Unit2 : Why Projects Fail

Formative Activity	Review and respond to the [discussion in unit 1](#).

This task responds to the post by Doug Millward (below)

Causes of Project Failure: Initial Post

by [Doug Millward](#) - Tuesday, 13 May 2025, 1:06 PM

Number of replies: 2

From my personal experience, I believe projects fail for three main reasons: communication, expertise and resource management.

From a communications perspective, Swart et al (2022) discuss the communication challenges in a modern digital project team which may be scattered across the world. These challenges include both language and cultural differences which can lead to difficulties in collaboration, understanding and delivery.

Elmholdt et al (2025) discuss a case of how clients evaluate the expertise of management consultants, however in many cases due to the effects of cognitive bias the expertise of a supplier is accepted until something happens that proves that such expertise is in doubt. There needs to be more of a "challenge everything" culture in small enterprises as well.

Finally, resource management challenges can lead to several issues within a project. It can be exhibited as scope creep, cost overruns, missed deadlines amongst several others. Currently, various research projects (such as Pal et al (2023)) are investigating the use of AI-powered tools to help improve resource management and forecasting.

Finally, can I encourage ALL students to contribute to the forums and to attempt the formative exercises. Not only do they count towards the e-portfolio (which counts for 40% of the overall marks) but they also help your learning!

Causes of Project Failure: Response

Hi Doug

Thank you for sharing your insight to the reasons for project failure. I have been reflecting on the parallels of project failure in the IT domain compared to other context, and particularly in my own professional experience of large complex educational institutions. I agree that all of the issues you have highlighted could be applied to projects more broadly and are not simply limited to the software, or hardware project management. While of course, technical expertise and resource management look and feel specific in terms of computing projects, the same can be true for any objective or goal driven project.

For example, the principals you discuss: communication, resource allocation and a productive challenge to external consultants could apply across a range of industries or projects. For example, in my own professional work, I have been supporting school improvement and working with some DfE partners. The recent guidance for delivering short term (2 year) improvement projects specifically reference the need or excellent communication, resource management and sharing expertise.

In my opinion, this illustrates the importance of not project management, not just in terms of software engineering, but in almost any setting where teams are working together to deliver a shared goal.

References

DfE (2025), 'Targeted Programme Guidance'. London: Department for Education

Wagan, Shah Mehmood, Sidra, Sidra, & Wagan, Atif Ali. (2025). The Impact of Leadership and Rewards on Project Management Success, Mediated by Employee Perception and Team Cohesion. *Journal of Construction Project Management and Innovation*, *15*(1), 23-38. https://doi.org/10.36615/jcpmi.v15i1.3299