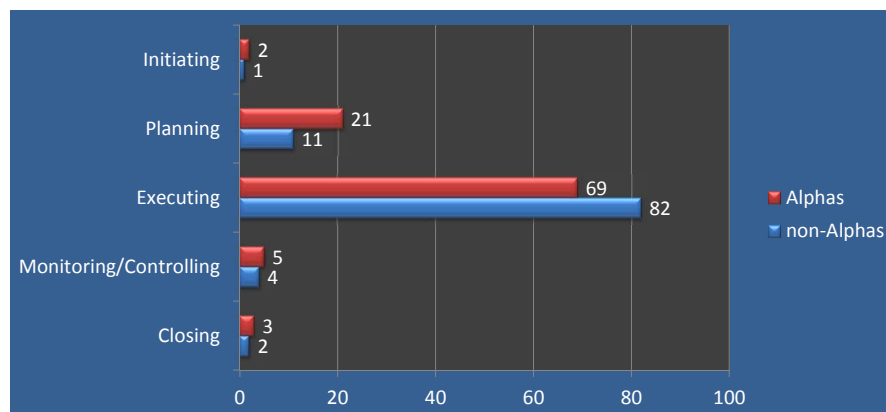


IST 302 : Alpha Project Managers

Schwalbe included this graph derived from Andy Crowe's, "The Alpha Study".

Relative time spent per process group for "Alpha" and "non-Alpha" project managers.



This lecture is in response to the question, “What is an Alpha?”

Alpha’s are the **best** project managers.

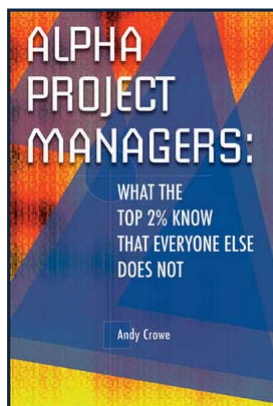
What does “**best**” mean?

“**Best**” means top **2%**.

What does top **2%** mean?

This is what we want to discuss?

The “Alpha Study” was describe in a book by Andy Crowe.



Alpha Project Managers: What the top 2% know that everyone else does not

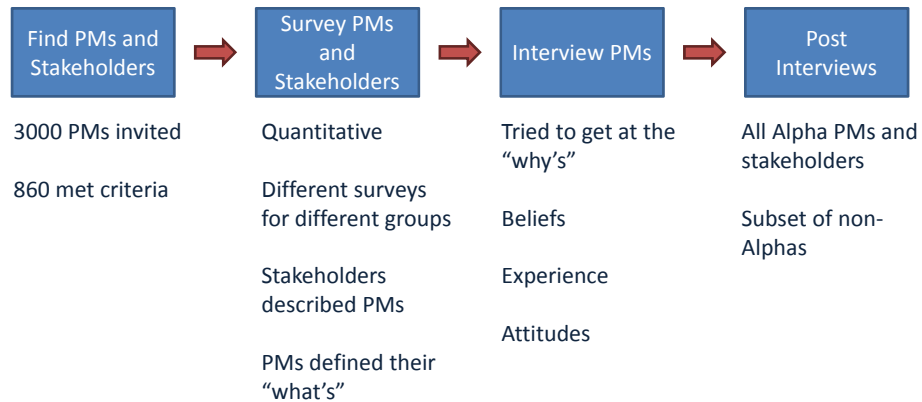
Andy Crowe

Andy Crowe, 2006/2008

ISBN: 0-9729673-3-8

All data and observations in this presentation are taken or derived from this book's content. It is an easy and quick read. You should take the time to read it and form your own thoughts.

The Alpha Study had four phases.



FIND: Project managers had to meet eight criteria to participate.

Currently managing a project	Supervisor participation
Managed 7500 hrs in last 5 yrs	3 team members w/500h over past year participate
1 project in 12m with \$75K+	Customer from last 3 yrs participate
Past 3 yrs at same organization	PMs and stakeholders complete phases 2 and 3

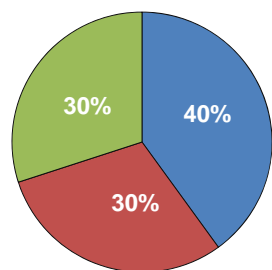
SURVEY: The stakeholders evaluated the PMs in 10 dimensions on scale from 1 to 100.

Rate the project manager's overall performance at ...

Setting expectations	Meeting scope, quality, time, budget
Communicating effectively/ efficiently	Managing procurement process/vendors
Managing issues	Managing change
Managing risk	Balancing objectives to deliver optimal solution
Leadership	Delivering a product/service/result to expectations

A weighted average was computed and the results tallied.

Stakeholder Weighting



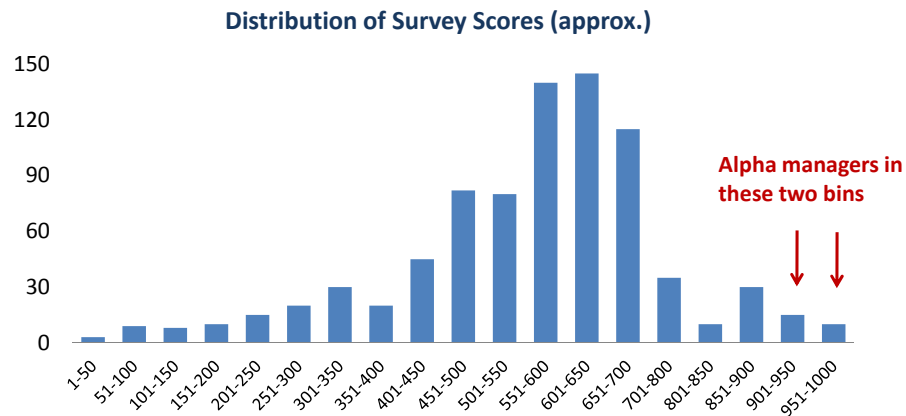
■ Customers ■ Sr. Mgmt
■ Team Mbrs

Candidate Alphas were to 2%

Stakeholders contacted to check accuracy of responses

Alphas were selected after recalibration

The distribution of the results were normal.



Project manager survey differed from the stakeholder survey.

- Focused on what they did and why they did it
- Did not focus on whether or not they thought they were an Alpha
- Results from both PMs and stakeholders are discussed

Attitude and Belief

Alpha

Enjoy their job more

View project management as career

Believe they have adequate responsibility and authority

Have strong sense the project management is important to their current project

Non-Alpha

Enjoy their job less

Don't view project management as career as much

Believe they don't have adequate authority

View project management as less important to the project

Supervisors believe the PMs have adequate

Supervisor views reflect PMs views.

Focus and Prioritization

Alpha

24% carry wireless email devices

Reply to fewer emails quickly

Spend ~7 hours in meetings per week

Non-Alpha

36% carry wireless email devices

Very responsive to emails

Spend ~9 hours in meetings per week

Rank the managers overall responsiveness to project related request:

Stakeholders of Alphas : 88

Stakeholders of Non-Alphas : 49

Communication

Alpha

Felt they were highly effective

Tailored communication and cared about presentation

Consistent, timely feedback

Non-Alpha

Felt they were highly effective

Less attention to presentation and tailoring

Sporadic and inconsistent feedback

Rank the managers overall communication effectiveness:

Stakeholders of Alphas : 80

Stakeholders of Non-Alphas : 49

Approach

Alpha

Believed planning is essential

Generally prefer "pure" project management role

Believe domain expertise as almost essential

Non-Alpha

Believed planning is essential

Generally prefer "pure" project management role

View domain expertise as less moderately important

Recall non-Alphas spent less time

Supervisors preferred "Hands-on" managers

Issue Management

Alpha

Worked to keep non-issues to remain non-issues

Issue logs remain under control and handled by established process

Prioritized issues well

Viewed issue management as essential

Communicated issues correctly to stakeholders

Non-Alpha

More often identified non-issues as issues

Issue logs grow towards unmanageable (issue log became an issue)

Didn't have a process / prioritization scheme

Didn't see issue management as important as traditional issues

Hid issues from stakeholders to avoid backlash

Leadership

- Supervisors viewed lack of leadership on the part of the PM as a primary cause of project failure
 - 75% vs. 25%
- Supervisor view of PMs leadership
 - Alpha : 91
 - Non-Alpha : 60