Project Management: Methods to Madness

Matt Armstrong

Agenda

- A very quick life story

- Where do we start?

- What's my beef?

- How it's really done

- So what?

"They've got to trust me - I'm taking these guys into battle, yeah? And I'm doing my own stapling."

- David Brent

Team Millennial

- ◈ Aircraft Technician (Navy)

- ◈ Maintenance Engineer (John Holland)

- ◈ Project Scheduler (CASG)

- ◈ Project Controls Lead (Leonardo)

- ◈ Project Manager (KBR/CASG)

- ◈ Project Manager (Hanwha)

Einstein's Parable:
God does not play dice

The definition of madness?

    "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results"

                        - Albert Einstein

Yet, arguably, every day we roll the same dice/s and get different results

Why? Because no one ever throws a dice in precisely the same way

Does that make it insane to play dice? If so, it's a very common form of madness!

"Naïveté is doing the same thing over and over, and always expecting the same result."

Project Management: Madness of the Highest Order

Madness is:

- a state of wild or chaotic activity

- the quality or state of being mad, such as:

behaviour or thinking that is very foolish or dangerous; extreme folly.

A **project** is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.

A **method** is a particular procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one

Project Management: it's an art; it's a science; it's a pain – but can it work?

There are lots of methods, trying to pick one could lead to serious ~~blindness~~ madness

Rational Unified Process

Critical Chain PM

Prince2

Spiral

Build-Method

Kanban

Agile

Rapid Application Development

Lean Six Sigma

Scrumban

Adaptive Software Development

Just get it done already

Feature-driven Development

Crystal

Extreme Programming (XP)

Six Sigma

Critical Path Method

Scrum

Waterfall

Eastonian

Event Chain Methodology

Lean Development

Hurry up Waterfall

Dynamic Systems Development Method

There's more to life than being really really ridiculously good at methods..?

There are many parts to this:

- an overwhelming number of methods exist

- picking one or many to deliver is a task in itself

- understanding their implementation is just more task in itself

- convincing dinosaurs that one method is better than

  "it's just the way we do things around here" has its cons

- remaining consistent / down-right-dogged determined is kind of important

- reality bites

It's called Scrum for a reason

Agile/Scrum:

- Developed for projects that need significant speed and flexibility

- Aim is to provide ongoing improvement

- Short delivery cycles ala "sprints"

- Real time communication, less control, self-motivating

- Agile is an "approach," Scrum is a "method" to implement Agile

- Typically, an approach/method to software projects

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

"If you work for a living, why do you kill yourself working?"

PRO

Brings people together

Divides big dreams/goals into something manageable

Enables short and sharp change

CON

Can quickly turn into a science experiment

People…

Doesn't say much for quality

And people…

There's another kind of black belt in town

Six Sigma (Motorola)/Lean Development (Toyota)/Lean Six Sigma

- SS; eliminate waste, improve process and profit

    – data centric

- LD; reduce waste, maximise output, increase share price

- LSS; improve process/efficiency/effectiveness,

    remove waste, reduce defects

"A black belt makes you way too comfortable with disrespecting people and not getting punched in the face for it."

- Mike Tyson

...so... about that black belt?

PRO

Customer centric

Quality is highest priority

Improving process is a very good thing

CON

Very complex, requires a deep understanding of statistics

Things that seem hard to implement are really up against it

Primary focus on quality may lead to shortfalls in other areas

Fresh Prince2 to the rescue

PRINCE2

- "PRojects. IN. Controlled. Environments."

- Emphasis is on organisation and control

- Linear and process based

- Good option for beginners…

- Clearly defined characteristics:

  - Scope/Budget/Schedule/Risk/Quality

Who wants some rescuing??

PRO

There is a clear-ish plan in place

Defined, agreed outcome

Is trusted and reliable as duct tape... and the speed of light

CON

More documentation than anyone can care to recount

Requires heavy senior management oversight

Very rigid

Success is all in the mind

What does Success look like?

- "Success is most often achieved by those who don't know that failure is inevitable."

    - Coco Chanel

- "Success is not final; failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

    - Winston Churchill

Methods/Processes/Techniques are all trying to ensure success… but there is guaranteed to be *failure* along the way

Which means there are no guarantees full-stop, nothing is full-proof

A project stands its best chance of success with thorough planning and implementation of plans

Snowy Mountains Scheme (ala Snowy Hydro)

The largest engineering project undertaken in Australia

Comprises 16 dams, nine power stations, two pumping stations, 225km of tunnels, pipelines and aqueducts

Constructed between 1949 and 1974, more than 100k people employed

This was more than an infrastructure project, it shaped Australian history

Delivered on time and budget

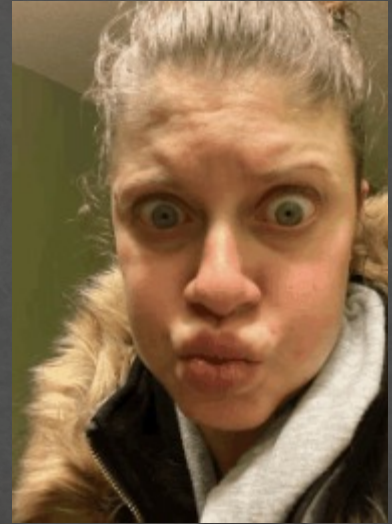Innovation included in its "success"

- Snocom
- Rockbolting

Proof lightning doesn't strike twice? Try Snowy 2.0

Also… "nation building"

Also, behind schedule (3-4 years) and over budget ($10b)

Described as "critical," "a revolution," "a good investment" – currently undergoing a "reset"

Aiming to generate and store enough power equal to powering 3 million homes for a whole week

Florence is an issue, so are sinkholes, so is 27km of tunnels

Planning started in a pub; PM read some books – "progress without foresight"

The answer is simple, and it also isn't ☹

Choosing and implementing a method/s for your project to deliver will not induce psychotic episodes

Projects are big and ugly enough on their own

Like everything, there are factors and variables to your decision:

- Type of product/service/result

- Budget

- Schedule

- Team*

- Ability to take a risk every once in a while

- Flexibility

- Customer/Stakeholders (and their expectations)

It all comes down to you and the people around you

"Leadership is not about being in control, but about empowering others to take control"

    - General John Monash

Too often, it's not the process employed that is to blame for project shortcomings (and nor should it)

Ego, power, micro-control, incompetence, laziness and risk aversion will fly any project into the ground; the process you choose can't save these problems alone

People are the heart of everything

There's no "I" in Team

Time for a little rehash

We've talked about the meaning of madness

We've learnt what causes madness

We've described the myriad of processes to deliver a project (and some shortcoming's)

We might all agree that delivering a project is very hard and complex, so is picking the right process

But a process – arguably – cannot cause one's madness on its own

The road to PM success is paved with some mental torture

People are core to project success and overcoming madness along the way

◈ Methods are great but there's more to project delivery than the method/s employed (alone)

◈ The number of methods that exist are not designed to ensue madness, nor is picking "the right one."

Feedback/Questions

Stay in touch:

matt.armstrong@hanwha-defence.com.au