project management literature, but I attempted to pull together the best materials I could find, augmented by my own experience, in Stretton 2018e.

This cause of failure is relevant through all stages of the strategic management process. However, its main genesis is in Stage 2, where we are developing embryo business cases for each of the alternative strategies, to facilitate later comparative evaluation. Therefore, if this part of the Stage 2 effort is not done “right”, it will generally result in failure to choose the “right” strategic option.

Regrettably, we have many examples of failure to get business cases “right” in infrastructure projects in Australia. A current example is here in Sydney, where we have a substantial light rail project which is in all sorts of trouble, both cost-wise, and time-wise. Quite recently, Smith 2018, a reporter for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, discussed the following problems with business case estimates for this project as revealed by two different external reviewers.

In February 2014 the *Herald [Sydney Morning Herald]* revealed that a peer review of the business case conducted by Evans & Peck warned that the government had been overly optimistic in its assumptions.

In 2016 the NSW Auditor-General reported that cost blowouts in the project were “due to incorrect estimates” in the project’s business case produced a year earlier.

Here again we have revelations about over-optimistic assumptions and incorrect estimates that come from the public domain. Unfortunately such unrealistic cost estimates and/or benefits forecasts are virtually the norm for many Australian infrastructure projects, particularly those in the transport domain.

Failure to develop a range of credible and genuine strategic initiative options

As can be seen in Figure 1, Stage 2 is specifically concerned with developing strategic initiative options, which is all too often not done well, if at all. For example, Jenner’s accompanying explanations and comments on this cause include recording a note from Kehnelman et al 2011, as follows.

“individuals and groups are prone to generating one plausible hypothesis and then seeking only evidence that supports it”.

This happened all too often in my own extensive experience in practice, and in academe. It also tends to be prevalent in large Australian infrastructure projects. For example, Gittins 2018 reported the head of Infrastructure Australia recording that

....projects are often developed without fully considering all available options to solve an identified problem, including potential solutions that make better use of existing infrastructure through technology and data.

A further quotation from the same sources said,

...too often, we see projects being committed to before a business case has been prepared, a full set of options have been considered, and rigorous analysis of a potential project’s benefits and costs has been undertaken.

It is interesting that the latter two recognitions of the importance of developing strategic options come from the public domain. In addition to Jenner’s observation above in the project management domain, I discussed this matter in more detail in Stretton 2018e, and included contributions by Archibald 2009, Prieto (in Archibald et al 2012:22), and APM 2012.

Failure to include all required business changes within the scope of the initiative

I am particularly concerned with a variation of this cause of failure, which is a tendency to focus only on the project component of a strategic initiative, and to neglect the non-project business changes (which I later describe as *other strategic work*) which is also normally required to implement organisational strategy.

In Stretton 2017I I quoted from Dalcher 2017, who said that the contribution of a project to the realization of benefits to the organization in relation to IT projects could be as little as 20% of the total investment in that strategic initiative.

Now, it could well be that some of the changes that Dalcher refers to could also be done by projects. However, my own experience in doing these types of projects in Civil & Civic, where we did most things by project as a matter of course, was that the actual practice of embedding the changes was not project work, but an onerous continuing task, sometimes of much the same magnitude as the original project(s).

I discussed *other strategic work* at some length in Stretton 2018g, mainly in the context of Stage 4 of the organisational strategic management framework (although it is initiated at the same time as projects, in Stage 2). I also gave an example of how a so-called “project” failure was actually an *other strategic work* failure.

Evaluation of proposals driven by initial price rather than long-term value for money

When it comes to evaluating the options and choosing the best, Jenner specifically nominates this cause of failure – one which is all too familiar to most people who have been involved in project management. In effect this cause of failure is a particular instance of taking a short-term perspective in evaluation of alternatives, rather than a longer-term one. It still happens all too frequently on Australian projects, particularly those sponsored by governments or government agencies.

I note here that all the above causes of failure are particularly relevant to Stage 2 of *Strategy Development*, namely *Develop options, evaluate, choose best*, as shown in Figure 1. They are concerned with failure to choose the best strategic option(s) – or, in the vernacular suggested by Cooke-Davies 2004, failure to choose the “right” strategic initiative(s).

Poorly defined requirements

Even if the “right” strategic initiatives are chosen, there are still possibilities of failure because of failure to accurately specify the components of chosen strategic initiatives – or, more colloquially, failure to specify the chosen strategic initiatives “right”.

In the context of the project component(s) of the strategic initiative(s), failures in adequately specifying the project requirements “right” appear to be most likely to happen when the project is “thrown over the wall” from the strategic planning domain to the project management domain. So, such failures potentially apply to documents which are sometimes called charters, or briefs, or similar.

As I have advocated time and time again in articles in this journal and elsewhere, the most obvious way of improving the process of specifying project requirements is to involve a suitably experienced project manager in its development. But ignorance about this approach, or resistance to it, still appear to be very much in evidence. I will return to this subject shortly.

Adopting activity-based rather than results or benefits-led change

I am uncertain about the type of situation Jenner had in mind when he nominated this cause of failure. In a generalised context, this cause appears to be concerned with potential failures arising out of a focus on means, rather than on ends – which is not an unfamiliar situation in some sectors of the project management spectrum.

I suspect that this cause may be particularly relevant in Stages 4 and 5 of the strategic management framework. However, it would appear most likely to originate in a failure to adequately specify the requirements that the strategic initiative is expected to satisfy in order to properly contribute to the realisation of the ultimate strategic benefits. It is therefore included under Strategy Development in Figure 1.

Both this cause of failure, and *Poorly defined requirements*, are most closely associated with the Stage 3 sector of the latter, namely *Augment/consolidate chosen strategic initiative(s)*. They are concerned with failure to accurately specify components of chosen strategic initiatives – or, in the vernacular suggested by Cooke-Davies 2004, failure to specify the strategic initiatives “right”.

We now turn to look more closely at responsibilities for the above causes of failure.

Responsibilities for these causes of “project” failure?

It is first noted that these seven causes of failure comprise over 40% of the sixteen causes from Jenner 2015. This broadly coincides with what I found in my own earlier sampling of causes of project failure from different sources, as reported in Stretton 2018a, where project initiation-related causes of failure comprised 40% of the total (although the component causes of failure were substantially different).

Now, one of the most significant things about these findings is that project management had at best little, and more often no, effective involvement in the relevant activities. In a similar manner to that discussed earlier in relation to *Top-level strategic management failures*, to describe the above as “project” failures, is essentially a misnomer. Who then is responsible for these failures?

I have opted to nominate the generalised *Strategy development management* as the responsible entity. However, the high number of causes of failure in this sector leads one to suspect that this may have been due, at least in part, to there being no one having specific responsibility for the whole of the strategy development processes. Management of the latter could be quite an onerous task, particularly when many different avocations are involved, which is often the case. For example, with regard to defining requirements for projects, Dalcher 2014 observed that,

...requirements managementis an often ignored aspect of project elaboration that is done by business analysts, systems analysts, systems engineers or requirement engineers.

With regard to the project components, it has already been noted that the most obvious way of improving the processes of specifying project requirements is to involve suitably experienced project managers. I have gone further and suggested that some project managers should extend their ranges of skills to be in a position to become *Strategy development managers*. However, there are some problems with this, which I will discuss towards the end of this article.

STRATEGY EXECUTION

STRATEGY EXECUTION MANAGEMENT	
Strategic portfolio management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of and contact with the supply industry at senior organisation levels
Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills and proven approach to project management and risk management • Too little attention to breaking development and implementation into manageable steps • Lack of effective project team integration between clients, the supplier team and chain
Transition management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to adequately address transition management

It can be seen that I have divided these causes of project failure into three groups, which broadly reflect my assessment of where the primary responsibilities for such failures can be most appropriately allocated.

Strategic portfolio management

- ***Lack of understanding of and contact with the supply industry at senior organisation levels***

This cause is specifically concerned with a failure at senior organisational levels – i.e. at senior management levels. I could perhaps have allocated this to the final group (*Top-level general management*), but thought it might more properly belong to a slightly less elevated senior level, but a critically important one, namely strategic portfolio management.

In Figure 1 it can be seen that the final process in Stage 3 of the strategic framework, under *Strategy Development*, is to prioritise and consolidate the chosen strategic initiatives into strategic portfolio(s). The management of strategic portfolios is quite extensively covered in the project management literature. Most definitions of portfolios broadly agree that they comprise programs, projects, and other work grouped together to facilitate effective management of that work to meet strategic business objectives. As Morris 2013:273 observes,

Portfolio management can be the critical strategic, project-governance, management function.

Morris also points out that, amongst other things, “Portfolio Management is ...about the allocation of resources.....”. The supply industry typically represents the major source of resources, which appears to confirm that the above cause of failure can be rather naturally aligned with strategic portfolio management.

Project management

- ***Lack of skills and proven approach to project management and risk management***
- ***Too little attention to breaking development and implementation into manageable steps***
- ***Lack of effective project team integration between clients, the supplier team and chain***

In Stretton 2018a I listed some seventeen causes of failure under the sub-headings of project management operational-related and leadership-related causes. Thirteen of these would fit most comfortably under the first bullet-pointed cause above, three under the second, and one under the third. The seventeen causes were cited 26 times in the sampling, and together represented nearly 40% of all causes of failure cited.

This group can certainly be unambiguously described as causes of project failure, in the sense that they are clearly project management responsibilities. Now, as I have said before, the above figure of 40% from my earlier work does not claim to be representative, but could be seen as indicative.

In the latter case, it would appear that deficiencies due to project management would be a good deal higher than one might have expected. I say this because most of the detailed causes of failure in this group from Stretton 2018a related to topics that are already very extensively covered in most project management standards – i.e. bodies of knowledge. This surely should raise questions about the actual utility of all these guidelines and allied documentation – questions which appear to me to be all too seldom addressed.

Transition management

- ***Failure to adequately address transition management***

This could be subtitled *Failure to do the transition work “right”*. Things can certainly go wrong in this transition stage, although the seeds will typically have been sown much earlier. An example of such failure to do the *other strategic work* “right” was briefly discussed in Stretton 2018g, in relation to BA’s Heathrow’s Terminal 5, whose construction “was lauded as a success, from a time, cost, scope and quality perspective” (Bourne 2015). However, from its opening in March 2008 flights had to be cancelled, passengers were stranded, and more than 15,000 pieces of baggage were lost. Why? One of the main basic causes was lack of staff preparation and training in understanding and operating the new facilities, notably in the baggage handling domain. This absolutely key *other strategic work* needed to make Terminal 5 operate as intended had been grossly neglected. This example supports a conclusion that some causes of so-called “project” failure may well be due to failures to choose the “right” *other strategic work*, and/or to do this work “right”. These are in addition to the other various causes of “project” failure previously discussed.

With regard to transition management, the degree of project management involvement will depend on the contractual arrangements – but, in most cases, there will be little, if any, role for project managers. Once again, in these circumstances the descriptor “project” failure will be a misnomer.

So, who actually has the responsibility for ensuring effective transition management? I discussed aspects of this question in the context of responsibilities for managing the realisation of benefits in the strategic management context in Stretton 2018h. I noted there that several writers have advocated the appointment of a *Benefits Manager*, with appropriate support, to ensure that strategic benefits are fully realised, particularly in the longer term. It appears to me that this arrangement might be as good as any to help ensure effective transition management.

We now move on to look at the last group of causes of failure. which apply over most stages of the strategic management framework.

TOP-LEVEL GENERAL MANAGEMENT

TOP-LEVEL GENERAL MANAGEMENT

- Lack of clear senior management and ministerial ownership and leadership
- Governance failures

I have broadly indicated in Figure 1 that these two causes of failure relate to nearly all stages of the basic strategic management framework.

These two causes are closely associated, and were included in my list of causes of failure in Stretton 2018a under the heading *Organisational leadership-related causes of project failure*. These, with six other associated causes, were cited eleven times in my sampling, and together constituted 15% of all cited causes of failure. So, these causes of failure, which are primarily due to top-level general management, can be quite substantial.

As far as I can tell, these causes appear to relate mainly to those production-based organisations whose senior managers have a poor understanding of project management, and have “thrown the project over the wall” to be planned and executed essentially independently from the rest of the strategic planning and execution activities. Evidently these types of procedures still exist, in spite of efforts from some sections of the project management community to have project management involved earlier in *Strategy development*. So, although we have assigned responsibility for the above causes of failure to top-level general management, it can also be argued that at least part of this can be ascribed to project management, in the sense that it has not yet succeeded in convincing general management of the value of earlier project management involvement.

CONCLUDING

We have seen that probably the majority of the causes of so-called “project” failures cannot reasonably be ascribed to failures by project management. Such failures have been identified as being responsibilities of other entities. We have specifically exemplified top-level strategic and general management as being responsible for two of the four groups of causes of failure, and have suggested that many, if not most people, would be comfortable with the *Strategy execution* stage being the responsibility of a nominated *Strategic portfolio manager*, often being supplemented by a *Benefits manager* (or equivalent) to oversee transition processes.

However, when we come to *Strategy development*, responsibilities are less clear. I have designated the responsibility as being with a *Strategic development manager*. However, the large number of causes of failure in this stage suggest that, all too often, there is no-one responsible for the entire work and outcomes. This then raised the question as to who is best placed to take over this responsibility.

For a long period of time many of us have been advocating for project management to extend the range of its activities back into project initiation, and beyond. For example, in discussing *Project and program leadership*, Morris 2013:263 says,

Ideally, therefore, *there should be someone acting as ‘the single point of accountability’* for the project from the earliest stages of the project right through into taking some accountability at least for operational performance.

In Stretton 2016g I put it this way:

At the present time there are many different avocations which get involved in project initiation processes and decision-making. If project management does not actively take over these responsibilities, or at the very least management of these responsibilities, the chances are that some other avocation may well do so. This would be an opportunity lost for project management, particularly in light of the fact that project managers are undoubtedly better qualified to consolidate the management of project initiation activities than any other avocation

I still believe this is the best way forward. However, more recently I have come to doubt that it can be achieved under a *project management* banner. This is because, despite so much advocacy by so many for a more holistic perspective on the scope of the project management discipline, the execution-only perspective appears to be even more dominant than ever. In these circumstances, it is even more unlikely that general management will see project management as being in a position to make really substantial contributions to pre-execution phases of projects. I still believe project management is in the best position to develop its scope into developing effective *Strategy development managers*, but that it will need to develop skills in, and focus on, strategic issues. However, it should probably best refrain from describing itself as *project management*, but adopt an alternative descriptor which reflects expertise at strategy development, or similar.

It saddens me to have to suggest this, particularly because the scope of the practice of project management that I was introduced into well over half a century ago most certainly included Morris' *single point of accountability from the earliest stages of the project*. This remains my own perspective on where project management can, and should be, making its greatest contribution.

As a post-script, it is noted that all the above causes of “project” failure are internal to the broader organisational strategic management framework (although, as we have seen, many of them are not directly project-specific). However, there are also potential causes of failure which are either wholly, or in part, external to the strategic management framework, and I propose to comment further on these in next month's issue of this journal.

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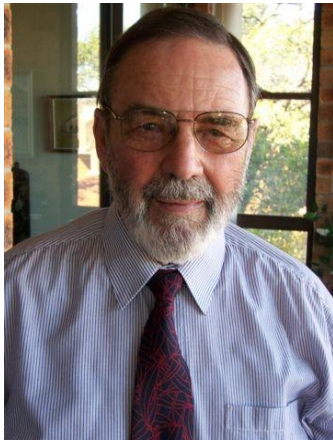
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