

Common Software Project Management Mistakes

Project Management Issues

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Very few projects go as planned, however, projects that fail often follow a pattern. Normally projects fail due to issues with:

1. **Personnel** - These issues range from wrong skill sets to bad work environments.
See prior newsletter: [Common Software Project Management Mistakes - Personnel Issues](#)
2. **Project Management** - These issues relate to improper processes and techniques for managing projects.
3. **Application** - These are issues with the application itself.
4. **Technology** - These are issues with the technology chosen for the application.

In this newsletter, we will focus on **Project Management** issues, we will cover the other issues in subsequent newsletters. Below are the common project management mistakes relating to **Project Management**:

1. **Formalize Requirements Gathering** - Too often, requirements are scribbled on a napkin -or- communicated via phone calls. The best approach to requirements gathering is to hold Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions. JAD sessions are a set of intense meetings held off-site where executives, developers, and end-users define the exact requirements needed by a software solution. By holding JAD sessions, your team can more quickly define requirements, get executive buy-in, eliminate irrelevant requirements and reduce political jockeying between team members.
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2. **Lack of Design** - Before projects can be estimated, they must be designed. Many teams by pass this step, estimating the efforts without detailed knowledge of what is needed to deliver each requirement.
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3. **Poor Estimating** - Another common mistake is to poorly estimate projects. This is done by inexperienced project managers that do not account for all tasks that need to be done or by project managers that succumb to management pressures to get the project timeline to fit a predetermined estimate.
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4. **Lack of Change Control** - Change control is the process of managing changes as to ensure that decisions are not made hastily and that the decision to add an additional feature is in the best interest of the project. If change control is missing from a project, new features will be introduced at random, jeopardizing the delivery date and quality of the software being developed.
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5. **Lack of Risk Management** - The key to managing risks is to build contingency plans for risk and to build enough time into your project schedule to mitigate risks that you do not know about.
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6. **Poor Project Communication** - Studies have shown that software teams that consistently deliver on-time and on-budget communicate in an effective manner. These teams stay in contact constantly, but wisely use each other's time during the communication process and are careful not to waste other people's time.
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Helpful Templates

Below are some helpful templates to aid you in developing software solutions on-time and on-budget:

- **Project Management Guidelines** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/ProjectMgtGuidelines.rtf>
- **Functional Specifications** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/FunctionalSpec.rtf>
- **Architectural Overview** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/ArchitectureOverview.rtf>
- **Detailed Design** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/DetailedDesign.rtf>

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- **Strategic Planning Document** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/StrategicPlanning.rtf>
- **Test Design** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/TestDesign.rtf>
- **Risk Assessment** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/Risk%20Assessment.rtf>
- **Weekly Status** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/WeeklyStatusRpt.rtf>
- **User Acceptance Test Release Report** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/UATRelease.rtf>
- **Post Mortem Report** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Pragmatic/Templates/PostMortem.rtf>
- **All Templates** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Templates.htm>
- **Prior Newsletters** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Newsletters.htm>
- **Software Planner** - <http://www.SoftwarePlanner.com>
- **Defect Tracker** - <http://www.DefectTracker.com>
- **Remotous (Remote Desktop Sharing)** - <http://www.PragmaticSW.com/Remotous.asp>

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