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by Lauren Pechey - Monday, 15 December 2025, 12:04 PM

Question 1: Three Most Common Reasons for Project Failure

1. Inadequate Planning and Requirements Definition

According to Agrawal et al. (2024), one of the primary causes of software project failure is poor planning and unclear requirements. When project objectives, scope, and deliverables are not well defined, teams face unrealistic timelines, scope creep, and misaligned stakeholder expectations. These issues compromise cost control, schedule management, and quality assurance, often leading to partial or failed delivery (Nizam, 2022).

2. Ineffective Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
Another frequent reason for failure is poor communication and lack of stakeholder involvement. Miscommunication among project teams or with stakeholders can result in misunderstandings, missed deadlines, and conflicting priorities. Projects that fail to actively engage stakeholders may overlook essential user needs or fail to adapt to evolving requirements, reducing adoption and overall success (Scheibner et al., 2021).

3. Insufficient Risk Management and Testing
The third major cause is inadequate risk management and testing. Projects often underestimate technical, operational, or financial risks or fail to allocate sufficient resources to mitigate them. Without rigorous testing and contingency planning, software releases are vulnerable to operational failures, cost overruns, and reputational damage (Agrawal et al., 2024).

Question 2: Examples Supporting These Causes

Example 1: NHS National Programme for IT (NPfIT) – *Planning and Stakeholder Failures*
The NPfIT aimed to implement electronic patient records across the NHS but was dismantled after billions of pounds were spent and only a fraction of systems delivered. The failure resulted from poor planning, underestimated training needs, and limited clinician engagement, directly reflecting both inadequate requirements definition and weak stakeholder communication (Verner & Sarwar, 2021).

Example 2: RBS Computer System Failure (2012) – *Risk Management and Testing Failure*
In June 2012, a corrupted software update to RBS's CA-7 batch processing system caused widespread disruption for millions of customers. Insufficient testing, weak risk controls, and poor release management were the main causes, illustrating the consequences of inadequate risk management and failure to implement robust testing procedures (Sallai & Pepper, 2025).

References:

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