

Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty



PMI-NH Chapter Meeting May 2015

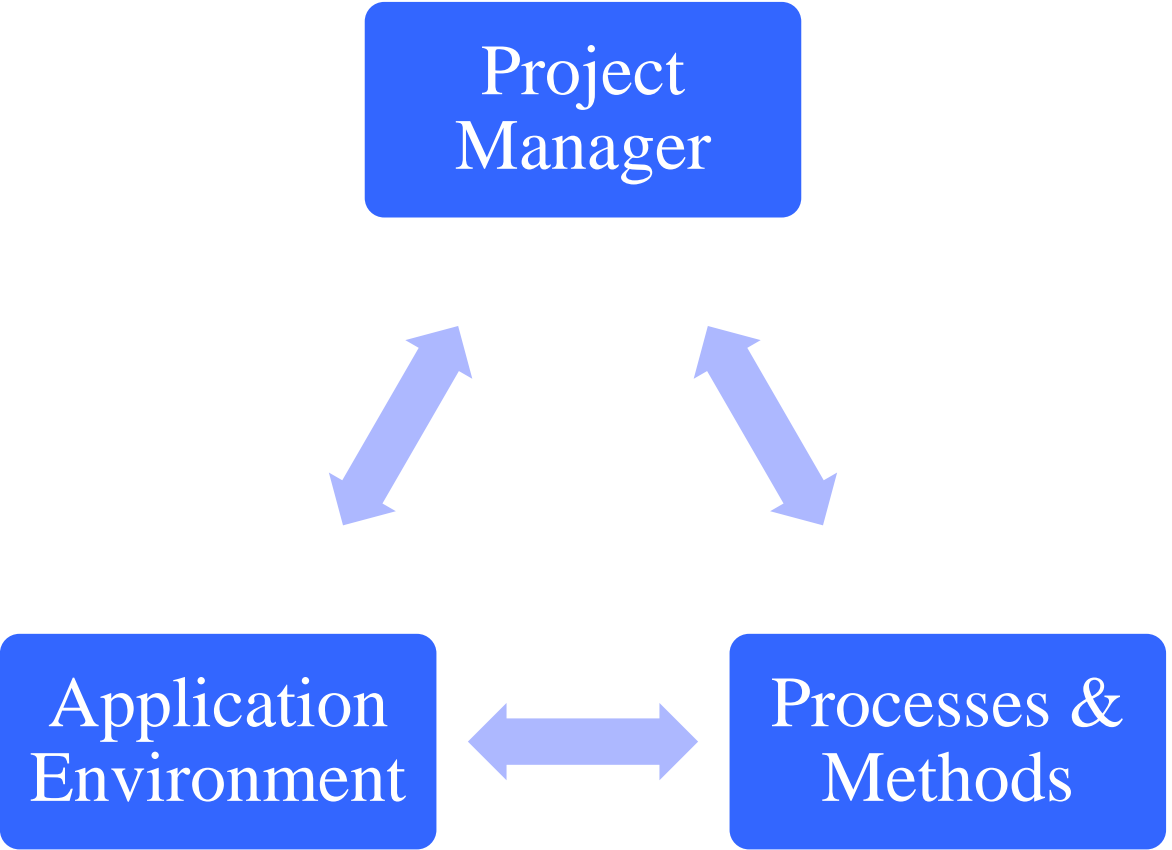
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Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty: Overview





Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty

◆ Presentation Points:

1. Define Intrinsic Uncertainty
2. What is the potential project impact
3. What can we do about these uncertainties and their impact



7 Attributes: That Make Project Management Work

1. The Organization
2. It's a System
3. Discipline
4. It's Quantitative
5. The Tracking Meeting
6. Accountability
7. Management of Project Uncertainty



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

1. Organization

- Organizational structure: functional vs. matrix
- The Project Manager
 - Has “sole-source” responsibility
 - Defining characteristics of a Project Manager
- Cultural attributes:
 - reactionary vs. proactive
- Consistent organizational policies and practices
- Vertically integrated



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

2. It's A System

- That has defined processes
- Processes utilize “Tools”
- System Characteristics:
 - Foundational
 - Integrative
 - Dynamic, e.g. matches the project approach to specific project requirements
 - Operates from Top Down and Bottom Up
 - Resource capabilities and resource availability matched to project requirements



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

3. Discipline

- Planning considered value added and necessary
- Consistent planning practices...regardless of the time constraint or urgency
- Consistency in application of project management practices
- Consistent methods of decision making
- Discrete (proactive) activities vs. reactivity
- Vertical organizational support



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

4. It's Quantitative

- Starts at Initiation of project
- Metrics for quality performance
- Requirements definition
- Vocabulary and project correspondence



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

5. The Tracking Meeting

- Planning is about getting control
- Tracking is about maintaining control
- Meeting Structure
 - Objectives:
 - Proactively find problems
 - Managing to Top 3 Issues
 - What this meeting is not
 - How is the agenda set



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

6. Accountability

- Assigning, managing and enforcing
 - Documented roles and responsibilities
 - Deliverable ownership...“what and by when”
 - Results orientated
- Use of “Escalation”



7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

7. Management of Project Uncertainty

- Every plan contains uncertainties
 - Do we directly account for this fact
 - If so how

- Can manage projects by managing uncertainties
 - Risk Management Process
 - Risk-based decision making

7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

The Hierarchy





Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty

- ◆ Does the presence of dysfunction in these attributes pose a threat to the project?
- ◆ Reasons for projects becoming “troubled”

7 Attributes That Make Project Management Work

The Hierarchy





Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty

- ◆ Does the presence of dysfunction in these attributes pose a threat to the project?
- ◆ Reasons for projects becoming “troubled”
 - Resources
 - Communication
 - Project Manager capabilities
 - Inadequate planning
 - Requirements Management



Requirements Management

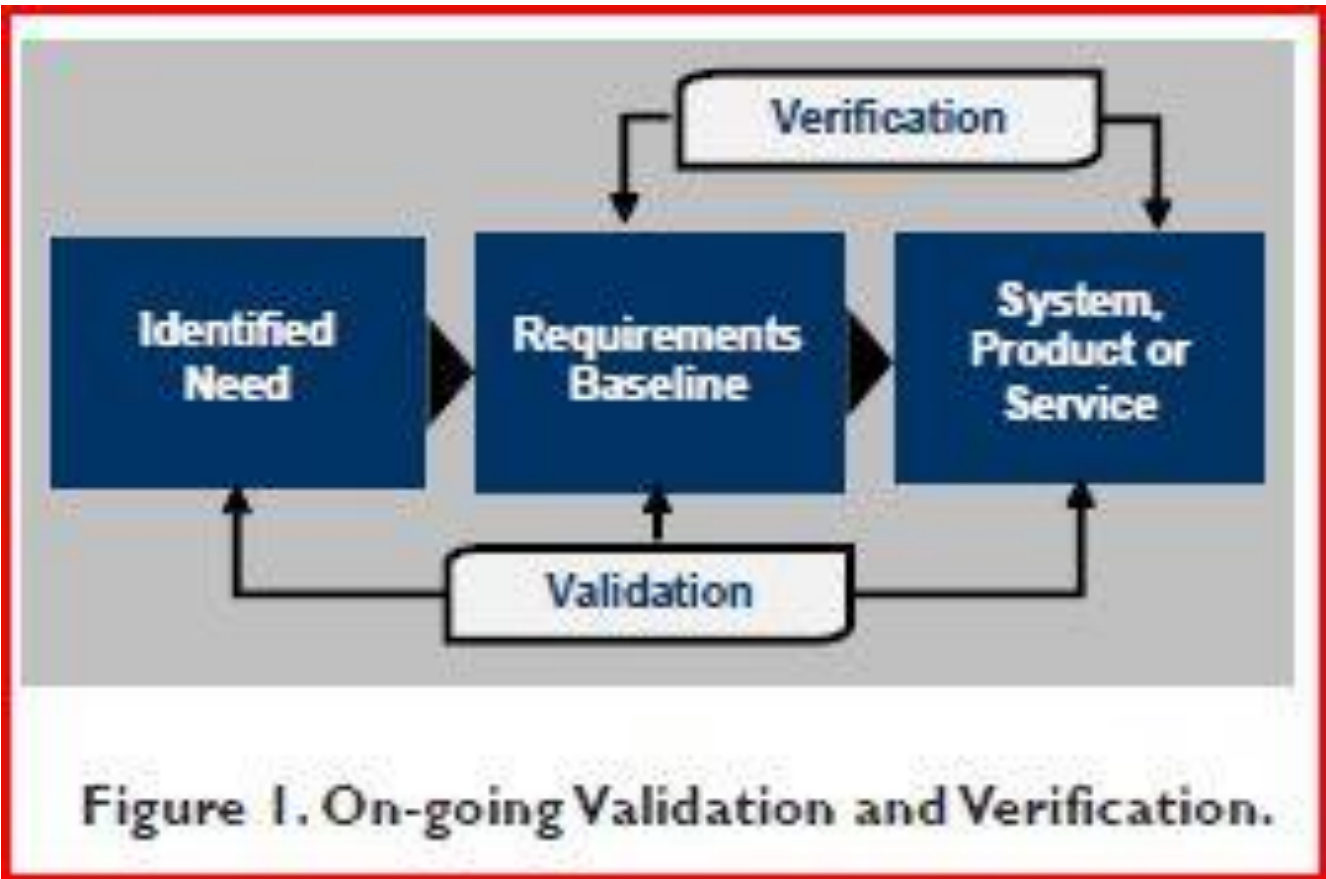


Figure 1. On-going Validation and Verification.



Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty

- ◆ How does Intrinsic Uncertainty relate to formalized Risk Management?
 - Defining characteristics of Intrinsic Uncertainty
 - 7 Attributes
 - Internal vs. External
 - Are “Issues” driving uncertainty in our projects



Strategies to Manage Intrinsic Uncertainty

- ◆ Start at the beginning
 - Aggressive front end involvement
 - Project selection process
 - Project initiation process
 - “Culture” Training



Strategies to Manage Intrinsic Uncertainty

◆ Project Leadership

- Project reviews
- Lessons learned & historical information
- Planning for Project Closure
- Recognition of dynamic nature of a project
- Assertion of Project Manager role



Summary

- ◆ We defined Intrinsic Uncertainty in terms of those attributes that make Project Management effective
- ◆ We characterized the impact based on symptoms of “troubled” projects
- ◆ We probed some management solutions and approaches



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Questions, Comments and Takeaways



Troubled Projects and Intrinsic Uncertainty

Bibliography

- ◆ No Nonsense Advice for Project Success
- ◆ “Blind Spots In Requirements Engineering Project Requirements”
- ◆ Identifying and Managing Project Risk
- ◆ 77 Deadly Sins of Project Management
- ◆ Project Requirements – A Guide to Best Practices