

Presentation on 8 June 2011
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Leading Accelerated Projects™

Thinking Outside the Blocks



Presented by
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Leading Accelerated Projects™

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Every Project Has an Organizing Principle

If the O.P. is ...

The project will have ...

**Risk
Minimization**

Added "overhead" to lessen
the possibility and/or impact
of potential risks

**Consistency
from Project
to Project**

A tried and true "process"
that must be adhered to
regardless of circumstances

**Cost
Containment**

Added measures to seek-
out cost reductions and to
track and control costs

**Schedule
Compression**

All elements of the
system (human & technical)
working in harmony to save
time

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What's the Big Deal? . . . Take Your Pick

- Quicker delivery of outcomes and results to customer
- Greater lifecycle profits . . . early-market advantage
- Less time for requirements and technology to change
- Less time for user community to change
- Less time for project team member "churn"
- Fewer projects in the pipeline - less WIP
- Fewer uncertainties . . . short-range vs long-range
- Better focus - oversight, priorities, resource usage



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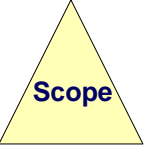
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Rethinking the Triple Constraints

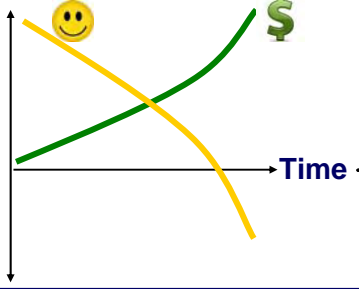
Industrial Era:



- 1 degree of freedom
- Varying 1 constraint requires tradeoffs between the other 2

Information Age:

Cost and customer satisfaction are a function of time

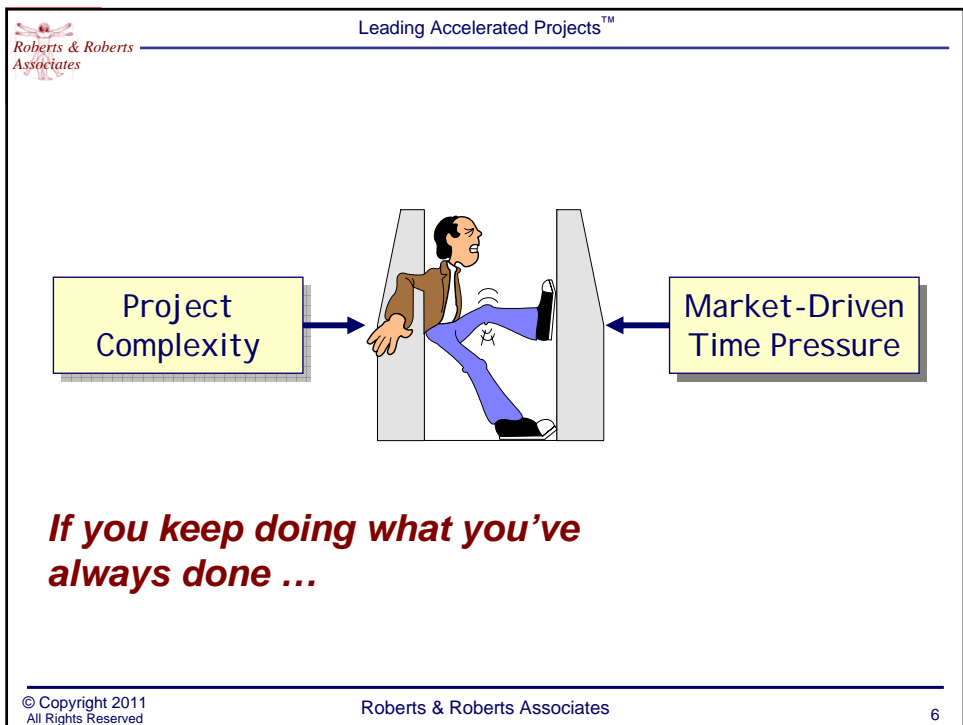
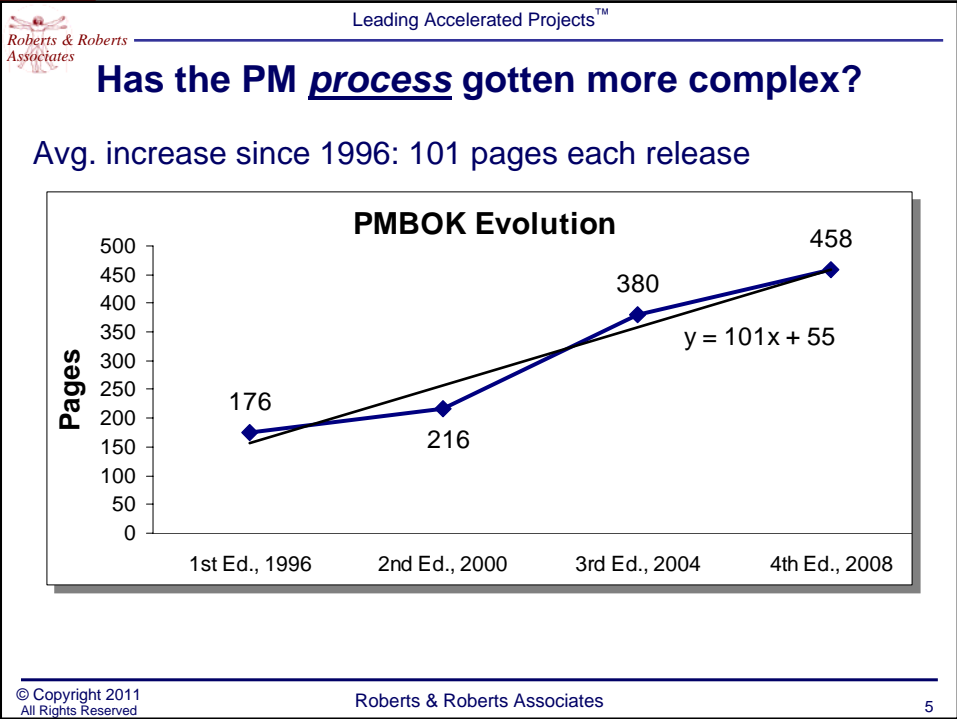


- Project scope
- Resources
- **System capability**
- **Project leadership**

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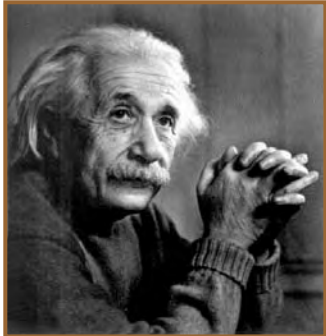
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“Without changing our patterns of thought, we will not be able to solve the problems we created with our current patterns of thought.”

— Albert Einstein

... nor can projects be accelerated by ‘amping up’ existing methods of planning and execution.

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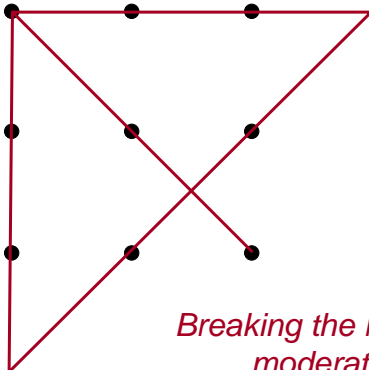
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Thinking Outside the Box

- Cheerleading
- Efficiency improvements
- Process streamlining
- Lean

Objective: Draw no more than 4 straight lines to connect the dots and without lifting the marker.



*Breaking the rules at Level 1
... moderate improvement*

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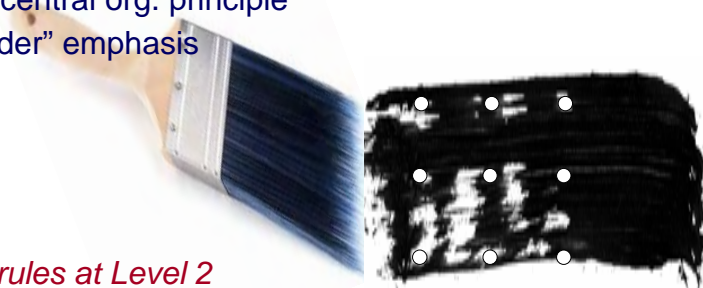
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Thinking Outside the “Blocks”

- Systems perspective
- Multiple opportunity levers
- No sacred cows
- Partnership agreements
- Time is the central org. principle
- Project “leader” emphasis

Objective: Connect the lines with the least number of lines possible.




*Breaking the rules at Level 2
... significant improvement*


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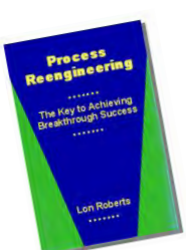
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Impetus, Insights, and Inspiration for AP

Our clients ... 

The marketplace ... 

Process reengineering ... 

Systems gurus ... 

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Five Realities Shaping the AP Philosophy

1. Project delays are more often due to human factors than technical factors.
2. Project leadership is the common denominator in virtually every list of critical project success (or failure) factors.
3. Human factors are amplified in accelerated projects, making the need for project leadership especially acute.
4. A project is a system within a larger system ... any attempt to accelerate a project that doesn't take the larger system into account can offer partial results . . . *at best*.
5. Every accelerated project is unique.

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Dubious “Solutions” for Accelerating Projects

- Sloganeering
- Pressuring the project team to work harder and longer
- Crashing the project
- Acceleration by decree
- Rigid adherence to methodologies
- One-dimensional solutions
- Primary emphasis on technology solutions
- Micromanaging the project
- Compressing the schedule by excessively overlapping tasks

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Concurrent Tasks Increase Schedule Risks

The Gantt chart displays a timeline from June 17 to July 5. Tasks A, B, C, and D are concurrent, each lasting 5 days from June 20 to June 25. Task Z starts on June 27 and ends on July 1. A bracket above the chart spans from June 20 to July 4, labeled '10 days'.

- If tasks A thru D are independent and estimated at p(50%)
- Likelihood of overrunning the schedule = $1 - 2^{-4} \cong 94\%$

With sequential tasks, there's at least potential for gains to offset losses

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Conditions Favorable for Type III Errors

1. Failure to consider the project's contribution to, or impact on, the system of which it is a part
2. Assuming the requirements, as stated, are correct
3. Assuming the requirements can be articulated
4. Assuming the project "solution" will be accepted and integrated into the system
5. Devising solutions that play to the designer's expertise
6. Mistaking inputs for outputs, and causes for effects

Example: *"Poorly defined applications have led to persistent miscommunication between business and IT. This contributes to a 66% failure rate for these applications."*

(Said to be from a study by the Forrester Group)

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Using BotEC to Estimate Project Delay Costs

Example: Cost of delaying a road expansion project

A single lane closure during rush hour on a four lane freeway operating near capacity creates a queue 5-miles long that takes 6-hours to dissipate. If the value of a person's time were \$15/hour, the resulting user cost for that single peak travel period (in one direction) is \$230,000. (Source: Utah DOT)

Time impact from closing 1 lane → **Cost due to 1 lane closure** (\$4.6M/mo.)

Avg. income per hr. → **Cost due to 1 lane closure** (20 peak days/mo.)

Project costs per month (\$1.2M/mo.)

Total impact per 1-mo. delay (\$5.8M/mo.)

Labor hrs./month (calendar icon)

\$ per hour (dollar sign icon)

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Project Acceleration Framework

Acceleration Objective: To reduce the schedule by ____ % below the "norm"

<p>Requirements Analysis</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Requirements/ Constraints</p>	<p>1. Risk Management (requirements)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Risks arising from Requirements</p>
<p>Acceleration Strategy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Whats" (not "hows")</p>	<p>II. Risk Management (acceleration strategy)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Risks arising from Accel. Strategy</p>
<p>Acceleration Levers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Exploit the 8 levers to fulfill the strategy</p>	

→ Planning → Execution

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Eight Acceleration Opportunity Levers™

Requirements
Psychology
Planning
Process
Policy
People
Technology

Leadership

Duration

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Uncovering Opportunities – MAP Critical Issues Survey™

A proprietary tool for surveying project stakeholders:

- Identifies “issues” that have bearing on the ability to accelerate a particular project ... issues are related to one or more of the Eight Acceleration Opportunity Levers™
- Identifies specific incidents from the history of an organization that provide palpable evidence of a particular issue
- Uses descriptive statistics to identify the perceived magnitude of the issue and the degree that the stakeholders agree on the issue
- Identifies links between “issues” that suggest a theme or pattern

(N) N = the survey item #

```


graph LR
    2 --- 14
    14 --- 8
    8 --- 9
    8 --- 20
    9 --- 23
    20 --- 18
    23 --- 18
    18 --- 15
    18 --- 33
    
```

Critical Factors
Risk Management
Multitasking
Inefficient Execution

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Thinking Outside the “Blocks”



The Discipline Block

- Relying on solutions that play to your technical strength
- Shutting out ideas from those outside your discipline

The Methodology Block



- Being “invested” in a particular methodology
- Allowing the methodology to set the organizing principle
- Allowing the methodology to be a straight jacket


The Consistency Block

- Losing sight of the fact that every accel. project is unique
- Treating variance in the project environment the same as variance in a manufacturing environment
- Confusing standards pertaining to the *quality of the work product* with project management standards

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Thinking Outside the “Blocks”




The Mess-Avoidance Block

- Failure to embrace a systems perspective
- Miscalculating the significance of a project’s human factors
- Thinking the human issues will sort themselves out

The Plan Block

- The “perfect plan” ... often a symptom of risk aversion
- Treating the plan as a roadmap, rather than a GPS
- *Managing* the plan versus *leading* the project



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Thinking Outside the “Blocks”



The Unrealistic-Schedule Block

- Thinking that adding more time will solve the unrealistic-schedule problem
- Perceiving the project *environment* to be an inviolable reality


The Communications Block

- Paying “lip service” to communications issues
- Mistaking information for communication
- Assuming team members will communicate on their own
- Assuming the requirements are clear and understood
- Failure to identify and eradicate communications barriers
- Failure of the project leader to serve as the CCO – the *Chief Communications Officer*



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6 Suggestions for VE Professionals



1. Help your organization “visualize” the value of rapid project completion or cost of late completion...*but keep it simple*
2. Identify specific impediments/opportunities...don't wing it
3. Streamline the planning process...work from an acceleration strategy predicated on *action-oriented “whats”*
4. Identify leadership actions and challenges for accomplishing the acceleration strategy ... select the best person for the job in light of these
5. Avoid Type-3 errors ... ensure “requirements” are genuine
6. Fix the system that aids or impedes project acceleration ... don't rely on a one-size-fits-all methodology

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References and Recommended Reading

Process Reengineering: The Key to Achieving Breakthrough Success, Lon Roberts, Quality Press, 1995.

SPC for Right-Brain Thinkers, Lon Roberts, Quality Press, 2005

Organizational Communications Imperatives: Lessons of the Space Program, Phillip K. Thompkins, Roxbury Publishing Co., 1993

Re-Creating the Organization: A Design of Organizations for the 21st Century, Russell K. Ackoff, Oxford University Press, 1999

Dirty Rotten Strategies, Ian I. Mitroff and Abraham Silvers, Stanford Business Books, 2009

Leading Accelerated Projects: Why Projects Overrun their Schedules and What to Do About It, forthcoming book by Lon Roberts. Visit website at www.R2assoc.com for availability information.

Training Courses

- Leading Accelerated Projects
- Gleaning Facts From Figures
- SPC Workshop for Users
- Quantitative Tools for Project Managers
- Analytical Skills for Admin. Professionals

See descriptions at
www.R2assoc.com/Trainp.htm



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