

3 Keys to Redefining Work Management Success

Completing projects on time and on budget has proven to be a pretty valid measure of IT project success—but should it be the primary measure? I believe that pushing a project to completion on time is not the only objective—ultimately the project also needs to deliver business value. Along with the worthy objectives of finishing projects on time and within budget constraints, here are some other objectives that should be considered:

- It should be about doing the right projects, not just doing them right. Delivering business value and satisfying customers is becoming more important than ever—and it starts with the evaluation of which potential projects will meet those needs and provide that value in the first place. Hopefully this has always been important, but organizations are realizing that they have to do more than give lip service to meeting customer expectations while meeting organizational goals. It must become a primary measurement of how we determine the success or failure of any IT project.

- Project teams need to completely understand and address the business needs of every project. Although everyone would agree that "quality" is very subjective, if everyone on the team doesn't have a thorough understanding of the cost of defects and rework, it doesn't matter what work management tool you use, it won't help. Edward Deming used to talk about how organizations must build quality into the product, it can't be inspected in. Quality assurance needs to be a part of every process from start to finish. Smart organizations are looking at defects and their root causes through the project life-cycle to develop methodologies that improve the quality of their final deliverables.

- The final product needs to be stable, compatible, and easily maintainable. It's just too expensive for organizations to maintain software that's incompatible with current systems or unreliable. Because staff and maintenance budgets are at a premium, software that isn't will be abandoned for something that is. The way organizations measure the success of project based work is changing. Managers who leverage project management tools to meet these new objectives are able to better address business needs and ultimately increase their value within their organizations.