Effective Project Portfolio Management: End the Multitasking!

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Gather Some Data

• How many of you are multitasking among several projects now?
  • Two projects?
  • Three projects?
  • Four or more?
Raise your hand if you like multitasking among several projects.
What Are You Supposed to Do First?
What’s the Problem?

• Too many simultaneous projects
• Too much interrupting work
• Technical work and multitasking is invisible
Possible Cause

Work/Assignment arrives  → Do "my part" Handoff to next person

Do "my part" Handoff to next person  → Do "my part" Handoff to next person

Do "my part" Handoff to next person  → Finished Feature

There may be more people required to finish

Work as a team to finish the feature. No "my parts"

Work/Assignment arrives  → Finished Feature
## What Some Project Portfolios Look Like

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project1</td>
<td>Project1</td>
<td>Project1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project2</td>
<td>Project2</td>
<td>Project2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project3</td>
<td>Project3</td>
<td>Project3</td>
<td>Project3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project4</td>
<td>Project4</td>
<td>Project4</td>
<td>Project4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project5</td>
<td>Project5</td>
<td>Project5</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## What These Portfolios Are Missing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month/Projects &amp; Rank</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Calendar Integration</td>
<td>Calendar Integration</td>
<td>Calendar Integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Advanced Email</td>
<td>Advanced Email</td>
<td>Advanced Email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Performance Mini-Release</td>
<td>Performance Mini-Release</td>
<td>Performance Mini-Release</td>
<td>Performance Mini-Release</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Missile Exploration</td>
<td>Missile Exploration</td>
<td>Missile Exploration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Advanced Search</td>
<td>Advanced Search</td>
<td>Advanced Search</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Unstaffed Work
- #3: Performance Mini-Release
- #4: Missile Exploration
- #5: Advanced Search
### Low Level View

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>Email, Feature 1</td>
<td>Email, Feature 1</td>
<td>Email, Feature 4</td>
<td>Email, Feature 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terri</td>
<td>Email, Feature 1</td>
<td>Email, Feature 1</td>
<td>Email, Feature 4</td>
<td>Email, Feature 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tristan</td>
<td>Email, Feature 2</td>
<td>Email, Feature 2</td>
<td>Email, Feature 5</td>
<td>Calendar, Feature 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabel</td>
<td>Email, Feature 2</td>
<td>Email, Feature 2</td>
<td>Email, Feature 5</td>
<td>Calendar, Feature 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Calendar, Feature 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inge</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Calendar, Feature 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Email, Feature 4</td>
<td>Email, Feature 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Email, Feature 7</td>
<td>Email, Feature 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 17</td>
<td>Email, Feature 7</td>
<td>Email, Feature 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Email, Feature 3</td>
<td>Email, Feature 3</td>
<td>Email, Feature 6</td>
<td>Email, Feature 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>Email, Feature 3</td>
<td>Email, Feature 3</td>
<td>Email, Feature 6</td>
<td>Email, Feature 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Manager</td>
<td>Mgmt</td>
<td>Mgmt</td>
<td>Mgmt</td>
<td>Mgmt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstaffed Work</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 18</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 18</td>
<td>Payments, Feature 18</td>
<td>Calendar, Features 2, 3, 4, Payments, Feature 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the Project Portfolio?

• The project portfolio implements your organization’s strategy

• The projects and the programs the organization finds valuable for now:
  • Knowing when the work starts and ends
  • Which one is #1
  • Decide when to stop, kill, or cancel projects
Differentiate the Project Portfolio from Product Roadmaps

• The project portfolio implements the organization’s strategy.

• Product roadmaps implement the product’s strategy throughout the product’s life cycle.

  • Guide products through releases

• When a product release is more valuable than other work, the organization decides to fund a project.
So What?

• The portfolio of work-in-progress tells you what is happening and when you can change it

• Requires cross-organizational commitment
Use the Portfolio to Make Decisions, Tradeoffs, and Assignments

• Move between the strategic view to the tactical view
• Create a rolling wave plan
• Provide transparency into the organization’s work
Project Portfolio Flow

List of collected work in rank order

....

Transform and then Commit

Transform

Commit/Kill/Transform Decision

Commit

Kill

Kill or Parking Lot

Commit to a Team
When to Make Decisions

• When some feature or iteration finishes--project cycles
  • Concept of a MMF, Minimum Marketable Feature

• When you have enough information about the next version of a product--planning cycles

• When it's time to allocate budget and people to a new project--business cycles
Another View of the Portfolio

Possible Project Portfolio Kanban with Unstaffed Work, Flow Through the Organization

Unstaffed Projects: Project 1, Project 2, Project 3
One Possible Flow of Projects

Backlog | Ready | Review Stories | Dev & Unit Test | System Test | Final Check | Done!
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
Project 1 | 7 | Project 1, Story 3, Story 2 | Project 1, Story 1 | 2 | 2 | 1
Project 1 | 3 | Project 1, Story 4 | | | | |
Project 2 | 2 | Project 2, Story 2, Story 3 | Project 2, Story 1 | | | |
Project 2 | 1 | Project 2, Story 4 | | | | |
Project 3 | 1 | Project 3, Story 6, Story 5 | Project 3, Story 4 | Project 3, Story 3 | Project 3, Story 2 | Project 3, Story 1
Project 3 | | | | | | |
# Make Pre-Conditions Visible

## Possible Project Flow Through Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project State</th>
<th>Create Backlog</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Pre-work</th>
<th>Project Work</th>
<th>Assess/Validate</th>
<th>Maintain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who does the work</td>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Should we do this project at all?</td>
<td>Any pre-work necessary for commitment</td>
<td>Committed Projects</td>
<td>Final Test and Acceptance (Beta/GA)</td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anyone can have an idea and put it on the backlog</td>
<td>Business and tech decide together</td>
<td>Business creates roadmap, defines success</td>
<td>Feature teams work and show progress</td>
<td>Feature teams work with business</td>
<td>Business and tech decide together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Decide Based on Value

• Should we do this at all?
• Shortest work first
• Cost of delay
• Business value points
• Who has the waste?
• What will we learn?
• Risks
• Comparison approaches
Cost of Delay

Revenue

Time

Maximum sales

Delays take sales from here

End of life

The delay means you receive revenue later and lower sales, often over the entire product life.
Business Value Points

- Not story points. No relation to size
- Way to frame the discussion about value to your organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Business Value Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feature 1</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 2</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 3</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature 4</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature 5</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feature 7</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7649</td>
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</table>
Three Kinds of Projects

• Projects that keep the lights on--that support the organization
• Projects that grow the business
• Projects that create new opportunities
Why Manage the Project Portfolio?

- People only work on one project at a time
  - Project portfolio makes it clear where the time is being allocated—and where the time is not allocated
  - Makes it possible for the organization to optimize at the organization level, not at the person level
    - Staff the most important work
    - Not staff the least important work
100% Utilization is for Machines
It doesn’t matter how many projects you start.

What does matter is how many projects you finish. And when.
Let’s Stay in Touch

• Please link with me on LinkedIn:
  • www.linkedin.com/in/johannarothman

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