

Any organization can foster the organic growth of 10X contributors.

10X Productivity for 10X Performance

OVERVIEW

According to Gartner, IT projects fail 75% of the time! The Standish Group claims that the number is closer to 68%. Whether we're talking 68% or 75%, we can all agree that failure at these levels would be devastating to any organization. Are IT organizations truly this incompetent? Do projects fail more than they succeed? What is causing such abysmal success rates?

Many experts have professed that projects are delayed, reduced in scope, or run over budget largely because of the following:

- ❑ *Bad Requirements*: Lack of clarity jeopardizes the ability to identify the best design or project approach
- ❑ *Inadequate Project Sponsorship*: Insufficient executive support impacts decision making
- ❑ *Weak Project Management*: Mismanaged project dependencies delay the critical path

While it seems to be an easy fix to improve requirements gathering, foster better sponsorship, or encourage stronger project managers, there are fundamental people, processes, and technologies that facilitated these shortcomings. Fixing the effects rarely resolves the foundational problems.

In fact, in spite of bad requirements, inadequate sponsorship, and weak management, there are some people that consistently deliver better results than others. As these certain individuals internally possess the knowledge, clarity of vision, and commitment to deliver, they are able to achieve progress at a rate 10 times that of their team members. We call these, 10X contributors.

ALIGN PEOPLE WITH PROCESS

According to numerous studies, people, process, and technology equally account for the factors that determine an organization's ability to deliver. Between management, training, and alignment of people within your processes, every organization has numerous opportunities to dictate their success. It is one thing to define a methodology as rules of the road and leave it to the PMO to manage. It is another thing to commit the organization to an approach that influences hiring decisions, encourages the development of people, and shapes the

alignment of teams to maximize success.

With 75% of projects failing, management needs to recognize the difference between definition of process and commitment to it.

While many organizations have adopted AGILE methods in an effort to capitalize on the promised low overhead, high flexibility, and increased customer satisfaction, many are doing so without clarity of vision, commitment to the approach, or knowledge of the pitfalls that lie ahead. Besides following the short iteration cycles, how many of the AGILE principles are truly employed?

- Assign cross-functional project teams
- Collocate project work areas
- Emphasize high-bandwidth communication
- Involve the customer in every step of the process

For the same reasons why AGILE might not be working for you, most team members are not able to live up to 10X Productivity. Those that succeed are those that have a commitment to the people, process, and technology involved. 10X contributors understand the customer's objective, have a foundation of knowledge within the technology, and have a vision of how to work within the process to move the project forward.

AVOID PRODUCTIVITY TRAPS

If you can't find the time to do it right, where are you going to find the time to do it over?

The pressure to deliver quickly grows with each new technological advancement, customer demand, or change in the competitive landscape. As a result, the demand for 10X Productivity increases with each step forward.

Aligning ideal resources with ideal roles on ideal projects is a scarce reality; however, here are a few productivity pitfalls to avoid.

1. *Risk Management:* Any project can miss dates, overrun budgets, or deliver short of expectations. Plan early, review often. Never abandon planning under pressure.
2. *Schedule over Quality:* Peer reviews, testing, and stage gates are best practices for a reason. Don't let short-term schedule commitments

dictate project delivery.

3. *Lack of Prioritization:* At the end of the day, projects get delivered by focus and attention to detail. Encouraging developers to work on multiple tasks is weak management by refusing to set clear priorities.
4. *Forced Productivity:* There is an understandable rhythm to any project. Consider team interaction and personal productivity influences as input to the project delivery schedule.
5. *Don't Ride the Same Horses:* Within every organization, there are the same select few individuals assigned to nearly every high visibility project. You need to develop more 10X contributors to spread the workload.

Project excellence is defined by the ability to deliver on-time, on-budget, and with quality. Sacrificing any one of them jeopardizes it all.

CONCLUSION

10X contributors have the knowledge of the process, understand the people involved, and can work within the technology at hand to deliver astounding results in a rather short period of time. These individuals understand the INs and OUTs of project dependencies. They understand the organization and how to work within the constraints of the environment to consistently achieve results. 10X contributors are the heroes of the organizations that deliver time after time.

Sadly, most organizations rely on the productivity of a few to make up for the rest. It is the same 10X contributors that are expected to make the leaps and bounds of advancement come into reality.

Luckily, there are foundational practices that can be employed to foster better overall productivity. Through careful planning, a commitment to align people and process, and proper training, any organization can foster the organic growth of 10X contributors.

ABOUT STRATEGIS

Founded in 2006, Strategis Consulting is a boutique technology consulting firm specializing in building strategic information solutions. Our range of services include advanced analytics, business process management, data warehousing, portals, reporting, workflows, mobile apps, integration, custom solutions, and training.