

PROJECTS + PSYCHOLOGY = SUCCESS

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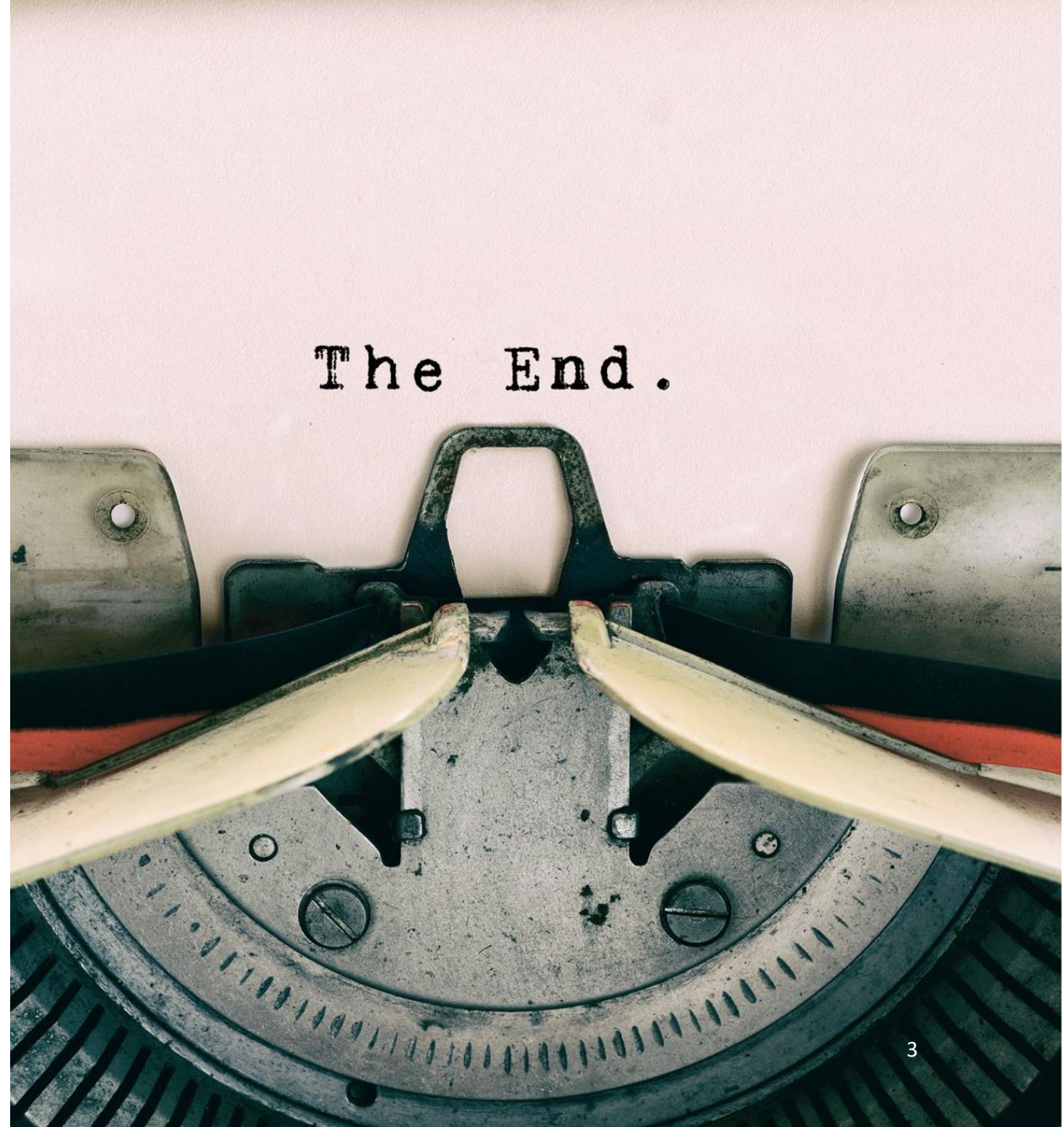
Cognoscenti Business Psychologists Ltd

- Cognoscenti is an international, business psychology consultancy that specialises in:
 - Project/Change Management
 - Implementing wellbeing that impacts on the bottom line
 - Executive Coaching
 - Coaching for Resilience



Project Statistics?

- 31% of UK projects are currently at risk of failure (2017).
- Representing a potential loss of turnover equating to £254.3 billion
- Only 40% of projects in various sectors successful (Mulder 2016)
- On average, large IT projects run 45% over budget and 7% over time, and deliver 56% less value than predicted (McKinsey 2012)
- **1 in 6** IT projects have a cost overrun of **200%** (2020)



Some of the Reasons for Project Failure

- Biggest barriers to success listed as people factors:
- 58% Changing mindsets
- 49% Corporate culture
- 32% Lack of senior management support (IBM 2008).
- “Fuzzy business objectives, out-of-sync stakeholders, and excessive rework” mean that 75% of project participants lack confidence that projects will succeed. (Geneca 2011)



People Related Statistics

- **80%** of employees spend half of their workweek on “rework” caused by poor communication
- **59%** of workers in the United States say communication is their biggest obstacle
- **55%** of team members say project objectives are unclear
- **41%** of organizations reporting poor project performance say they don’t get enough support from project management and project sponsors
- **“40%** of project managers spend most of their time micromanaging employee responsibility and answering questions over email
- **71%** of business executives say employee engagement is one of the top factors in project success (PMI 2020)



Why Do People Matter in Projects?

- Project internal factors' impact is greater than that of external factors'.
- Project manager's “soft capacity” is much more important than the project manager's “hard capacity”.
- [Xiangnan Lu](#); [Hong Liu](#); [Weijie Ye](#)



Most challenging issues project managers face:

- Motivating a diverse workforce
- Facilitating team decisions
- Resolving interpersonal conflicts
- Managing difficult people
- Strengthening team accountability
- Communication



Poll 3

- Which of these have caused you problems?
- Motivating a diverse workforce
- Facilitating team decisions
- Resolving interpersonal conflicts
- Managing difficult people
- Communication

Success factors for Projects

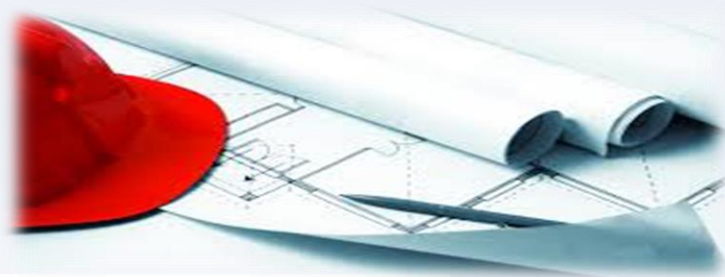
- Inspirational leadership.
- Team Building.
- Good Communication.
- Good engagement of Team and Stakeholders.
- Change Management Skills



Moving with the Times

Traditional Project Management

- A Focus on Planning and Controls
- A focus on methodologies e.g. AMP, Prince2
- A Linear, graphical perspective



Emerging Project Management

- A focus on managing people and performance
- A recognition of the value that behavioural sciences can add
- A more emotionally intelligent perspective (Briner 1992)
- “Projects, programmes and portfolios are delivered by people. The dynamics, attitudes and relationships between those people are the key enablers to project success” (APM 2019).

Project leadership

- Improving one's own leadership, Wong(2008) and Ciccotti (2014)
- ***“The key to understanding the behaviors of others is rooted in the understanding of oneself”.*** (Ciccotti 2014)



- Transformational Leadership is about:
 - Creating a vision to engage the project team and stakeholders.
 - Being a change agent.
 - Inspiring trust.
 - Understand team member needs and using these needs to motivate the team.

* Bass.M.B (1999). Two Decades of Research and Development in Transformational Leadership. European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology. 8. (1). 9-32.

Engaging The Project Team

- Transformational leadership uses emotional levers to empower team members to look beyond immediate gratification and aspire to self-actualization.
- Transformational leadership encourages follower maturity.
- Transformational leadership creates a shared vision and inspires team members to pursue it.



Any Questions?



Engaging Stakeholders

- ✚ **A sense of feeling valued and involved-** do not forget the quiet and undemanding stakeholders. Silence could imply a lack of interest.
- ✚ **Being involved in decision making.** -make sure that stakeholders have the option of being involved.
- ✚ **Having the freedom to voice ideas** -being able to comment on the project and know that the project manager will take the comments seriously..
- ✚ **Feeling enabled to perform well.** – making sure stakeholders are clear about what the project requires of them and that they also have the information and resources they need.



Engaging Stakeholders

- **Relationship Building**- too many PMs operate at a transactional level
- **Honesty and Openness** - we can have a tendency to shy away from bad news or play it down
- **Building shared ownership**- using the information that you gather to identify common goals or aspirations around the project



Using Emotional Intelligence

- "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).



Why Does EI Matter?

- Leadership Impact
- Newer leadership styles rely heavily on emotional intelligence to inspire and engage people.
- The ability to build and maintain good relationships is crucial to project success.
- Managing emotions minimises the risk of conflict which can be very damaging in projects.



Engaging stakeholders Using EI

Self Awareness

- Knowing what emotions you are feeling, especially if heightened or under pressure.
- Learn to recognise the signs that you are feeling stressed or irritated
- Understanding where those emotions are coming from
- Recognise when you need help

Social Awareness

- Having empathy- Being able to put yourself in the shoes of your stakeholders
- Really understanding the issues that your stakeholders are experiencing and why they matter to them.

Engaging stakeholders Using EI

Self Management

- About managing your emotions and the impact they have on others.
- Taking the irritation out of your voice
- Being positive and encouraging



Relationship Management

- Using your awareness of your own **emotions** and those of others to manage interactions successfully
- Being able to tune into emotions in a meeting and harness those emotions to help drive forward your agenda

Being Emotionally Intelligent

- Be aware of your emotions and keep asking yourself how you are feeling.
- Engage your brain before you put your mouth into gear.
- Make an effort to empathise with others
- Use your emotions and what you know of the emotions of others to inspire them



Evidence

- Research with 373 project managers in the Australian defence industry found that EI has a positive impact on project **SUCCESS** (Rezvani et al 2016)
- Other research found project managers with high emotional intelligence who exhibit transformational leadership behavior are effective leaders and ensure higher success in projects than their counterparts (Maqbool et al 2017)
- An additional study found that emotional intelligence and the transformational leadership combined made projects even more successful (Doan et al 2020)
- Among transformational virtual project team leaders, there was a relationship between overall emotional intelligence scores and the success of virtual project teams (Ferronato 2017)

Any Questions?



Managing Risk

- “Project risk can be defined as an unforeseen event or activity that can impact the project's progress, result or outcome in a positive or negative way”
(PMBOK)
- What about the risk that individual personalities pose?



Project Risk and the 3 Elements of Human Behaviour



Personality

- Individual Factors



Groupthink

- Group Factors



Blame Culture

- Organisational Factors



Individual Factors: Personality

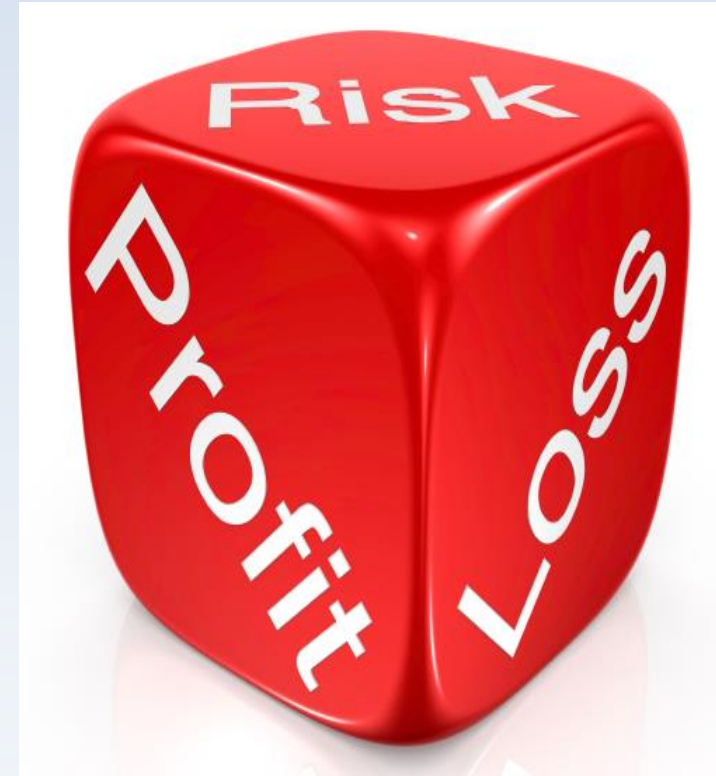
- High Risk takers tend to be:
 - More extrovert than average.
 - More open to experience.
 - More emotionally stable.
 - Lower on agreeableness.
 - Lower on conscientiousness



- Curious, outgoing people who do not feel much anxiety and who do not care much about what other people think.
- Being low on conscientiousness can suggest a 'get rich quick' mentality.
- Perception of degree of risk

Decision Making

- Does the individual consider all facts before making a decision or make the decision quickly without looking for evidence?
- Are they able to make a decision independently or are they swayed by the opinion of others?
- Does the individual's cognitive bias prevent them from seeing the truth?



Group Factors and Project Risk

- Groupthink (Janis 1972)
- Risky Shift (Stoner 1961)
- Team Culture.
- Communication Style.



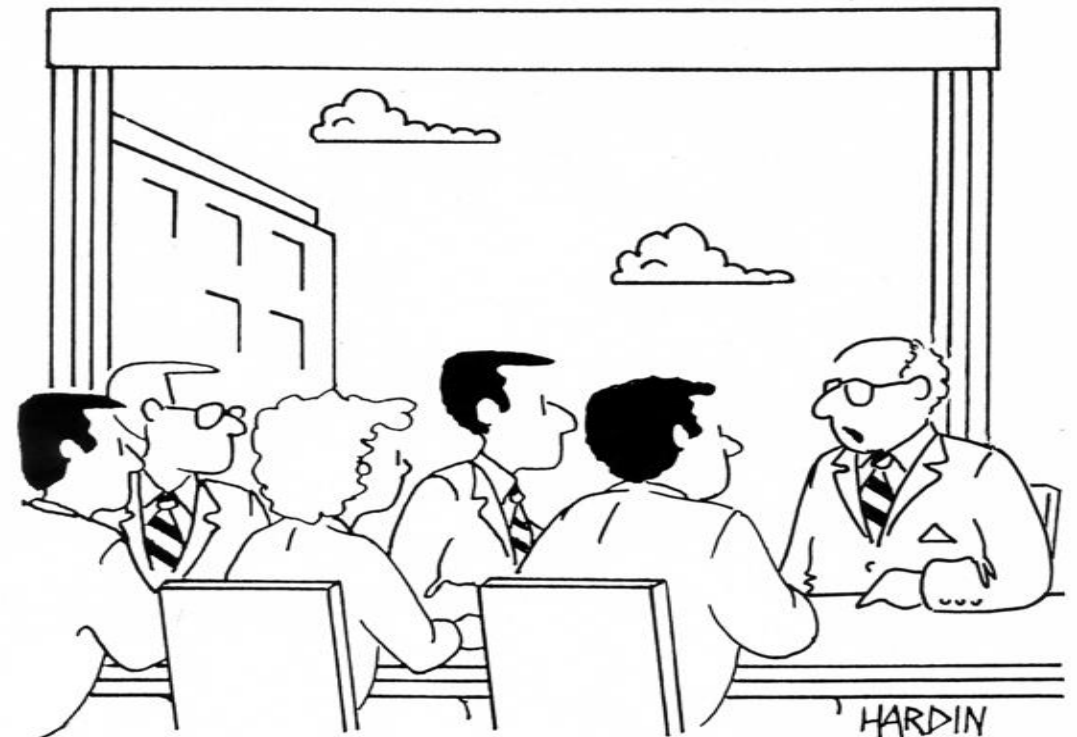
Organisational Factors That Impact on Risk

- Leadership.
- The extent to which there is a 'blame culture'.
- Attitude towards reward.
- Attitude towards challenge.
- The degree of support /mentoring available.
- The extent to which it is OK to ask for help.
- Power distribution.



Improving Project Risk Management

- Understand the individual risk propensity of your team members.
- Create a supportive team culture with no blame.
- Empower the team members to take appropriate risks.
- Implement processes to ensure that effective communication takes place.
- Evaluate decisions and decision making processes.



"We've considered every potential risk except the risks of avoiding all risks."

Any Questions?



Building a project team

- Use psychometric tools to ensure that you get the person with the right personality and aptitudes
- Help team Identify their individual strengths and what they can offer/ask from each other (tools such as Strengthscope)
- Identify signature strengths of team and use when allocating tasks



Our Signature Strengths

- We all have our own personal “Signature strengths”
- They are the strengths that are most essential to who we are.
- We are happiest/most productive when we are using our Signature Strengths.



Signature Strengths

- Curiosity/Interest
 - Love of Learning
 - Judgement/Critical Thinking
 - Ingenuity/Practical Intelligence
 - Social Intelligence
 - Perspective
 - Valor and Bravery
 - Seligman (2004)
- Free tool - <https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter>. VIA Survey of Character Strengths
- Perseverance/Diligence
 - Integrity/Honesty
 - Kindness/Generosity
 - Teamwork
 - Fairness and Equity
 - Leadership
 - Self-Control
 - Prudence/Discretion
 - Humility/Modesty

Characteristics of Strengths

- They are psychological traits that can be seen across different situations at different times
- They are different than talents because they have a moral component
- They are usually valued in their own right e.g. wisdom
- They usually involve choices as to whether to use them and to further develop them.



Why does Using our Signature Strengths Make us Happier/More Productive?

- Because we are enjoying what we do, it encourages us to set goals.
- Makes tasks more meaningful for us.
- Increases our level of positive emotions.
- When we are dealing with challenging situations, tapping into our strengths can boost our confidence and enable us to find new ways of achieving results.



Any Questions?



Project Communication

- According to the Project Management Institute. 75%-90% percent of a project manager's time is spent communicating
- Effective communication is a connection between people that allows for the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and leads to mutual understanding.



Communication is a Human Behaviour

- Understanding what your stakeholders want to know
 - Understanding when and how frequently your stakeholders want to be informed about project progress
 - Understanding their preferred communication technologies
 - Communication needs both content and feeling to engage
- Highlight reports have their place but do not assume that this is communication!



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