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IT Project Delivery

On Time, On Budget? Not Enough!

Historically, the success of an IT project has been based in whole or in part on the premise of delivering a product or service "on time and within budget". While we all understand these are important measurements, there is a paradigm shift occurring towards an extended set of success criteria for IT projects. These new criteria go beyond the traditional and often myopic IT view of the corporate business, demonstrated by the limited understanding of Business User job demands, and lack of regard for job stressors and job performance enablers. This is nothing new if the role of IT is to provide the infrastructure, platforms and services needed for Business Users to execute their jobs as efficiently as possible in order to drive company value. But, in today's environment, where more and more IT projects need to be delivered in a shorter amount of time to realize the business benefits quicker, and where less resources are available, we all too often ignore the importance of Business User involvement during the IT project cycle.

Trexin is a strong proponent of an IT organization that supports and promotes employee engagement (*see Enhanced Project Success Model*[1]). Engaged users:

- Show an increased satisfaction with IT
- Are more likely to provide pro-active feedback
- Show more support for the IT initiative with less complaints and management escalations
- Ultimately give IT higher marks for service excellence
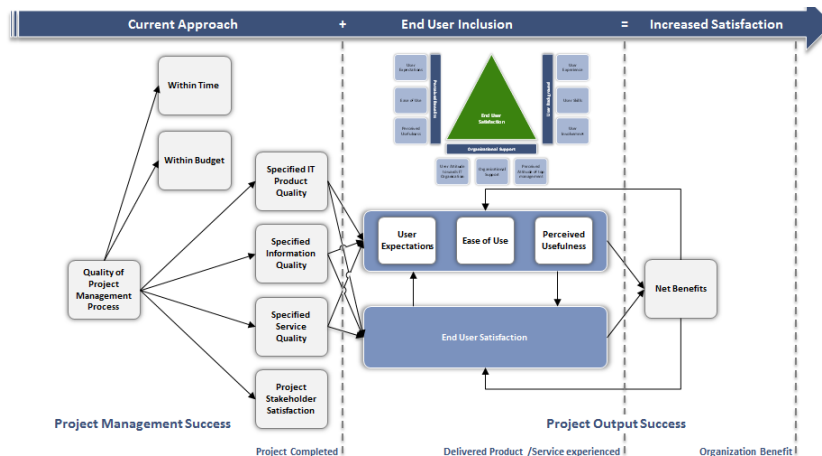
Enhanced Project Success Model

All of which may have a positive influence on IT leadership's ability to obtain sponsorship for new projects, obtain IT budgets and improve their image throughout the business.

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[1] *Source: extension of DeLone & McLean 2003, p. 24 - and enhanced by Trexin*

The Gallup organization states:

> *"Employee engagement or the ability to capture the heads, hearts, and souls of your employees to instill an intrinsic desire and passion for excellence. Engaged employees want their organization to succeed because they feel connected emotionally, socially, and even spiritually to its mission, vision and purpose."*

The top three drivers for Increased Business User Satisfaction[2] are User Involvement during the development or project initiation phase, Perceived Usefulness of the service/platform, and User Experience. What is surprising in all of this is not the outcome of the research, but that this information is not part of a structured methodology embedded as part of the PMO/IT process models. It is seen as cumbersome, time consuming, and often the Business User knowledge is regarded as 'how would they know what is best for them'. To be sure, User Centered Design (UCD) , User Experience (UX), and Agile, just to name a view are often times seen as too complicated, or time consuming to use – our real world model is based on being 'Useful, Usable and Used in the field'.

Should a PMO have an Business User Experience Governance model whereby the chief function is to ensure the Business User is actively engaged, has an open and constructive dialogue, where concerns are addressed, and communications are concise, relevant and taken seriously? All while collecting relevant metrics? I strongly believe the answer is Yes!

By adopting a common Business User communication framework that incorporates corporate communications, ensures a proactive end-user reach out, and enables a transparent feedback mechanism in a social forum

Trexin Interactive Communications Framework

Regional Responsibility	Regional & IT Org. Responsibility	IT Organization Responsibility
Creating Awareness of Product/Service	**User Alignment, Demand generation, IT Organization Brand Awareness**	**Become trusted partner, we listen, we care, we want to improve**
Communications	**Interaction**	**Feedback**
Per set Interval - Reliable Project Updates around: • Scope, Objectives, timelines • Status, migration date(s) • User Experience Impact around; – User functionality – User Impact – Benefit of project for User • Provide feedback mechanism • Point to Project dashboard • Known issues	Per set Interval – Moderated Show and Tell sessions (Live, pre-recorded or a combination) where; • Product or service is demonstrated • Focused on Users impact on performing his work • How deployment will happen and expected impact to User • Outline User Benefits • Provide feedback mechanism • Point to Project Dashboard	On-Going - Provide moderated discussion boards, lists organized by project/theme where users can; • Comment or ask questions about projects • State concerns, or identify additional requirements • Ensure Users questions are answered in a collaborative and open fashion
Metrics – Governance - Dashboard		
Project Metrics	**Interaction Metrics**	**Feedback Metrics**
On Time, On Budget # Scope changes (can be measured) # escalations (not sure, but we should) % of milestones met, % completed # Pilot users involved # Known Issues # Users directly impacted by BU/GEO	# of Show and Tell Session held # of Show and Tell Participants # video's reviewed # Project Content reviewed **User Excitement** during/after session Is …..value for you? Will ….improve your XXX work experience?	# of site visits # of Unique visitors # comments posted # of responses posted **User Excitement** at set interval on site Is …..value for you? Will ….improve your XXX work experience?

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[2] Reference: Adam Mahmood, M., Burn, J. M., Gemoets, L. A., & Jacquez, C. (2009). Variables affecting information technology end-user satisfaction: a meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *International Journal of Human Computer Studies, 52*(4), 751-771

format so that questions and answers can be seen by all, the Business User is optimally engaged in the IT development process. Our Business User inclusion framework is an interactive communication model that can easily be adopted to drive enhanced Business User satisfaction for IT delivery projects:

"IT will play an even bigger business-focused role for digital data, e-commerce, business automation, etc." – CIOinsight – IT Growth Outlook and Trends 2013.

Conclusion

Despite resource constraints, and management pressure to deliver IT Projects quicker and leaner, it would best serve the business and IT to include the Business User in all IT projects where there is a Business User impact. By increasing Business User buy in and support, IT's standing will increase and over time, so will needed budgets and resource allocations. This alignment and the now inherent mutual understanding of business user needs and IT's capabilities might even slow down or eliminate business users looking to engage with 3rd parties to get what they want quicker and (often) better. Business User inclusion can be jump-started by implementing the Trexin Business User Communications Framework to help drive business and IT value across the organization.

Spread the word!

This TIP was written by Ton Roelandse, who specializes in Applied Cloud Technologies and other cool topics. Ton welcomes comments and discussion on this topic and can be reached at ton.roelandse@trexin.com.