

Detailed Outline

Introduction

- Looking at problems in the right way makes them easier to solve.
 - In this book I'll show you
 - Some helpful ways of looking at project management that makes the problem much easier.
 - Some unhelpful ways of looking at projects that should be avoided.
 - Practical steps that you can take to give your projects the best chance of success.
- Why now?
 - We've always needed this since the start of software
 - Now software is eating everything
 - Companies that can get the software they need rule the world
- Why me?
 - Boring answer
 - Involved in digital 30 years
 - Managing projects 25 years
 - Delivering using Agile since 2010
 - Non-Boring answer
 - I understand it isn't just about following the right methodology
 - Understand project management is irrational, emotional, stressful
 - Want to make projects, less emotional, less stressful and more effective?
 - I have the answer
- Why you?
 - Do you work on software development projects?
 - Do you need software for your organisation?
 - Are you human?

Part 1 – Helpful ways of looking at projects

Chapter 1 – Projects happen between two value streams

- Existing products have a mature complete value stream
- Non-existing products have two value streams
 - The idea (dream) value stream
 - The real (unfinished) value stream
- The contradiction
 - Starting to build the real value stream undermines / attacks the “dream” value stream
 - There are three solutions to this contradiction
 - Side with the dream
 - Side with reality

- Negotiate

Chapter 2 – Projects are a complex space like a swamp

- The space where we're trying to build a new value stream is complex, like a swamp.
 - Existing structures
 - Natural resources
 - Scarcity of resources
 - Residents
 - Potential residents
 - Owners
 - Property developers
 - Governors and regulators
 - Environmental campaigners
 - Law, religion, superstition
- It's a really good idea to learn about the swamp
 - User research
 - "Probe" the swamp with working software
 - Develop the best relationships you can with stakeholders

Chapter 3 – Software wants to escape

- The ultimate goal of the project is to connect with its users
- In many projects there are barriers to this
- Releasing software to live undermines the value of the idea
- But you need to do it anyway
 - Just getting software nearer live is informative
 - But there's another reason – pull
 - Connecting with users changes the dynamic of the project
- How to plan an escape

Chapter 4 – Never avoid the pirate ship

- In improvisation there is an idea called "agreed activity"
 - Makes improvisation boring
 - Makes projects unlikely to succeed
- We need to deal with whatever is on the horizon
 - Dealing with the obvious ship on the horizon moves the story forward in improvisation
 - Dealing with the obvious ship on the horizon moves the project forward in project management
- But there's a complication
 - Few people want to hear bad news
 - Pointing out the pirate ship can get you silenced, or fired

- Conclusion / sophistication
 - What you see is all there is
 - You need to change people's thinking by changing what they see

Chapter 5 – Empirical process is like driving a car

- In this book we advocate empirical process
- There are three pillars to an empirical process
 - Transparency
 - Inspection
 - Adaptation
- Think of it like driving a car
 - You need to be able to see out of the wind screen (transparency)
 - You need to look through the wind screen (inspection)
 - You need to change what you do because of what you see (adaptation)
- Everything you to manage a project should be
 - Increasing transparency
 - Facilitating inspection
 - Changing (adaptation) what you do in light of what you see

Chapter 6 – Everything is a bet

- All projects are risky
- Orgs take the risks because they want the reward
- But most people don't want to look like gamblers
- So “project management theatre”
 - Carefully follow a methodology
 - Plans showing the project can be delivered
 - Optimistic outlook and “groupthink”
- But if you're the project manager
 - Understand the project is a bet
 - Do what you can to de-risk the project
 - Take it easy on yourself when things go wrong

Part 2 – Unhelpful ways of looking at projects

Chapter 7 – Keeping a promise

- Why are we tempted to see projects are promises?
- Commitment and consistency is a powerful driver of human beings
- But everybody knows this!
- Typical project management agreement
 - Set of high-level project requirements
 - For a particular time
 - For a particular cost

- Looks like a commitment but...
 - All projects are bets
 - Everybody secretly knows this
- Seeing things in terms of commitment interferes with healthy working of the project
 - Heroics
 - Rushed work and bad work
 - Big, nasty surprises
- If we understand how commitment and consistency works we can
 - Remain comfortable in a state of tension
 - Discover value
 - Connect to pull
 - Get the right kind of commitment from senior stakeholders

Chapter 8 – Just a simple matter of...

- Why are people tempted to see complex, risky projects as being simple?
- What's the problem with treating work as simple
- What can you do about it?
 - Call out the problems when they arise
 - Publicise the trade-offs and contradictions
 - "Televisé" the complexity

Chapter 9 – Faster

- Why are people tempted to want to go faster?
- Why simply going faster isn't necessarily a great idea
- What can you do about it?
 - Show *actual* progress
 - Discourage
 - Corner cutting
 - Heroics
 - "Burning man"
 - Understand what the team really are capable of

Chapter 10 – All

- People are tempted to want everything
- Why are people tempted to want everything
- What's wrong with wanting everything
- What can you do about it?
 - Welcome deadlines
 - Wherever you can connect with users to understand priorities
 - Deliver working software

Part 3 – Practical Suggestions

Chapter 11 – Fried Egg Agile

- This is the way I fry an egg
 - You might do it differently
 - That's OK
 - Obsessing over detail of practice is an “agreed activity”
- My fried egg
 - Meetings
 - Settings / parameters
 - Original idea of Agile has been shown to be a success
 - Lots of variations
 - Variations are different settings for the parameters
 - Remember, it's a lightweight methodology

Chapter 12 – Tips from Negotiation

- Create artefacts
- Understand the basics
 - Lead time
 - Current constraint
- Side by side rather than face to face
 - What should we do about these things
- Explore the value landscape

Chapter 13 – Advice for senior stakeholders

- The streams
- Escape
- The swamp
- The Pirate Ship
- The Bet
- Commitment
- Fast
- All
- Rule the world

Chapter 14 – Conclusion

- Tension is built into the way that projects originate
- Projects are complex
 - Pretending they aren't is a really bad idea
- When we're in a project we can't relieve that tension completely
 - Looking at things in the right way helps manage the tension
 - Avoiding seeing things in the wrong way helps avoid disaster
- Hope

- There are other ways of looking at projects
- If you look at projects in these ways you can get more success
- Joy
 - If you and your team get it right, sometimes it sings
 - You deliver something of genuine value for you and your organisation
 - Arthur C Clarke “Sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”
 - When things go right
 - You’ve delivered some magic