* In a technology environment, only a few projects can be considered truly successful, and failures are not uncommon, the disasters in these projects of the Hall of Shame are not isolated incidents, they actually are a part of modern project management landscape. This research aims to learn as much as possible from each mistake in the projects of the past. In the Hall of Shame it describes what went wrong with the nine projects, and it suggests that the defect detection, quality assurance, planning and testing, communication and collaboration must be moved up the agenda.
* Among the nine failed cases, I resonate most with the failure of Airbus A380 – the wonder of the world’s largest passenger airliner. On February 14, 2019, Airbus announced A380 has been cancelled, with production ending in 2021 – the dream is over. I am extremely curious about the specific pain points that prevent Airbus A380 from maximizing their businesses and lasting its glory in aviation industry. As stated in the research, over budget, poor planning, bad business strategies, zero collaboration are some essential reasons why Airbus A380 is in the Hall of Shame. Often, when a project gets into trouble it is the result of the interaction of many poorly made decisions, and Airbus A380 is one such project.

The development of Airbus A380 was a collaboration between 16 sites of 4 different countries. As known, it is not easy to merge disparate entities into a whole because of their different origins, corporate cultures, management styles, IT systems, etc. One typical example is as the given research paper points out, different design groups used different versions of CAD software to create engineering drawings. The communication gaps between them caused the major delay and poor quality. Moreover, key issues such as the lack of integration project management, the monumental costs, the poor configuration management and difficult communication were ignored in the early stage of the project lifecycle, then failure to address these issues resulted a project management crisis. Besides, the senior management team of Airbus A380 misjudged the future demand of civil aircrafts market. Most of the orders of A380 were from Emirates and Singapore. However, Emirates’ need for A380 was steadily fading. Another factor that caused misjudgment was the drop of oil price, which caused a weak demand for low fuel consumption aircrafts such as A380. The inadequate risk factors management and the lack of visionary leadership also contributed to the project failure.

From the story of Airbus A380 one could learn the importance of establishing and insisting on appropriate controls over the underestimation of complexity, the deficient collaboration and risk management across all project sectors, especially for managing those complex global collaborative projects.

* As far as I am concerned, the first important finding of this case study is: you never know what will stand in the way. In project management it is hard to predict uncertainties. Uncertainties cause different forms of project delays and failures, challenge the budgets, and change the outcomes of projects. Like in case #3 and case #5, the complexity of projects caused delay after delay; in case #7 the consumers rejected product upgrades; in case #9 the ad hoc and unplanned work was not managed properly. The case study suggests the need to manage expectations, to establish a better risk management process, and to establish buffer time and back-up plans.

Secondly, we can see a common issue exists in almost all projects: the gaps in communication. In case #1 the east and west of Rome can’t break communication wall; in case #5 the Airbus A380 lacks global collaboration; in case #6 the creators of Pontiac Aztek didn’t communicate enough with users and stakeholders. It is essential to enhance communications between executive management, project managers, team members, and the users and stakeholders.

Thirdly, all tiers of the project teams should access to the right level of information to gain visibility. In case #2 the built team missed market research; in case #4 the project leaders didn’t gain clear visibility into how each misstep can affect the destination. Solutions include publishing projects to a visible location, providing a project and task communication platform, etc.

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