

The Greatest Goal of Project Management is To Impact Business Results

By Ken Sadler



Project management has one main goal – to better deliver projects that impact your company's business results. Most of the people you and I see daily do not have training or knowledge of project management (PM) nor do they care to. So it is left up to us to leverage this tool to impact our company's business. Therefore we need to develop our PM skills in order to achieve the right results. **This is part of the reason that TEC 2006 (the recent TUG Technical Educational Conference) included sessions on project management.**

One of the greatest compliments you can be given as an IT person is to be called a business leader. In your company, your executives want projects delivered to meet their goals — on time, on quality, and on budget.

However, behind every project in your company, there is a business initiative that management wants the company to achieve. Perhaps they want to reduce the number of days outstanding in accounts receivable, so they want IT to implement an improved A/R system solution. Understand that the project manager is managing the people and resources for the implementation of the new A/R system — in this case, its changed business processes with new software and hardware.

Your and my expertise will be to deliver the new AR system on cost, on time, and on quality goals. By doing so, we position the company, our company, to reap the benefits of the new system — in this case, reduced days o/s for accounts receivable. The company sponsor's role is to use the system to generate the change in business results and benefits forecast by the project. The impact on your company's business results is the reason your company funded the project. Therefore, the impact on the business results is really the only measure of success for your project.

My challenge and your challenge is to think like business people in our leadership role. For example, when you run into obstacles in your project, appealing to the business results of the project often helps remove obstacles. When momentum is needed, appealing to the business results of the project will help you gain that for your project. What does this look like? Let's say you need users to spend 2 days testing the UAT for your project and the A/R manager cannot free up resources to do the acceptance testing. You tell her the risks and the impact on schedule until her people can do UAT. She will do the math and see the benefits lost to the company by them not testing and having resources available for the project. She will schedule the resources for testing. This works with other obstacles too.

You and I as project managers, do not own the project. The Project Sponsor owns the project. We project manage the resources to deliver the project using the standard elements of time, quality, and cost for the Project Sponsor and our company. But the project is only successful when the expected business results are achieved for the company. It causes one to think a little differently about our projects, doesn't it?



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