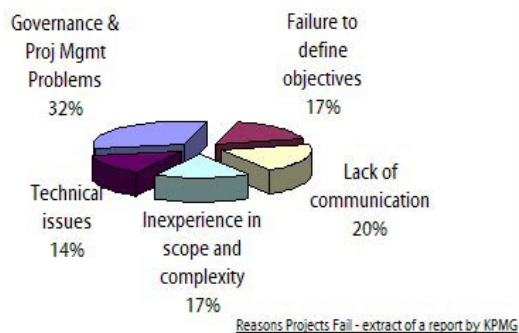


An **EndState** article by Iain Begg

When the Sponsor remains fully engaged and works closely with the Project Manager you will maximize your chances of success.

At **EndState** we employ a number of mantras to illustrate to clients the causes of project failure. One of these mantras is "projects don't fail in the end, they fail in the beginning." In this article we examine one of the fundamentals of project governance and the role of the Sponsor as a common root cause of failure.

The following chart shows that Project Governance is the most common reason IT projects fail.



So how do you set up a project for success? And when appointed as a Project Sponsor does this automatically mean you have the skills necessary to sponsor a project? In this White Paper **EndState** offer three tips on setting the project up for success.

For more on project sponsorship check out our training course for Project Sponsors on our website www.uk.endstate.com/project-sponsor.htm.

1. Goal Setting

If you were to ask the Project Manager and the Project Sponsor what are the goals of the project, nine times out of ten you will get a different answer. Why is this? It could be a lack of communication. It could be that each has made assumptions. Or it may be that as time has moved on, the needs of the business have moved on and so the Sponsor's needs have changed.

Together the Project Sponsor & Project Manager should prepare a Mission statement that encapsulates the project goals and success criteria.

Good goal setting means knowing what your responsibilities are and what you will be held accountable for. This clarity brings focus and with it, results.

Then as the project progresses the Project Sponsor & Project Manager should periodically re-read the project goals and if the business needs have moved on then the project goals can be adjusted.

2. Give Airtime to the Project Manager

The responsibility of the Project Sponsor includes articulating the high level scope (i.e. goals & success factors), approving the proposed solution, securing financial and human resources, making prioritisation decisions and ex-

Key Observations:

- GOALS—GIVE CLEAR GOALS AND DEFINE THE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS
- GOVERNANCE—ENSURE PROPER GOVERNANCE BY EMPOWERED DECISION-MAKERS
- AIR-TIME—GIVE SUFFICIENT AIRTIME TO THE PROJECT MANAGER AND USE THE SPONSOR'S POSITION POWER TO REMOVE ROADBLOCKS TO PROGRESS

EndState Differentiators:

- WE HELP OUR CLIENTS REDUCE THEIR HIDDEN COSTS OF RECRUITMENT
- WE GIVE YOU MANAGEMENT CONSULTING BRAND VALUES IN A RECRUITMENT COMPANY SETTING
- WE HAVE PERSONALLY BUILT TEAMS TO DELIVER SUCCESS; WE UNDERSTAND YOUR CHALLENGES
- OUR AFTER-CARE SERVICE FOR CLIENTS & CANDIDATES ALIKE HELPS BUILD LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS
- WE ALIGN OUR BRAND VALUES WITH YOUR VISION, ENABLING YOU TO ATTRACT & RETAIN TALENT

SPONSORSHIP IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT!"

erting their position power to facilitate resolution of issues & risks. This can only be achieved if sufficient airtime is given to the Project Manager and this is even more important when dealing with Project Managers who are new to the role and hence may not have the training or experience.

An experienced and hard-nosed Project Manager would be expected to provide delivery focused plans, report progress against those plans, identify solutions to issues, mitigation for risks and prioritise to meet deadlines. Yet even they need the position power and authority of the Project Sponsor to rubber stamp the recommendations and lobby for support.

Without sufficient airtime the Project Manager and Project Sponsor are likely to make assumptions. This represents a significant risk to the project which is often overlooked.

3. Getting the Governance Right

Do you know who the real Stakeholders are for your project? The following diagram is a reminder of how to categorise all individuals who are interested in the project (including those outside the organisation).

Affected Parties are the subset of Interested Parties who are affected in some way by the project (e.g. they may need to accept a feed from the new system).

Stakeholders are the subset of Affected Parties who have something to gain if the project succeeds and something to lose if the project fails.

Stakeholders are incentivised to see the project succeed and will move heaven & earth to make it so. But not all Stakeholders can commit to attend steering

committee meetings so a small subset of Stakeholders should be elected as decision-makers who will form the Steering Committee (or Project Board).

The Project Sponsor is one of the Stakeholders and must attend the Steering Committee .

Be aware that whilst Affected Parties might have something to gain from the project, unless they will feel the pain of failure they may not be incentivised to prevent it. For example I once had an Affected Party who would subtly throw a spanner in the works at the Steering Group meeting to cause delay because delaying this project was beneficial to one of their other projects. So it helps to think about the political risks of non-stakeholders participating in a Steering Group.

For more on governance of projects ask for a copy of our white paper on Steering Committees.

The **EndState** Launch Toolkit will help you initiate for success, monitor to keep things on track or help you repair the damage on a failing Portfolio, Programme or Project.

Find out more about **EndState** at **www.endstate.uk.com**.

"IDENTIFYING ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, AFFECTED PARTIES & STAKEHOLDERS HELPS CONSTRUCT THE GOVERNANCE MODEL AND THE SAME INFORMATION IS NEEDED FOR THE PROJECT'S COMMUNICATION PLAN."