Project Failures

Please read the Agrawal et al. (2024) paper and then answer the following questions.

Question 1

What do you believe are the three most common reasons for project failure?

Poor Communication

Ineffective communication between stakeholders, users and internal teams is a fundamental cause of project failure. It leads to unclear requirements, misaligned expectations and delayed recognition of problems. Agrawal, Walia and Anu (2024) identify weak stakeholder engagement and lack of top management commitment, both of which stem from breakdowns in communication.

Scope Creep

The uncontrolled expansion of project objectives without proper evaluation of time, cost or risk, introduces instability and inefficiency. According to Agrawal, Walia and Anu (2024) scope creep is linked to poor project selection, weak alignment with organisational strategy and the absence of defined performance measures.

Insufficient Technical Expertise

Teams that lack the necessary technical competencies struggle to implement effective, reliable solutions. Agrawal, Walia and Anu (2024) highlight this as a recurring issue, citing inadequate training and underdeveloped technical capabilities as major contributors to failure.

Question 2

Provide two examples of project failures that support your choices.

The Day Before (2023) Fntastic

This project failed primarily due to communication failures and unrestrained scope changes. Marketed as a multiplayer MMO survival game, the final release lacked core features and instead resembled a limited shooter. The shift in the game's design was not communicated clearly to the public or even within the development team. Features shown in promotional material were significantly scaled back or omitted, demonstrating a clear case of scope creep. The game was withdrawn from sale within one week of release and the development studio closed shortly afterwards (Harrold, 2023).

Bowman Radio System UK Ministry of Defence

Intended to replace the outdated Clansman system, the Bowman project encountered repeated delays and significant cost escalation due to uncontrolled scope expansion. Additional technical requirements, integration demands and expanded operational expectations were introduced during the project without change management. This resulted in delivery well behind schedule, at a much higher cost than initially planned and with persistent performance issues. The system was widely criticised for being unreliable and overly complex (National Audit Office, 2006).

References

Agrawal, T., Walia, G.S. and Anu, V.K. (2024) *Development of a software design error taxonomy: a systematic literature review*. SN Computer Science, 5(467). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-024-02797-2 (Accessed: 30 April 2025).

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National Audit Office (2006) *Delivering digital tactical communications through the Bowman CIP programme*. London, UK: The Stationery Office. Available at: https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20170207052351/https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2006/07/05061050.pdf (Accessed: 30 April 2025).