

Project Management Isn't Enough: Essentials of Effective Sponsorship

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Payson Hall

Consulting Project Manager

Catalysis Group, Inc.

Payson@catalysisgroup.com

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- Catalysis Group, Inc.
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Also brought to you by **REALITY™**

About *Reality*:

- *Reality* is where projects happen
- *Reality* is a messy place where the unexpected is common
- *Reality* is bitter medicine for theoreticians who wish the world was different
- *Reality* is the gold standard against which any proposed process improvement must be judged

**“If something isn’t compatible with *Reality*™
It isn’t worth doing”**

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The 7 - Item Reality Test

Do your organization’s projects **ALWAYS**...

1. Deliver what was promised/desired?
2. Meet or exceed stakeholder expectations?
3. Hit defined schedule targets?
4. Require only the resources budgeted?
5. Meet relevant quality standards?
6. Avoid/overcome all risks & challenges?
7. Earn recognition for the team’s efforts?

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“YES” to all 7 Items?

My suspicion is that you...

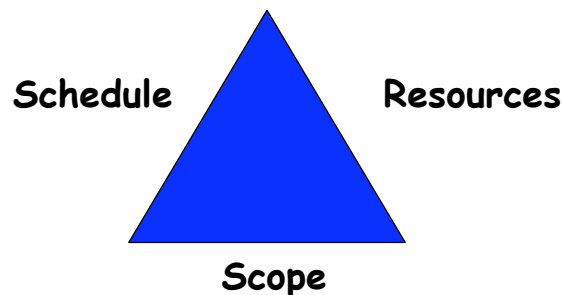
- Weren’t paying attention, or
- Live in a state of denial, or
- Don’t do projects in Reality™

Bottom Line: If your organization’s projects always go well, I don’t have anything to offer you... have a great day!

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What is a “Project”?

A temporary effort undertaken to accomplish a defined goal (scope) within specified resource and schedule constraints



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What is “Project Management”?

“...the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements.”

- PMBOK® Guide, 2004

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Project Management isn't Enough!

Applying Project Management “knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques...” *HELPS* get projects done, but there are no guarantees...

- The initially defined goals of some projects are impractical/impossible
- Projects may become infeasible over time
- New information or changes in context may make meeting project goals a poor choice

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Project Origins

Why Sponsor A Project?

Projects are initiated because someone believes the project is worthwhile. This business decision is usually based on two assumptions:

1. Project can be completed successfully within specified schedule, scope & resource bounds
2. Value of a successful outcome is worth the investment & the risk of failure

What is a “Sponsor”?

Organizational leader(s) responsible for:

- Assigning funds & staff (resources) to projects,
- Setting project schedule goals,
- Identifying project objectives (scope),
- Establishing priorities,
- Reviewing and approving charters and plans,
- Authorizing changes to project constraints, and
- Choosing to continue, cancel, or delay projects

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A Good Sponsor Provides...

- Clear goals
- Resources
- Priorities
- Support
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Guidance
- Timely decisions
- Strategic direction
- Business context
- Changes to context
- Validation
- Recognition
- **ACCESS**

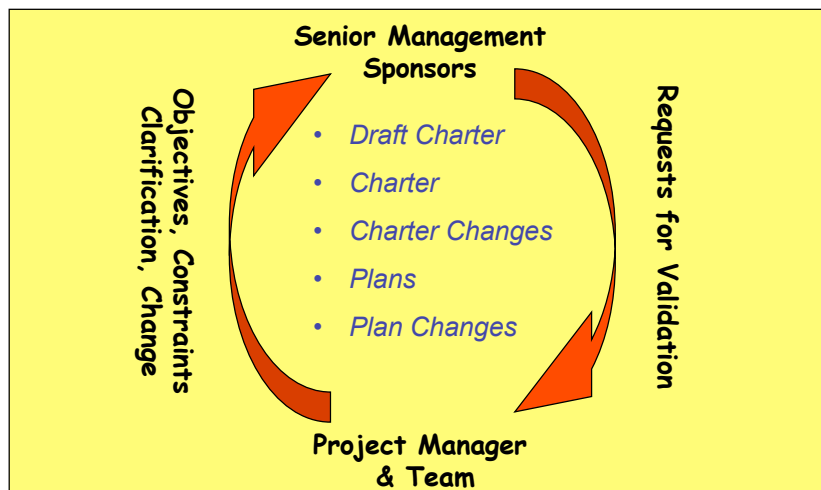
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The Project Manager's Role

- Understand Sponsor's goals/constraints
- Establish project management processes
- Lead the team
- Use Project Management processes to define, monitor, & guide the project
- Provide timely and accurate status to support informed sponsor decisions

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Validation Cycle



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Phases & Guiding Questions...



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Define

Project Manager

Ask Sponsor:

- What do you want?
- When do you want it?
- What resources will you commit to get it?
- What is the expected value of the completed project?
- If I develop concerns, when do you want to know?

Create Charter

Sponsor

Identify & orient PM

- Clarify initial goals, constraints & priorities
- Review & approve charter
- Decide whether to continue

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Plan

PM & Team

Determine:

- Work to be done
- How long it will take
- Resources required
- Overall feasibility

Propose charter changes if needed

Document plans

Sponsor

Refine goals

Determine acceptable risks

Review & approve charter changes

Review & approve plans

Decide whether to continue

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Do & Manage

PM & Team

Do work & Manage

- Monitor performance against plans
- Identify & address causes of variance
- Respond to new info
- Revisit plans as needed
- Escalate as needed

Report status to sponsor

Ask for help if needed

Sponsor

Refine goals

Determine acceptable risks

Provide organizational support

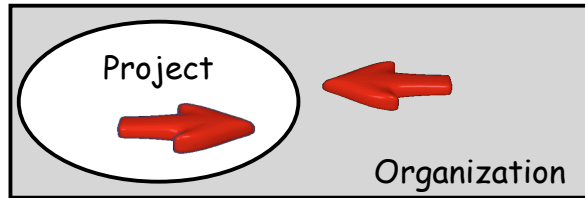
Review & approve charter changes

Review & approve plan changes

Decide whether to continue

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Evolution Triggers



Internal to Project

Updated information about

- Resources
- Schedule
- Scope
- Risks & Issues



External to Project

Changes in business context

- Strategy
- Goals & Priorities
- Resources
- Sensitivity to Risk

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Question Only Sponsors can Answer:

Based on the best information we have today, do you wish to continue?



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Sponsorship Issue Resolution

Issue	Preparation	Action
Slow/No decisions	Discuss sponsor role as decision maker	Communicate impact of delays
Changing constraints or goals	Define change management process	Use process consistently
Discovering invalid assumptions	Document assumptions & review with sponsor	Promptly identify & communicate invalid assumptions
New Sponsor mid-way	Maintain charter, plans & change log	Confirm charter & approach
Multiple Sponsors	Discuss goals & conflict resolution with all sponsors	Revisit charter and conflict resolution process with group

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Closing Thoughts...

- No sponsor = no project
- Sponsors initiate projects because they assume project is feasible and worth the risk (based on limited info)
- Use validation as project progresses and definition, approach, and assumptions are refined
- PM doesn't invent reality - job is to explain it & support informed decisions
- Canceling projects can be good business decisions
- If you shoot the messenger, bad things still happen, people just stop talking about them

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Questions?

Thank you!

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