ENISTE TECHNOLOGY

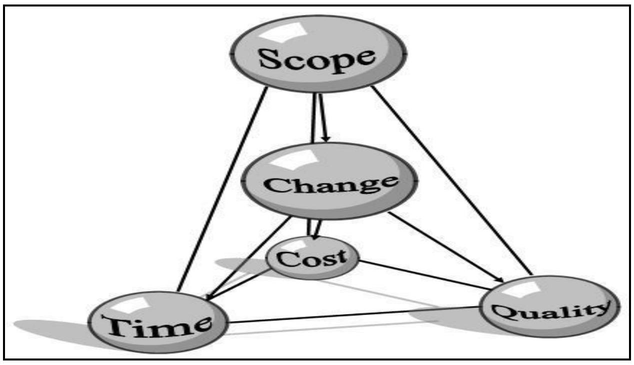
PROJECT DELIVERY EXCELLENCE

MANAGING SCOPE CHANGE

Technique Paper: Managing Scope Change

We all know that managing project scope is one of the major challenges facing the project manager in the successful delivery of any project. The fact that the project management world is littered with projects whose scope has creeped, and if we are all honest – we probably have never seen or managed a project within pre-defined scope.

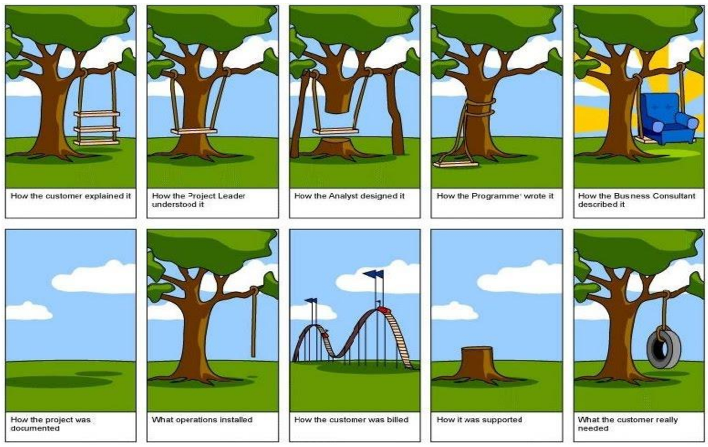
There are numerous project management books about how managing *Cost/Time/Quality* (CTQ) trinity effectively can ensure that project is delivered successfully. But as John Lennon said in the song Beautiful Boy *'life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans'*.



Scope is like **Life**, it can creep or change on the project manager whilst he/she is busy with managing cost, time and quality.
But as we all know that life will happen, we also know that scope change will happen. This why numerous project management books dedicate chapters on rigorous change control mechanism/governance to managing scope. This is akin to the adage of *'treating the symptom rather than the cause'*.

While several factors can cause scope change, many believe that project managers do a poor job of establishing the outcome of a project at the start of their project.

It has been suggested that project managers are more focus on the project planning and deliverables – splitting them into smaller, more manageable components and then, articulating these deliverables/components as scope definition **statement**. Therefore the likely outcome of the project often turns out in accordance to the popular picture below.



Seasoned project management practitioners realise that the key to managing scope is to minimise the need or causation for change in the first instance.

If we all agree that scope can be defined as the agreement of what the goal of a project will deliver once the project is completed. Therefore, by definition – we need a better way of defining the outcome (what the customer really needs) of the project as part of the project documentation.

Using the Critical Success Factor (CSF) to define Project Goal.

One of the more successful technique/method I have come across in managing and minimizing scope change is the use of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) in developing the project scope.

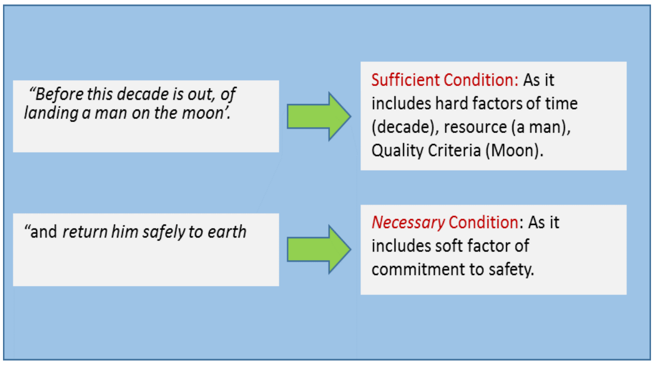
Rather than focusing on deliverables, timeline, resource assignments etc., project management practitioners should focus on the limited number of **conditions**/ factors that the project must achieve for it to be declared a 'success' by all stakeholders.

Oftentimes, project managers focus on the **'sufficient'** conditions required to complete the project objectives, and neglect to understand or document the **'necessary'** conditions of the client.

Sufficient condition can be described as the **'hard'** factors of time, cost, and quality**.** Whilst **necessary** condition can be described as the **'soft'** factors such as; communications, commitment, adoption etc. It is oftentimes the successful completion of the necessary conditions that determine Critical Success Factor (CSF) of the project.

Ensuring that the necessary conditions are captured as part of CSF documentation enables the project manager to minimise/eliminate scope changes.

President Kennedy's famous "**We choose to go to the moon**" speech included one of the most famous CSF goal statement – *"this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth"*



Thus the US moon landing project of July 4th 1969 would have been considered a failure if the astronauts had landed on the moon but were;

a) not returned to earth
b) returned to earth injured or dead

Therefore 'returning him safely to earth' becomes the CSF within the scope documentation and on which metrics can be measured.

- 100% = return of astronauts
- Green = health status of astronauts.

The Project Manager is **responsible** for identifying and agreeing (with the project board) the CSFs to be used on the project during project startup. The CSFs should form the critical part of the scope documentation.

Sample of Scope Definitions – using Critical Success Factors

The examples below show the CFSs that were identified as **'necessary'** conditions, for a big multinational project

1) The project defined within its scope that the project will have been a success if;
   - it is accomplished without compromising the high standards of accuracy needed for all statutory reporting, but without building unnecessary complexity
   - the resulting systems are easy to use, *especially for infrequent users*
   - the training and implementation is effective
   - the transition is smooth
   - good communication is maintained internally and externally
   - the confidence of the Business Sponsor is retained

2) Similarly a project included the following CSF within its scope definition;

   *"In addition to meeting the project objective to time, quality and budget, the project will also need to achieve the following to ensure **success;***

   - The project establishes an organisation, a set of methods and a reliable and robust infrastructure to support the adoption and use of this new way of working.
   - The project maintains visibility with relevant management groups outside of company.

Finally, the impact that scope change has on projects cannot be underestimated, therefore any tool or technique that will help to minimize/eliminate scope change should be embraced by the Project Manager.

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