

Avoiding Adventure land: Making the most of your Steering Committee

Paul Hesselman; asapm symposium, Washington March 5 2012

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- Introduction
- Project Control
- Adventureland – Interest Radar
- Interest Radar - conclusions
- Closing statements

How to increase the awareness of a Steering Committee or Project Board for the tasks they have to perform.

(and avoid project failure)

- Presentation of an effective tool for steering committee members that can make them aware of their tasks in a project!
- GAP analysis project steering committee members \leftrightarrow project manager regarding the tasks to be performed.

“Failure is an event, never a person”

“80% that goes wrong is caused by the process and not by one person”
(William Demming)

First see what you think....

Standing

I find it sometimes hard work with a steering committee, lacking mandate, not firm enough, too big, too small. The group is not geared to what to do.

Sit down

I've always got the ideal Steering Committee on a plate for my project ,or I made sure that I got it.

Question 1

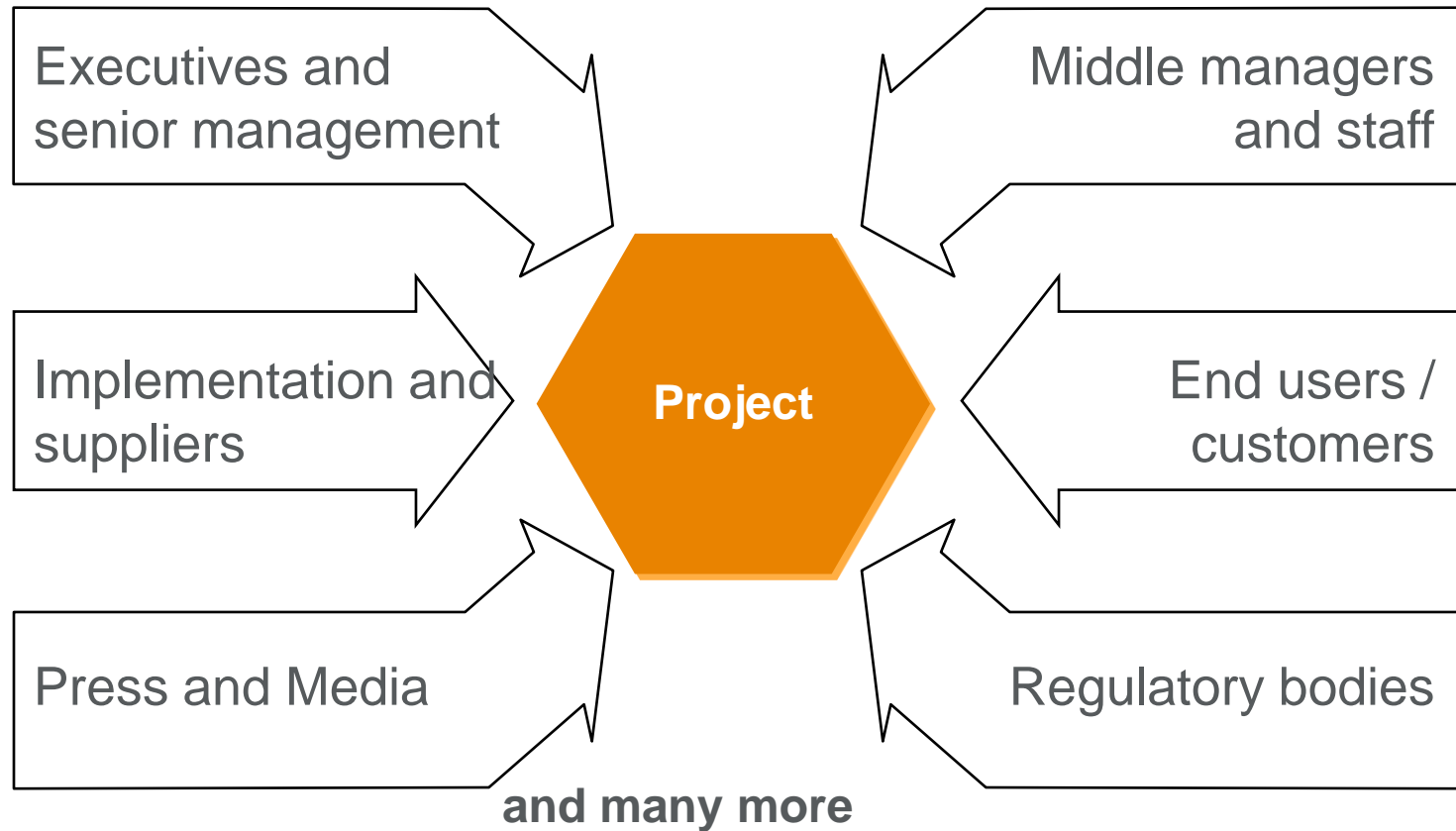
Standing

I always perform a stakeholder analysis.

Sit down

Stakeholder analysis? Perhaps I should do it. But it's just another paper tiger, you do nothing with the results!

Identify Stakeholders – Financers, project sponsors, interest or counter interest...



Question 2

Standing

I always make sure that the committee is complete and that the major stakeholders are represented. Even if it means bypassing people.

Sit down

I find it challenging to adventure with a steering committee and adjust during the ride if necessary. Some people you just can't let out of it.

Question 3

Standing

I care that the committee meets primarily for decisions.

Sit down

I think it is important for the steering committee to meet at least once a month to keep up with the facts in my project.

Standing

I chart pros and cons of a decision, I check the opinions before the meeting and tune with my Executive. Issue's are ironed out before the meeting starts.

Sit down

I bring up the issues. The consequences of a decision, are for consideration of the steering committee members. They are not little children, they can defend their interests well!

Standing

My steering committee members know exactly what tasks they need to perform for the project. They are also addressed on these issue's by the Executive.

Sit down

My steering committee members can use a good course how to act in a project..

- Meet only when necessary → no decision required? No meeting!
- An agenda is there to follow. Make sure that the topics are well prepared and discussed in advance.
- Let the steering committee members know what you expect of them. Make sure the Executive addresses all members on their tasks to perform!
- An action list for following up on actions, not for them to advance to the next meeting.

Conclusion: They who are still standing can leave!

- They have their steering comfortably in hand.
- Their steering committees know exactly what to do and do it too!
- Decision making runs smoothly and is guaranteed.

But maybe it is convenient to stay

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Project success or project failure. A matter of choice.

A project manager determines the success of a project for 40% .
The project environment the remaining 60%.
If it is successful at all.....

The Standish "Chaos" 2009 study shows a backwards trend in software success:
32% **Successful** (On Time, On Budget, Fully Functional)
44% **Challenged** (Late, Over Budget, And/Or Less than promised functionality)
24% **Failed** (Cancelled or never used)

The main causes are **lack of execution and focus** and **increase in process, tools and red tape**. Process isn't helping, it's hindering!

... it is the Executive and the Project Steering Committee together with the Project Manager who create success through focus and to act decisively.

You can always do a Dilbert...



....but will it help?

- "Almost always business and government seize the weapon of the committee or working group or - for problems where busy people should be involved - the steering committee.
- As a footnote to the bitter lesson that I learned in The Hague: a committee is good for six months of delay, a steering committee for eighteen months. "(1)

Can it be done differently?

(1) Winsemius, P., You will only see it if you get it. About Cruyff and leadership, Balance, 2004

Why look at the operation of a steering committee?

A good steering committee is committed and has enough seniority.

A steering committee is not a tea party. If nothing is there to decide on: you don't need a meeting. Ensure that informing is organized separate from decision making and that the right people come together.

What, among other things, should you arrange?

- Will the Executive sufficiently support the project through clear directives, clear decisions, concrete acceptance of the outcome
- Are the right people asked to serve on the steering committee.
- Is the Executive sufficiently knowledgeable to intrepid the (sometimes technical) results?
- Are responsibilities and is empowerment clear for both the Executive and the other steering committee members?
- Do the members of the committee want to commit to the project and the purpose of the project?
- Do they have something to decide on and can they?

A project is not an island, the goals must be clear and Governance determines the strength

Questions to start with...

- Have stakeholders been identified and do they remain involved in the project?
- Is it clear who the responsible Executive is?
- Does the organization understand the value and approach of the project, is the need for the result clearly identified?
- Does the project have sufficient focus, is it clear what the outcome should be?
- Have all involved the same expectation of the result?

Let's pick up from the start of a project....

10 golden rules to check on your project

Manager	0 1 2	Professional	0 1 2
Project is in line with business objectives		realistic planning exists	
Manage change!		There is a accepted and actual spec/ requirements	
Project Manger is empowered (budget, resources etc)		Senior management is committed	
There is a good relation with the Stakeholders		Competent team members with defined responsibilities	
Use of a project management process (plan, milestones etc)		Enough budget for the agreed work is available	

0= absent. 1= likely. 2= agreed.

Score them and discuss with the Excecutive...
 ... to few points? Don't start the project!

Separate implementation from decision

Project Manager

- Provides products, services or results
- Executes
- Follows the progress according to plan
- Informs the environment

Environment

Executive

- Reaches his goals
- Decides
- Determines priority
- Assures funding

Steering Committee

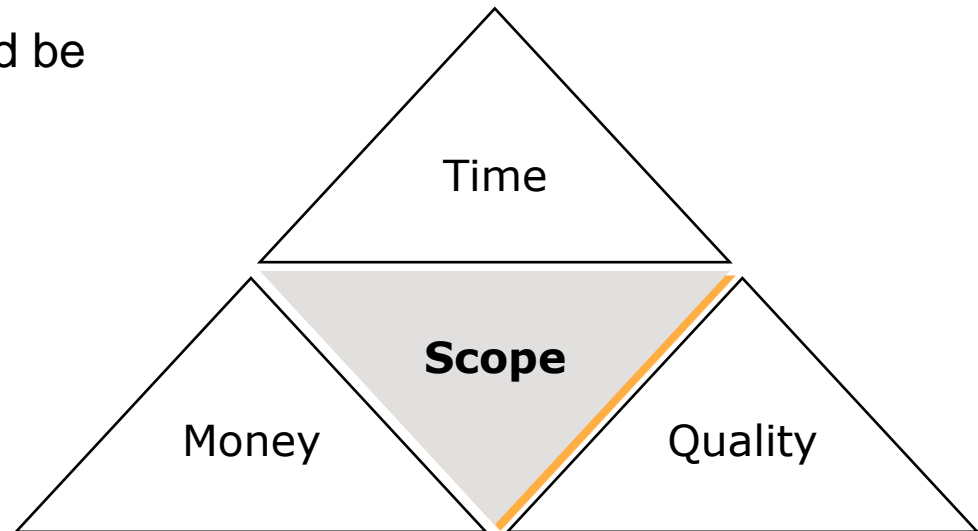
- Sets/ adjusts frameworks
- Accepts the products, services or results

Project

Role of the Steering Committee: Informed decisions!

In a steering committee meeting there should be no surprises and certainly no unprepared difficult decisions to make. The steering committee should be chopping **known** knots.

Bottlenecks require choices regarding time, money and quality



The devil's triangle: the change of one also means the change of the other

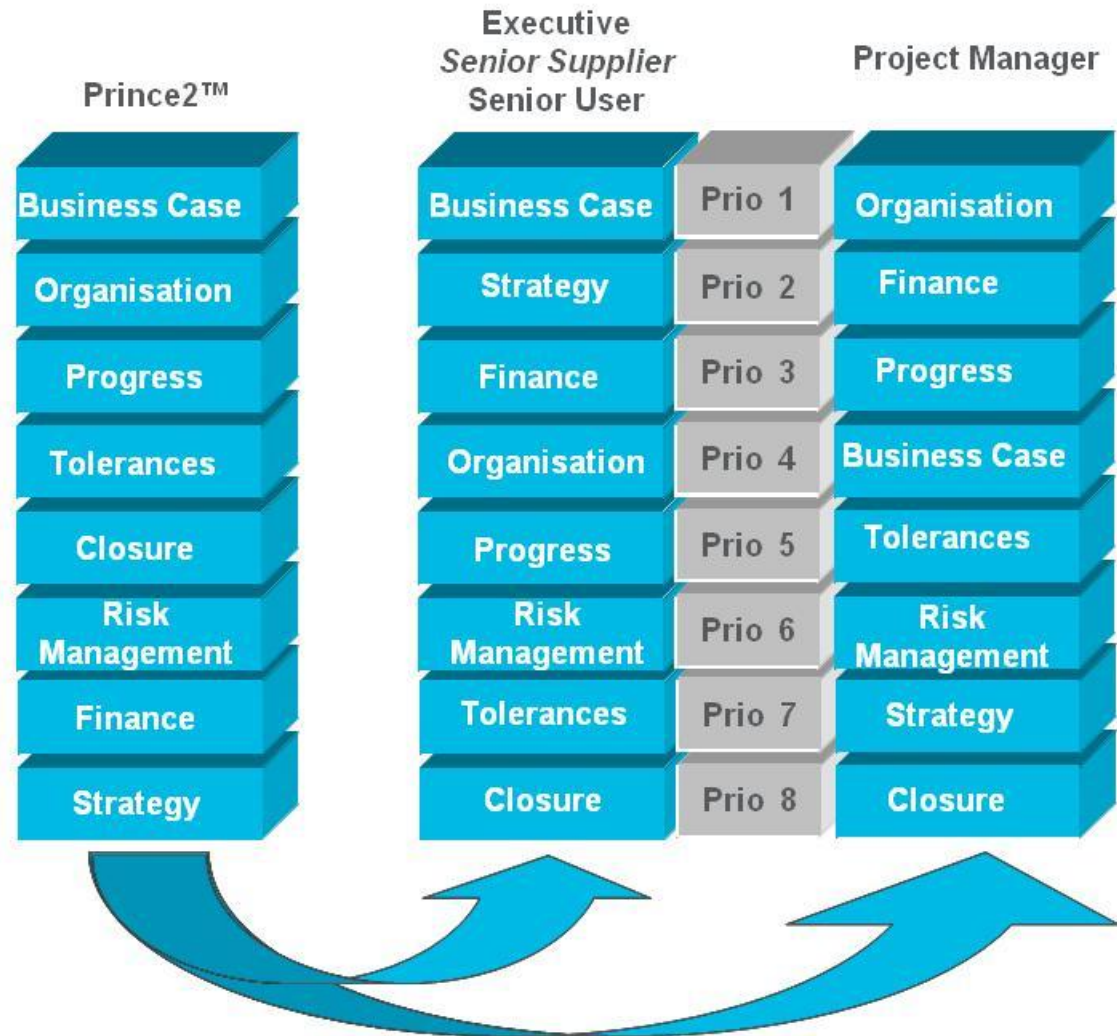
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So what can we do to get a more effective Steering Committee?

Answer: The Tool – *Interest Radar*.

- Duties & Responsibilities (according to Prince2™) are explained by a facilitator.
- D & R's are prioritized by:
 - Principal/ Executive
 - Senior Users
 - Senior Suppliers
 - Project Manager
- The facilitator analyzes the differences
- The Steering Committee discusses the results

The Steering Committee members and the PM prioritize all tasks



Some tasks get attention anyway

- There are duties and responsibilities, of all involved, that get a high priority.
- These are expected to be handled properly.



Some discussion arises on specific tasks

- For some tasks there is a discrepancy in priorities.
- This need not to be a problem, provided that the parties work together and know about each others preferences.



Some tasks are just not performed

- There are tasks to which none of the participants give any priority/ importance.
- These are a risk.

Executive Senior Supplier Senior User		Project Manager
Business Case	Prio 1	Organisation
Strategy	Prio 2	Finance
Finance	Prio 3	Progress
Organisation	Prio 4	Business Case
Progress	Prio 5	Tolerances
Risk Management	Prio 6	Risk Management
Tolerances	Prio 7	Strategy
Closure	Prio 8	Closure

Responsibilities Executive (Prince2™)

Group	Responsibility	EX	PM
Business Case	1 Oversee development BC and Projectbrief	16	14
	2 Monitor/control progress of the project on a strategic level (BC)	2	4
	3 Ensure the impact of changes of scope are checked against the BC.	17	11
	4 Validation of BC on external events and project progress	18	17
	5 Ensure the benefits have been realised by holding a Post Project Review.	19	19
Risk Management	6 Risk management (tracking & mitigation)	9	8
	7 Monitoring business risks	11	18
Organisation	8 Ensure coherent projectorganisation	12	1
	9 Organise and chair Project Board meetings	8	5
	10 Ensure logical set of plans	7	2
Tolerances	11 Set stage tolerances	14	10
	12 Recommend on future action in case tolerances are exceeded	1	6
Progress	13 Brief corporate and programme management about progress	3	9
	14 Monitoring project finance on behalf of customer	6	15
	15 Monitoring stage and project progress against the agreed tolerances	10	13
Strategy	16 Keeping project in line with customer strategy	4	3
Finance	17 Monitoring supplier/contractor payments	13	16
	18 Authorise Customer expenditure	5	7
Closure	19 Approve projectclosure and ensure documents are passed on to appropriate stakeholders	15	12

Responsibilities Senior User (Prince2™)

Group	Responsibility	SU	PM
Requirements	1 Specifications desired outcome project	6	4
	2 Specifications are accurate, complete and unambiguous	13	5
	3 Resolve user requirements and priority conflicts	3	8
	4 Prioritise and contribute user opinions on Project Board decisions on whether to implement recommendations on proposed changes	5	15
Progress	5 Development of the solution at all stages is monitored to ensure it meets the needs	15	13
	6 Progress monitoring from a user perspective (against specifications)	16	10
User management	7 User liaison is functioning effectively	2	1
	8 Availability of user resources	10	2
	9 Brief and advise user management	11	14
	10 Promote and maintain focus on the desired project outcome	1	7
Quality control	11 Quality checking on products	7	12
	12 Quality control procedures are used correctly to ensure products meet requirements	12	11
	13 Approve Product Descriptions for those products that act as inputs or outputs from the supplier function	14	6
Risk Mangemt	14 Risks to users are frequently monitored	9	9
Closure	15 Provide user view on Follow-on Actions	8	16
	16 Signing off products at completion	4	3

Responsibilities Senior Supplier (Prince2™)

Group	Responsibility	SS	PM
Supplier Management	1 Agree objectives for supplier activities	4	1
	2 Promote and maintain focus on the desired project outcome from supplier point of view	3	9
	3 Ensure that the supplier resource are available	9	2
	4 Arbitrate on, and ensure resolution of, any supplier priority or resources conflicts	7	5
	5 Brief non-technical management on supplier aspects of the project	14	13
Requirements	6 Approve Product Descriptions for supplier products	12	12
	7 Contribute supplier opinions on Project Board decisions on whether to implement recommendations on proposed changes	2	3
	8 Resolve supplier requirements and priority conflicts	5	6
Progress	9 Progress towards outcome remains consistent from supplier perspective	11	14
	10 Monitor potential changes and their impact on correctness, completeness and integrity of products against their Product Description	10	10
Quality Control	11 Ensure quality control procedures are used correctly, so products adhere to requirements	8	7
	12 Ensure that any supplier and operating standards defined are met	13	8
	13 Advise on selection of development strategy, design and methods	6	11
Risk Management	14 Monitor any risks in the production aspect	1	4

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Workshop *Interest Radar*: result of study with steering committee members and project managers in The Netherlands.

(50 participants)

- There is no 'good outcome'
- The outcome is not a disqualification of steering committee members or the project manager.
- It gives insight to the natural preferences and how the persons operate in projects.
- One task **has** to be on the top an other **has** to be at the bottom. No equal importance's and "I do them all" stuff.
- Do it at the start of a project – before any blaming starts.
- Use a facilitator with enough distance to the project.
- Don't make it too heavy. Its primary function is to create awareness

Pitfalls of the Steering Committee – The Results

- Business Case: Scope changes are likely to be insufficiently translated into the Business case
- Requirements: Too much room for interpretation. Scope is not clear enough
- Finance: Insufficient insight into the financial management of a project can be expected.
- Quality Control: The Steering Committee is also responsible for the quality of the delivery. Quality management is likely to be the first that suffers.
- Project Closure: Too little attention to the closing of a project. The lessons learned are missing.

Take advantage of knowing that up front.

- "It's good to reflect on my own work."
- "For this this task we need to do more."
- "I thought my colleague would have that higher on his list, I will pay more attention to it."

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- A steering committee never steers itself (or if they do, often the not the way that you want for your project).
- A little awareness of their duties will not hurt. This can be "playfully" taught with the Interest Radar.
- A good project management course for clients can always help in the end!

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

CONNECTIVATE

Need help implementing?
Don't hesitate to contact:

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- The workshop Interest Radar in practice

- Pilot with a steering committee within a large telecom operator in the Netherlands
- interviews with
 - the Executive
 - The Senior Supplier
 - 3 Senior Users
 - the Project Manager
- Closing workshop to discuss the results

Executive and Project Manager are often aligned

	Exec	PM
Project management team	2	2
Issue's en risks versus BC	1	3
Decisions on issue's and risks	5	1
Progress control	3	5
Projectplan and Business Case	4	11
Finance	9	4
Steering Committee meetings	6	6
Escalation by exceptions	7	9
Fit with strategy	8	7
Benefit reviews	10	12
Approach and quality of the results	11	8
Transfer of benefit reviews	13	10

Executive and Project Manager are often in a line for Control

	Exec	PM
Project management team	2	2
Issue's en risks versus BC	1	3
Decisions on issue's and risks	5	1

- Executive and PM pay close attention to:
 - The right person at the right place
 - operational control
- The game is played "close on the ball".

Executive and PM have less emphasis on the project approach

	Exec	PM
Escalation by exceptions	7	9
Fit with strategy	8	7
Benefit reviews	10	12
Approach and quality of the results	11	8
Transfer of benefit reviews	13	10

Principal and PM have limited attention to:

- Escalations
- Adjourning to the company strategy
- Principal and PM pay little attention to:
 - tactical management of suppliers and users
 - project approach
 - suppliers/ users to fulfill their responsibilities

The Senior Users have much the same priorities

	<u>SU1</u>	<u>SU 2</u>	<u>SU 3</u>	<u>PM</u>
Focus op end result	1	8	1	2
Design & realisation	2	2	7	5
Resolve difference of opinion	3	12	3	6
Realisation benefits	4	9	5	7
Continuity of operations	5	1	2	9
Product descriptions	6	5	11	10
Product review	7	7	8	8
Availability of resources	8	11	12	3
Project assurance	9	4	9	4
Informing and advising user organisation	10	3	4	11
Benefit reviews	11	10	6	12
Issue's en risks	12	6	10	1

Senior Supplier and Project Manager and complement each other

	SS	PM
Supplier management	1	11
Product descriptions	2	9
Supplier aspects	3	7
Review methods	4	8
Realism of proposals	5	2
Project assurance	6	6
viability	7	4
resources of suppliers	8	3
Quality procedures	9	10
Issue's and risks	10	1
Difference of opinions	11	5