Managing Client/Consultant Expectations

Achieving harmony between client and consultant

BCS Consultancy SG 22 February 2022

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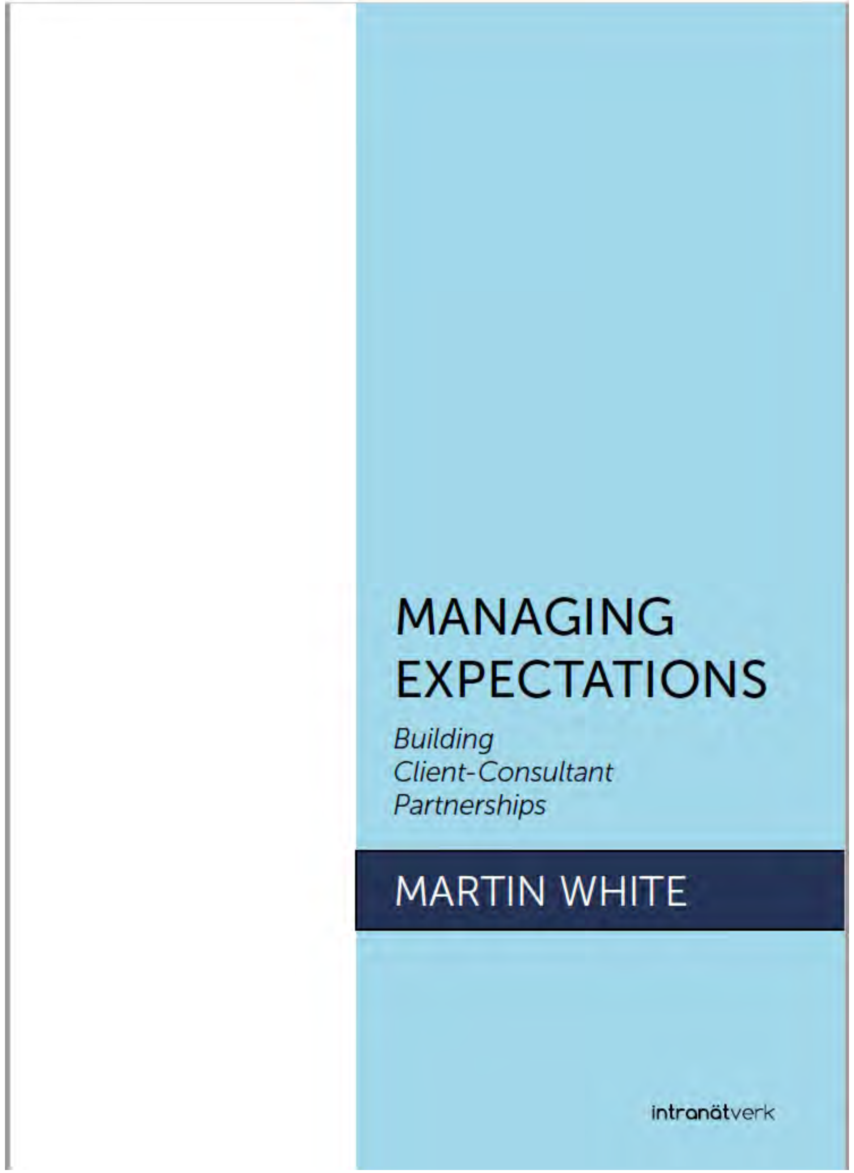
The book of the presentation!



Information science meets IT

We need to replace our intranet/enterprise search/e-commerce search/information management/knowledge management application

We need to have a set of requirements that we can share with solution vendors

We need a list of vendors

Can you recommend a vendor?

Learning from Logica (1989-1991)

The primary task of a consultant is always to be able to differentiate between ‘fitness to specification’ and ‘fitness for purpose’

A solution that is fit for purpose is more likely to meet the expectations of the client, especially those of the employees using the system

Delivering an outcome that is fit for purpose is more important than delivering profit. If it is fit for purpose, then the profit will come

Defining expectations

To define search requirements with any degree of confidence you have to start with the user expectations

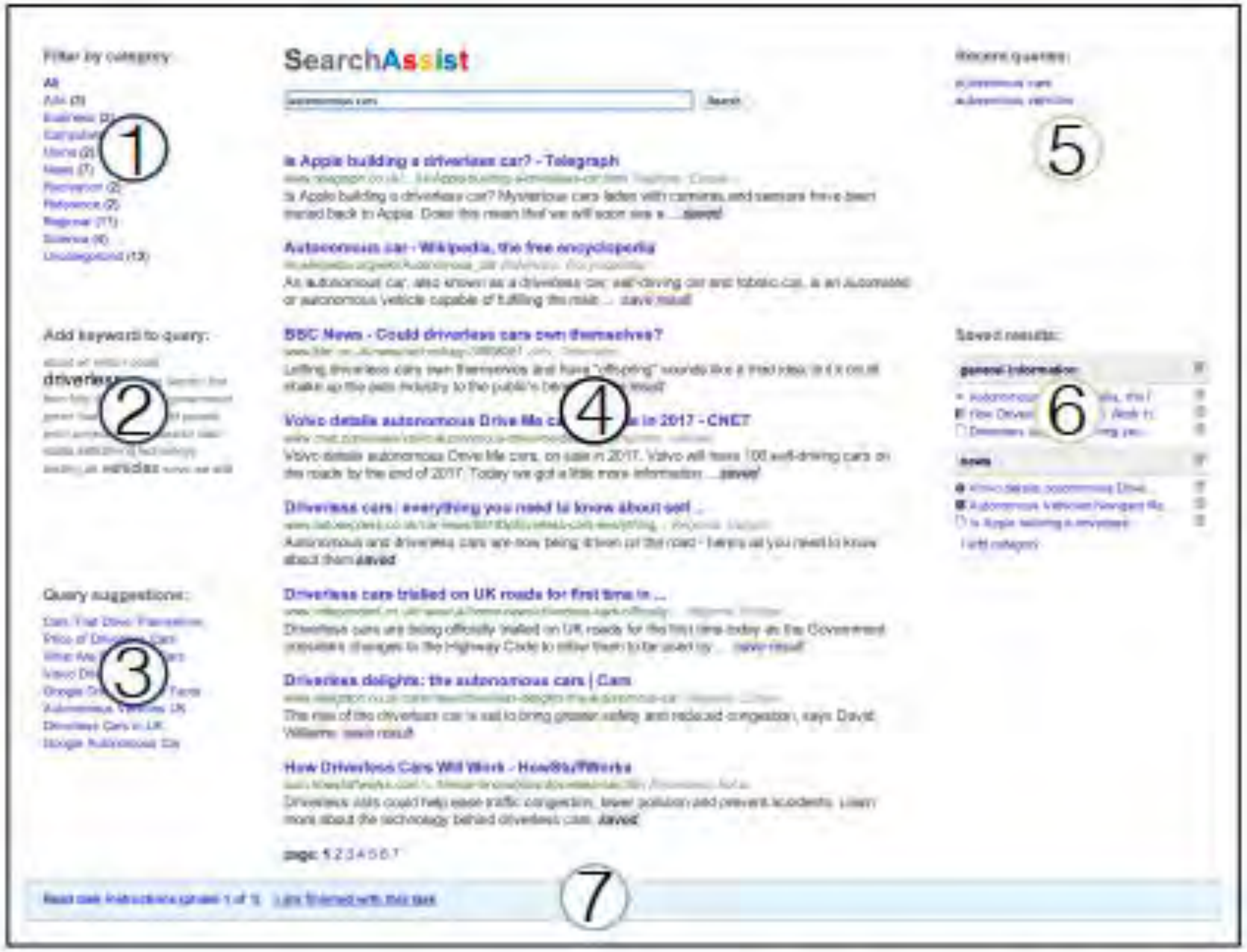
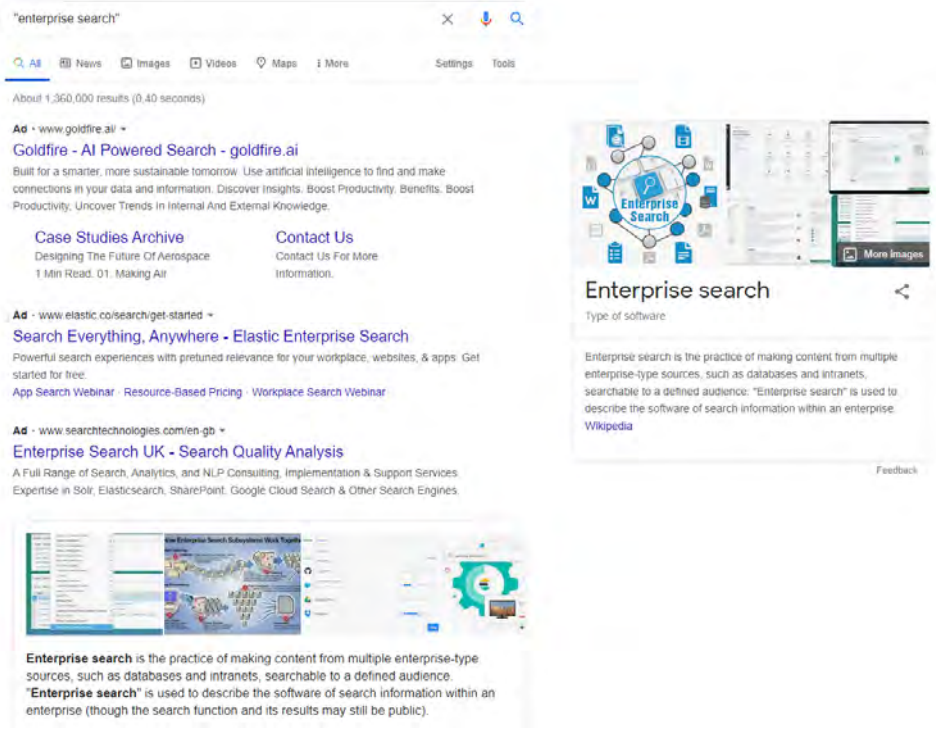
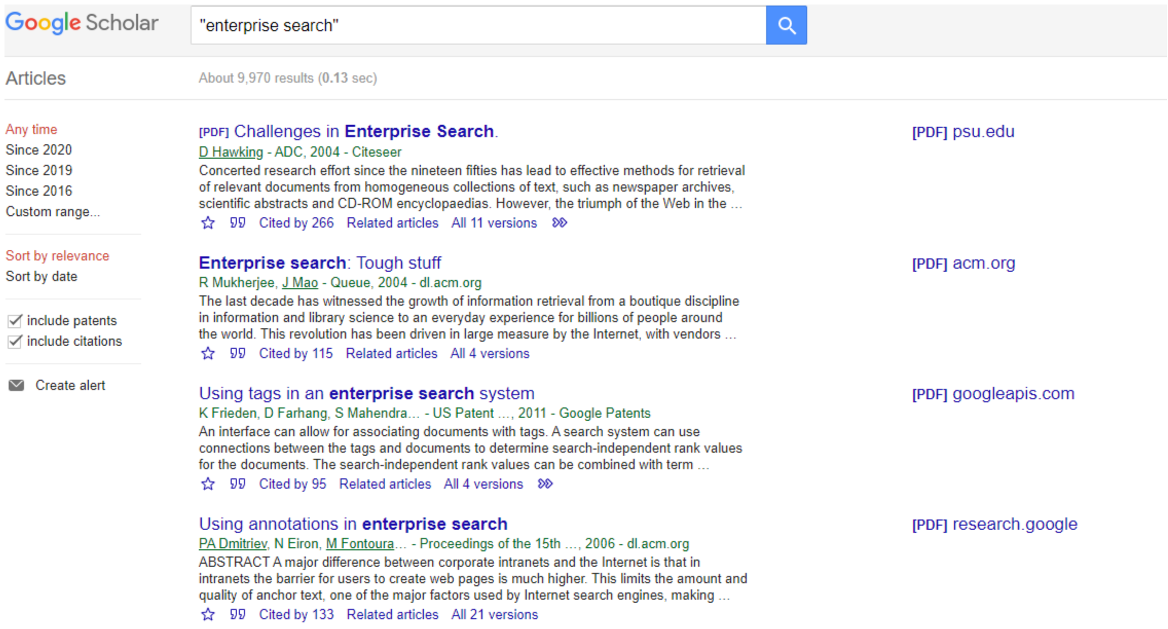


Figure 4: Screenshot SearchAssist. *Left column* (1, 2, 3): control features. *Middle* (4): input and informational features. *Right Column* (5, 6): personalisable features. (7): task bar

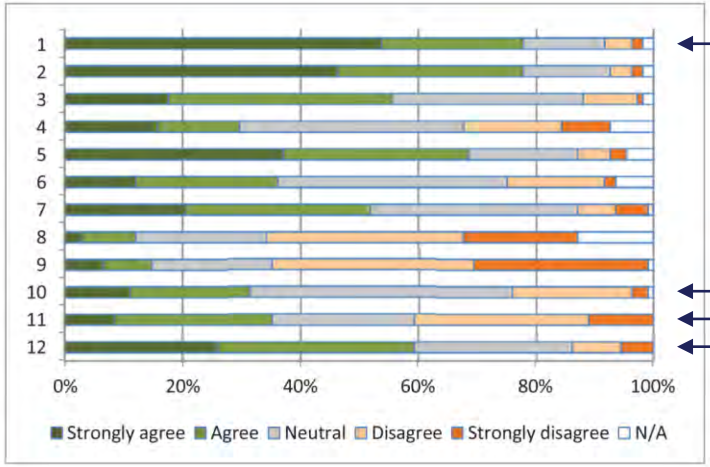
Even Google does it!



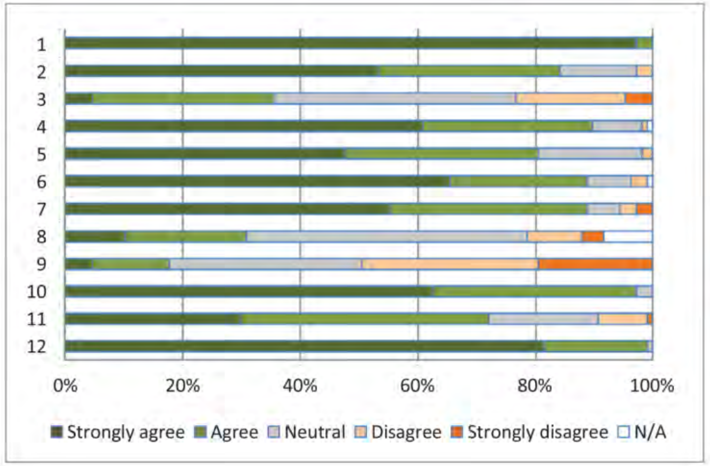


One size does not fit all

A1: Legal



A3: Healthcare

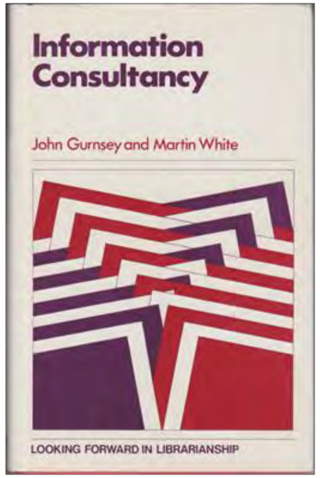


Likert diagrams for legal, recruitment, healthcare and patent sectors showing the value placed on search functionality during query formulation, including Boolean logic (1), proximity operators (2), relevance ranking (3), truncation (4), wildcards (5), field operators (6), query expansion (7), query translation (8), case sensitivity (9), abbreviations (10), misspellings (11) and synonyms (12). The patent survey did not include 9–12.

[Information retrieval in the workplace: a comparison of professional search practices — University of Strathclyde]

Organists have to cope with odd user interfaces!

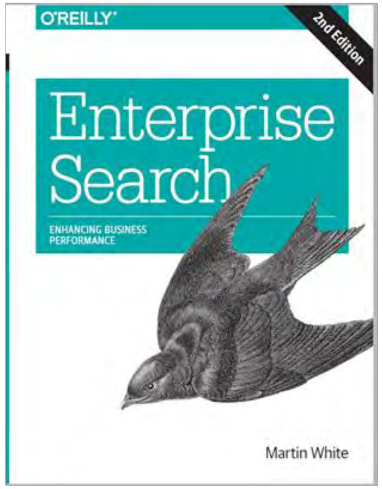
A commitment to transparency



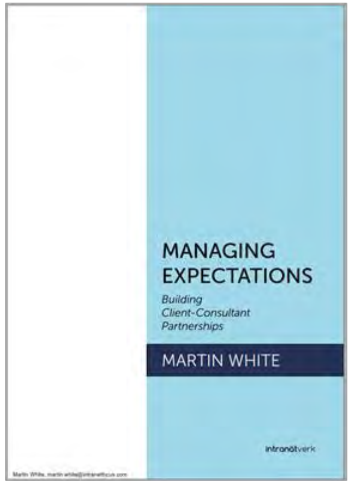
1989

2011

2007



2012/2015



2017

My ground rules

- When I set up Intranet Focus Ltd. I had seven rules of engagement
    1. I will only work in areas in which I have business experience
    2. I will not work for central or local government
    3. I will not work to a scope decided by a procurement department
    4. I will only work on a fixed fee basis
    5. I will only work on interesting projects
    6. I will always ask for a meeting with the project sponsor before starting work
    7. I will always smile. It makes other people wonder what you know that they don’t

The big concerns… and my Roadmap

#1 How can we build a win-win relationship?

#2 How can we ensure we get value for money

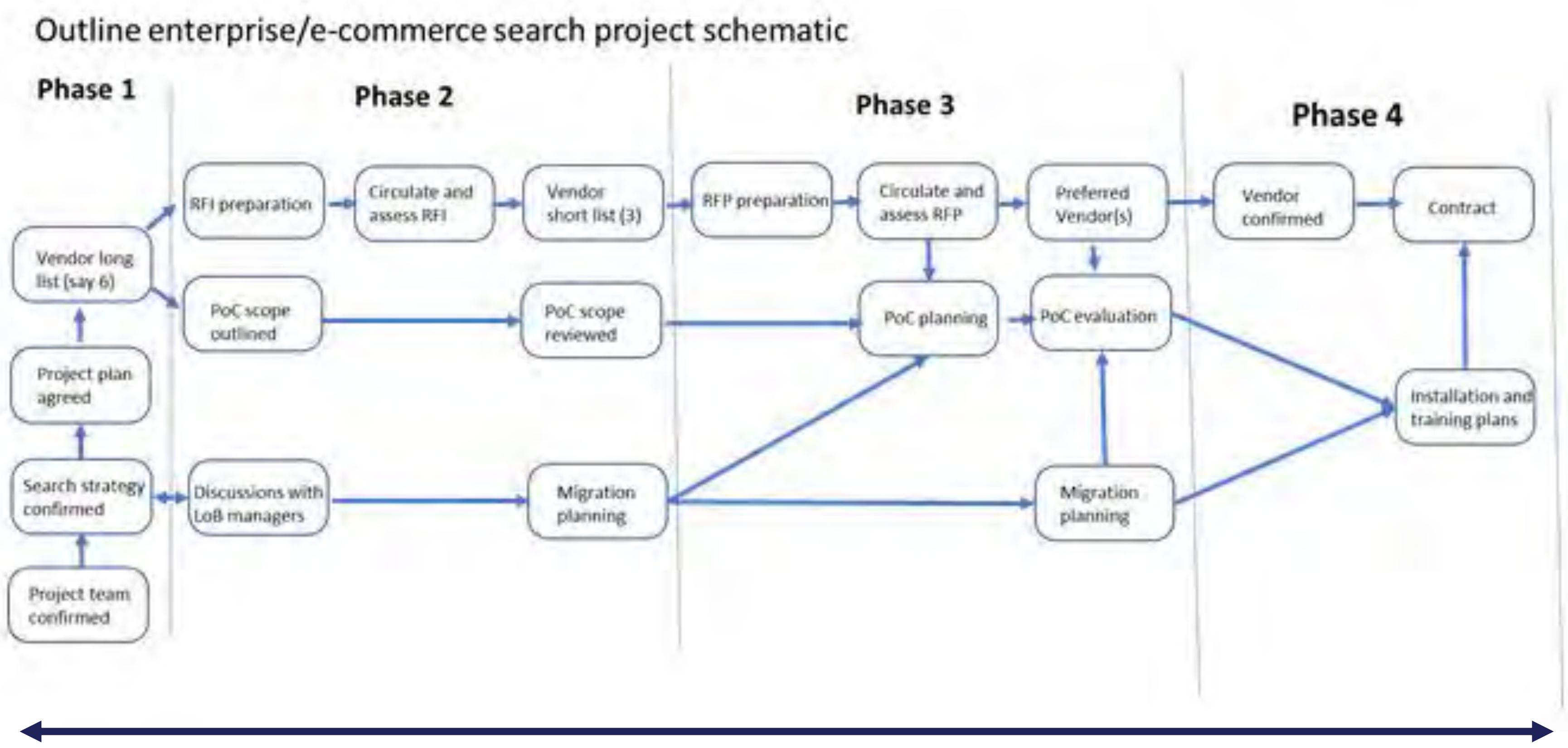
#3 How will we manage scope creep

#4 How will risks be identified and managed?

#5 How will we define user requirements?

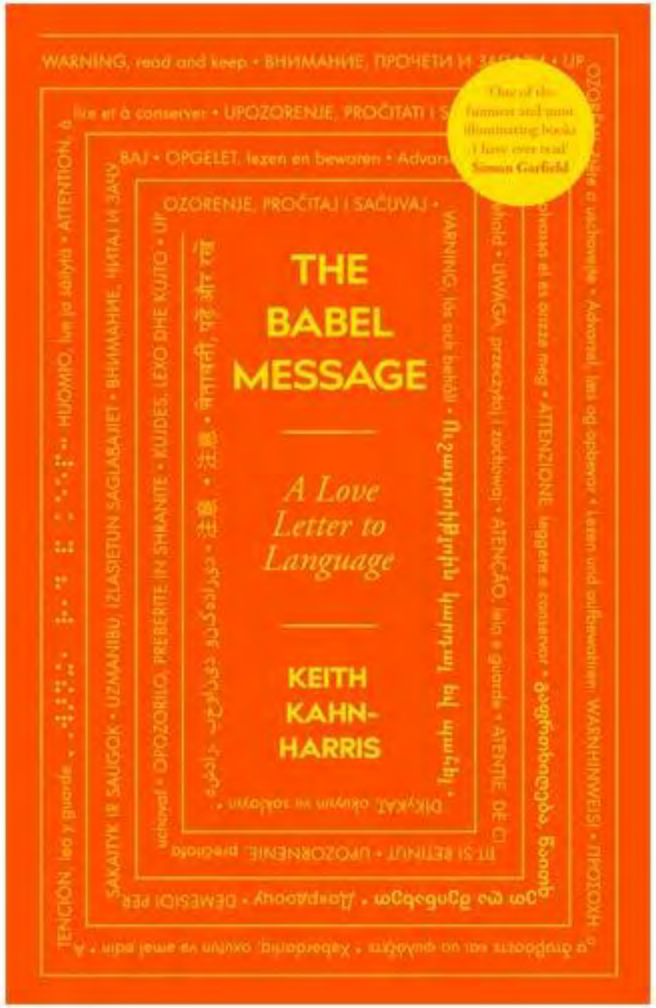
#6 How will we keep track of the project?

A typical project plan



A typical project duration would be 12 months

The Babel message



https://iconbooks.com/ib-title/the-babel-message/

The Babel dimension

Language	Content items as % of total	% speaking the language as their primary language
English	73	24
German	13	25
Spanish	4	11
Portuguese	3	4
Japanese	2	6
Italian	2	5
French	1	6
Chinese	1	4
Polish	1	3

76% of employees are searching English-language documents in their second, or maybe third language

Many of the English language documents may well have been written by someone who does not have English as their first language

Some of the documents may be written in more than one language

Source – client of Intranet Focus Ltd

Reading, writing, speaking and understanding

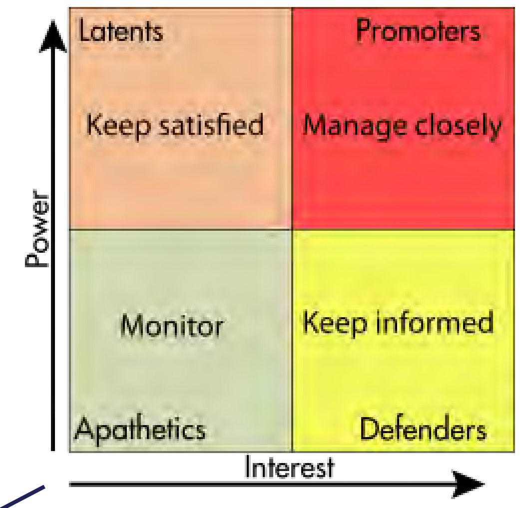
Level group	Level	Description
A Basic user	A1 Breakthrough	• Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. • Can introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where they live, people they know and things they have. • Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
	A2 Waystage	• Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). • Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. • Can describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B Independent user	B1 Threshold	• Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. • Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken. • Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. • Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
	B2 Vantage	• Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialisation. • Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. • Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C Proficient user	C1 Advanced	• Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses and recognise implicit meaning. • Can express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. • Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. • Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
	C2 Mastery	• Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. • Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. • Can express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_European_Framework_of_Reference_for_Languages

Code switching

http://awinlanguage.blogspot.com/2017/06/kinds-of-code-switching.html

Stakeholder mapping

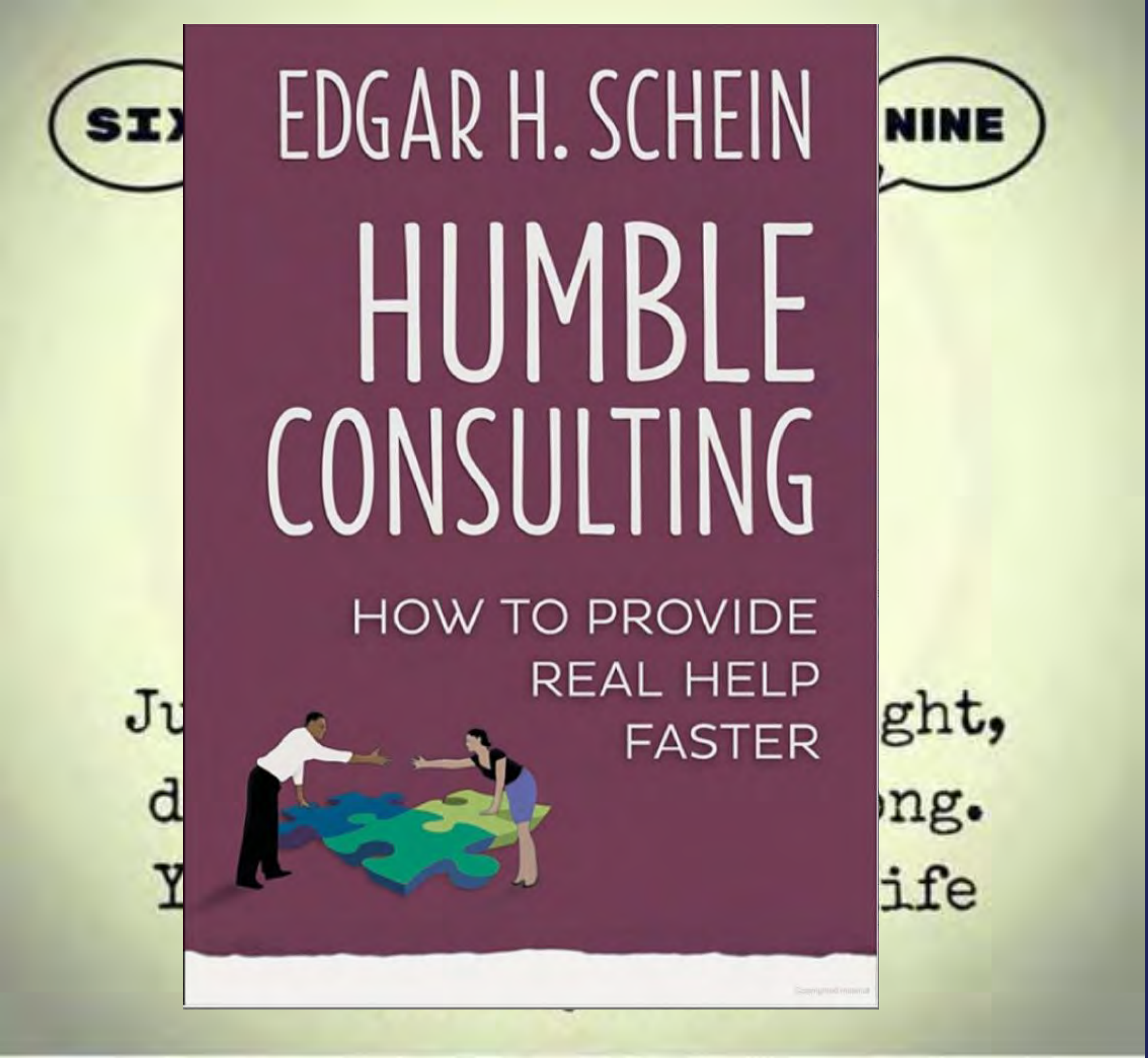


Culture &
language

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stakeholder_analysis

First impressions?

Nick White



We live in a pragmatic, problem solving culture in which knowing things and telling others what we know is valued . . . Having to ask is a sign of weakness or ignorance, so we avoid it as much as possible.

Edgar Schein

The big concerns… and my Roadmap

- #1 How can we build a win-win relationship?
- #2 How can we ensure we get value for money
- #3 How will we manage scope creep
- #4 How will risks be identified and managed?
- #5 How will we define user requirements?
- #6 How will we keep track of the project?

#1 How can we build a win-win relationship?

Plan the first meeting agenda

- Always in advance of a contract
- Have something (preferably a diagram) ready to share
- Find a common area of interest within a couple of minutes
- How much experience do they have of managing a consulting project?
- Share and develop objectives (consultants have them as well)
- Get risks onto the table
- Control without being controlling

Starting the discussion

Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Change
	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Confusion
Vision	+		+	Incentives	+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Anxiety
Vision	+	Skills	+		+	Resources	+	Action Plan	=	Resistance
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+		+	Action Plan	=	Frustration
Vision	+	Skills	+	Incentives	+	Resources	+		=	False Starts

Adapted from T. Knoster, R. Villa, and J. Thousand. " *A Framework for Thinking About Systems Change*." In R. Villa and J. Thousand, eds. *Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education: Piecing the Puzzle Together*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 2000

Search satisfaction octagon

Meaningful metrics
Search logs are valuable in improving relevance rank. but if search satisfaction is low then the number of users will also be low. As a result log data may not representative, and it will not reveal the extent to which users have scanned a SERP and discontinued the session.

Information quality
All employees should take personal responsibility for information quality, making sure (for example) that titles are informative and that appropriate metadata is applied

Train and support
All enterprise applications require users to be trained and supported. Enterprise search is no exception. Few users have the skills needed to construct alternate queries when an initial attempt fails to deliver relevant content

Application capability
Inadequate technical capability is the largest single cause of search dissatisfaction. Fundamental shortcomings in the search application cannot be overcome by any amount of training and support. You are building on sand!

Seeking strategies
Employees have a wide range of options to find the information they need. Search has to be positioned seamlessly within this spectrum and not as the only option available

Customised solutions
It is very unlikely that a single user interface will be suitable for all users. The user experience cannot be 'intuitive' for everyone. An extensive programme of user testing is essential in achieving a high degree of user satisfaction

Search personas
Search personas should reflect why employees are searching, and distinguish between searching for 'documents' and searching for knowledge and expertise. It is all about the business and personal context around the query

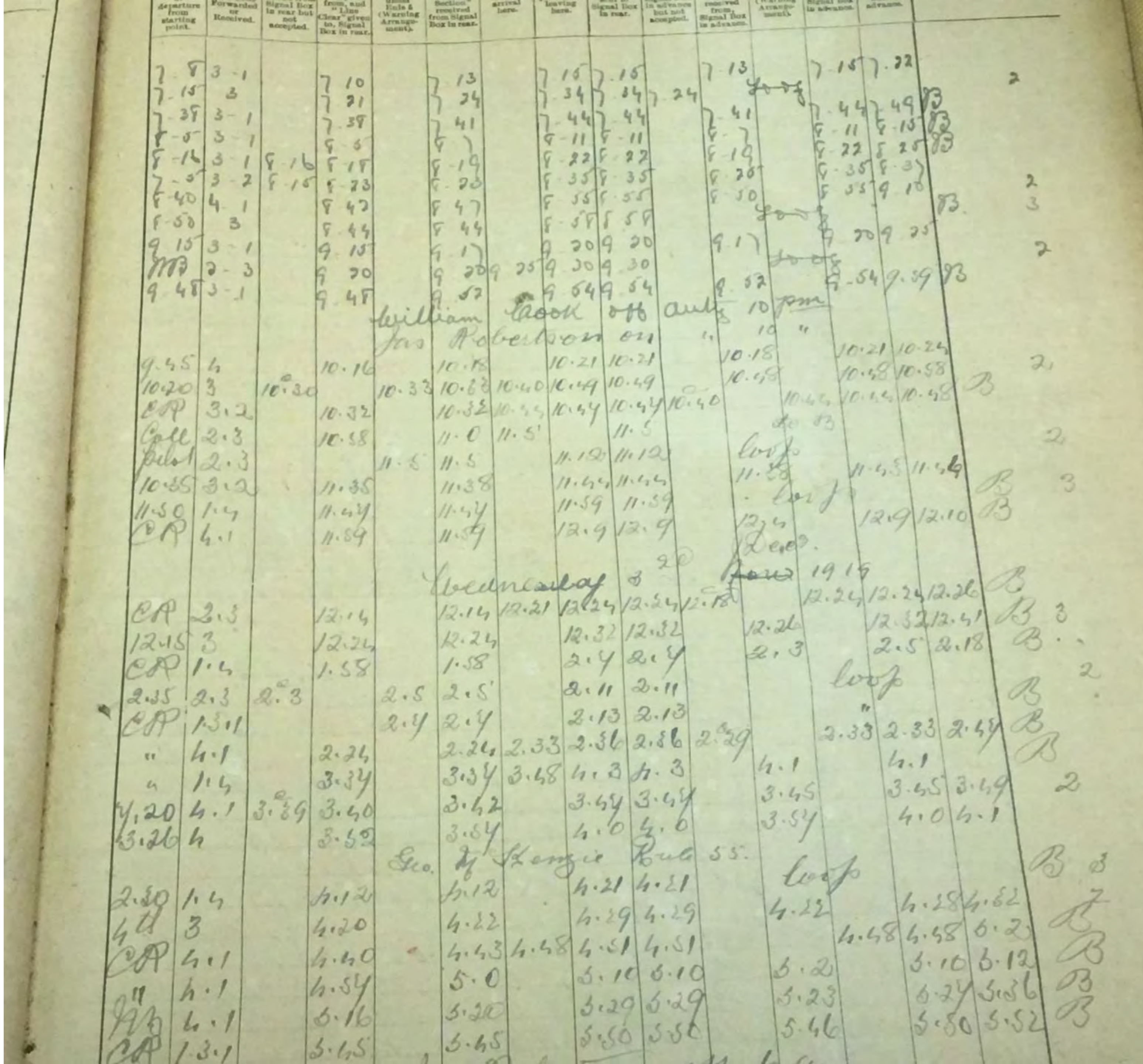
High visibility
The search team has to be highly visible. It has to have the capacity to respond quickly to instances of poor search satisfaction and be proactive in resolving them

Search team
Search team members have two roles. The first role is to provide support and training to employees, and gain feedback on the operation and value of the application. The second role is to enhance relevance ranking and the overall performance of the application based on search metrics and user requirements.

Assessing my contribution

Agreeing a set of performance metrics ensures that the client feels it is in control

- Realistic planning
- Building relationships
- Knowledge sharing at the close of the project
- Quality of documentation



The big concerns… and my Roadmap

#1 How can we build a win-win relationship?

#2 How can we ensure we get value for money

#3 How will we manage scope creep

#4 How will risks be identified and managed?

#5 How will we define user requirements?

#6 How will we keep track of the project?

#2 Getting value for our money

Value is a personal assessment – different stakeholders will have different perceptions of the project value

Decision-focused value

- What decision is going to be made as a result of the engagement?

496 C.L. Citroen / International Journal of Information Management 31 (2011) 493–501

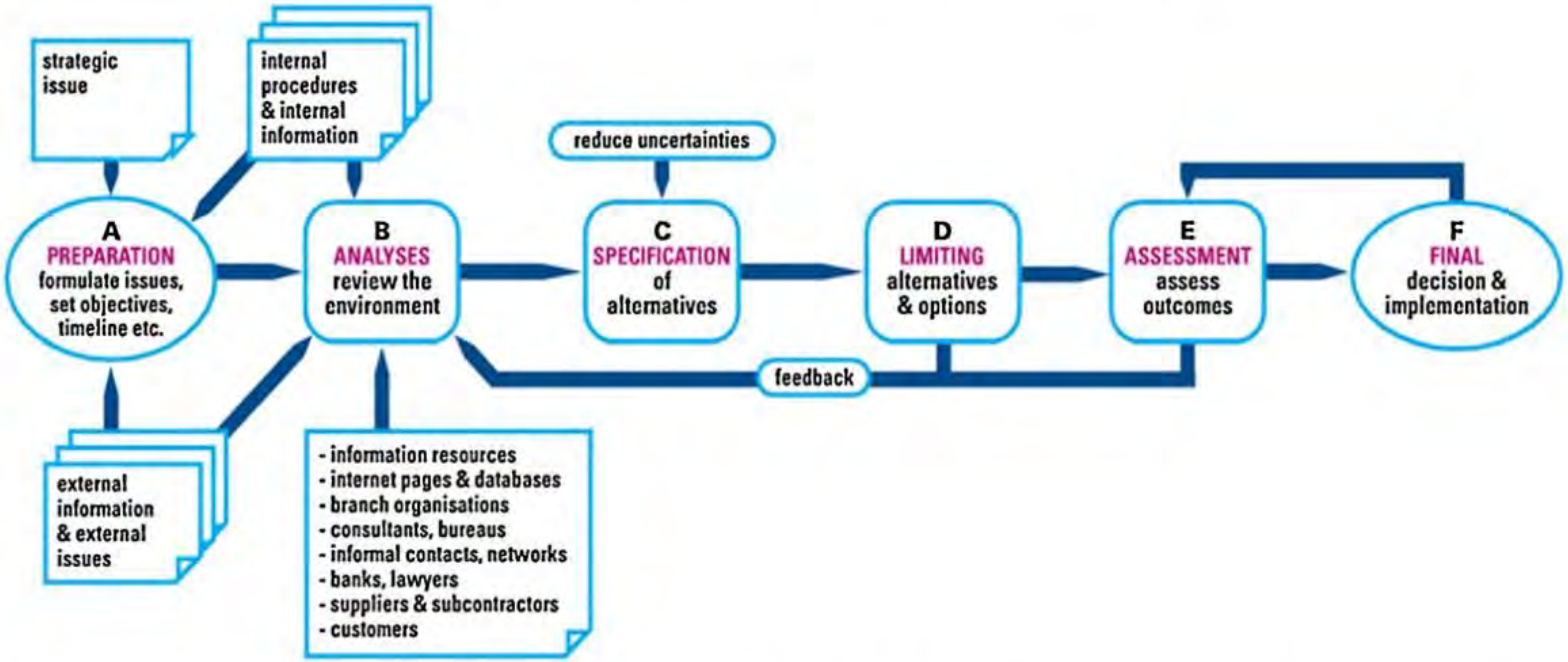


Fig. 1. Model of the phases of a rational decision-making process. Rounded boxes indicate the five phases in the decision process; square boxes contain parameters that provide input for the indicated actions. Arrows indicate the main direction of interactions.

Risk reduction value

- A Board of Directors has a duty to manage the operational risks to the business
- Operational risks are visibly presented in annual report, and have to be signed off by the Board
- Risk management is a good way to start a discussion about an engagement and also to justify the engagement fee and corporate commitment against the potential benefit to the business

The big concerns… and my Roadmap

#1 How can we build a win-win relationship?

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#6 How will we keep track of the project?

#3 How will I manage scope creep?

Working backwards from the report

- Almost always the end result of a consulting assignment is a report
- Yet rarely in my experience is there ever a discussion about the format, content, length etc of the report at the outset of a project
- In particular,
  - Who is going to read it and why?
  - What are their expectations?
  - What decisions are they going to take having read the report?

Report scope agreement

Intranet Strategy Structure 02 October 2014 Draft for Discussion		
Main heading	**Sub Sections**	**Page**
Executive Summary		0.5
Overview		0.5
2015 corporate strategy	Business	0.5
	Employee	0.5
Current situation	Intranet landscape	0.5
	Technical	0.5
	Resources	0.5
	Migration overview	0.5
Governance	Structure	0.5
	Policies	0.5
User requirements		1.0
Roadmap 2015	Services/portal approach	0.5
	Migration plans	1.0
	Development	0.5
2015 Development	Platform	0.5
	Search	0.5
	Collaboration	0.5
	Mobile	0.5
	Social	0.5
Team	Skills and resources	0.5
	Governance	0.5
Metrics	Summary	0.5
	KPIs	0.5
Risk register		2.0
2016-2017	Overview	1.0
	Total	15.5

The aim of presenting the report structure at the earliest point possible is that it helps define the overall and sub-level objectives

Clients appreciate the transparency and have something tangible to show their manager

The page allocations may change during the project. It the total is unchanged then so is the fee

If a significant change in scope becomes a requirement then there is a basis for a discussion about a fee change

The big concerns… and my Roadmap

#1 How can we build a win-win relationship?

#2 How can we ensure we get value for money

#3 How will we manage scope creep

#4 How will risks be identified and managed?

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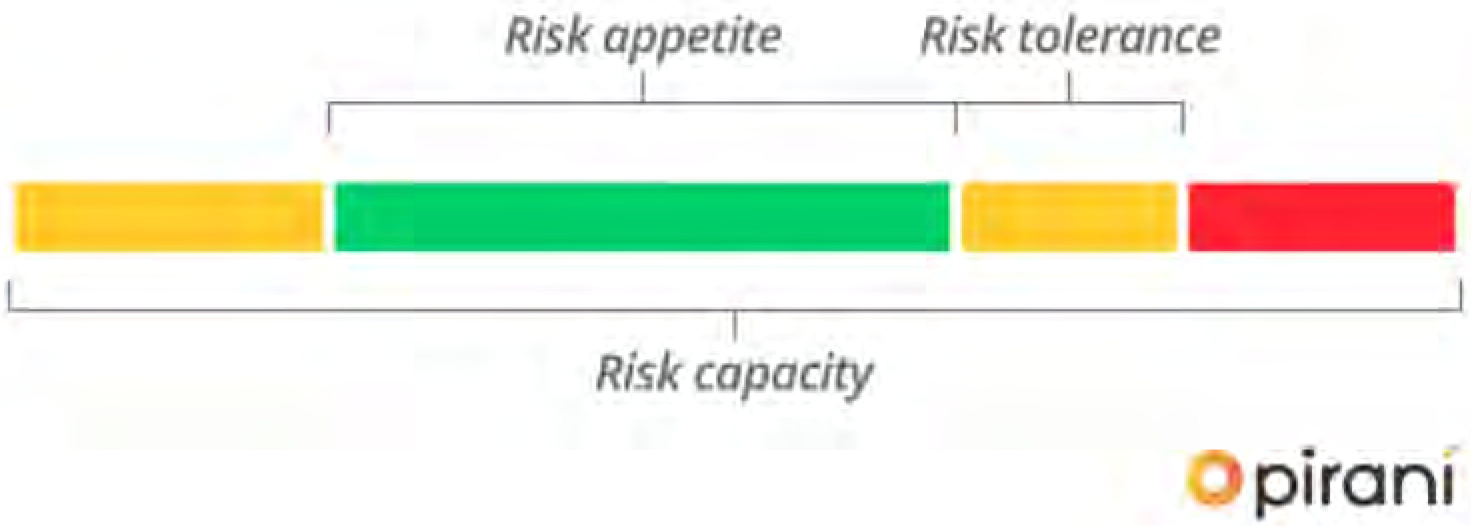
#6 How will we keep track of the project?

#4 How will project risks be identified and managed?

Project risk management

- There are of course many approaches to scoring and managing risk, but LoB managers may not be aware of them.
- Bringing a discussion about project risk management into the project plan at the earliest possible point reassures the client that there is a common agreement that risks need to be placed very transparently on the table
- Zero risk is not possible – it's a question of the risk appetite on both sides
- Define the process for managing red flag issues

Risk appetite



Schedule

Scope

Resources

https://www.piranirisk.com/blog/what-is-risk-appetite

Project risks – my experience

1. No access to the project sponsor on a timely basis
2. Difficulty in remote access to internal systems and file shares
3. Unpredictable access to documents that have a bearing on the project
4. Key staff are not available for interview
5. The client’s project manager is overloaded
6. The scope and/or deliverables are changed by edict, not agreement
7. Stakeholders appear without warning

The big concerns… and my Roadmap

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#5 How will we define user requirements?

It comes back to focusing on fitness to purpose and not on fitness to specification

“It depends”

[Stanford Shopping Center • DineShopPlay.com]

Defining user/employee requirements

- Clients are often very uneasy about letting a consultant loose in their organisation
- Will the interviewees be annoyed, reluctant to speak etc.?
- User interviews rarely get the level of attention that is required in the project planning
- Working in Germany in particular is a special challenge!
- Will they talk about the work-arounds?

Defining interviewee personas

Frank
Financial Performance Advisor

Goals:

- Staying informed drives business performance
- Validating with my people network is critical to understand business issues
- Trust in information (all information) is paramount to making accurate decisions

"Accurate, timely and validated information drives strong business performance"

IVAN
Information Technology

Goals:

- Delivering high-quality service to business
- Consultation and management of projects
- Identifying new and efficient ways to improve solutions and processes

"We effectively manage our technical and people resources, while constantly delivering value through innovative products and services that helps the business meet it's objectives."

Leslie
Legal & Compliance

Goals:

- Responding quickly to ad-hoc requests from business partners.
- Recommending courses of action that minimize risk and liability.
- Maintaining a strong network of internal and external people and information resources.

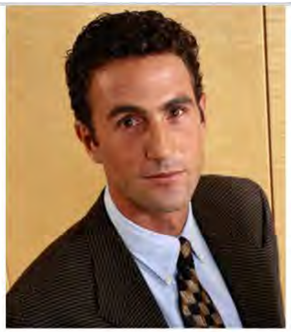
"I need to constantly stay informed of changing market and industry conditions that affect our business in order to give the best advise."

Mitch
Medical Affairs & DRA

Goals:

- Ensuring that all materials and reporting of any adverse events are accomplished in an accurate and timely manner.
- Watching deliverables and timelines to ensure that projects don't slip.
- Maintaining a strong network of company contacts internally and externally.

"We need to closely monitor our trials, our post-marketing data, and all submissions to regulatory authorities."



Sam
Sales & Marketing

Goals:

- As we learn to communicate with one voice, we avoid costly compliance fines & drive our brands.
- We are rigorous in crafting and targeting high value info to our sales force. We need to eliminate and cleanup our outdated information.
- We need to constantly develop our employees – metrics on headcount and top performers is critical.

"We can grow our business, respond to changing marketplace conditions, and develop our employees by having fast and accurate access to the information we need, when we need it."

Randy
Research & Development

Goals:

- Researching new and innovative disease treatments that offer a competitive advantage.
- Maintaining and improving efficiencies in drug development.
- Maintaining a strong network of community and company contacts to maximize team work.

"We need shared access to latest compound and patent information for research, real-time project status tracking for development, and more efficient ways to collaborate."

Managing user interviews #1

Project overview

The digital workplace will deliver a holistic set of platforms, tools and environments for work, delivered in a useable, coherent and productive way

There are four main elements of the digital workspace

- Communication
- Knowledge
- Processes
- Collaboration

The interview

I would like to talk with you for no more than 50 minutes to understand how ABC Ltd works now, and how ABC Ltd needs to work in the future to maintain its global reputation.

Further information on the scope of the interview is given on p2 of this briefing document

I will not be recording or transcribing the interviews. Any comments you make will be 'off the record' unless you give me permission to quote you.

All the interviews will be brought together in a draft summary report which will be circulated to everyone I speak to. When you read the report you are most welcome to make additional comments.

Consultant profile

By profession I am an information scientist, focusing on improving how information flows around organisations to enable employees to make better decisions

I set up Intranet Focus Ltd. in 1999, advising organisations on consulting on the design and management of intranets, information management strategy development and the specification, selection and implementation of content management and enterprise search software.

Most of my projects have been for multi-national companies, including Rolls-Royce, Atlas Copco, Ericsson Telecommunications, Hofmann La Roche, Bayer and Arup. I have business experience in almost 40 countries.

I have been a Visiting Professor at the Information School, University of Sheffield since 2001. I have written eleven books, including The Intranet Management Handbook (2011) and Enterprise Search, the 2nd edition of which was published in 2013

I live in Horsham, UK, which is close to Gatwick Airport

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Twitter intranetfocus
Skype intranetfocus

Managing user interviews #2

These are the topics that I would like to cover in our conversation. The timings are indicative, and it may be that we spend most of the time talking about just one or two of the four topics.

A. Decision making 10-15 minutes

I'd like to understand how you make decisions. Some of these decisions may be made on a regular basis, and others as the need arises. Perhaps a technical problem has arisen with a product and a solution needs to be found.

I'm especially interested in situations where you need to find information from a number of different sources, especially when these sources are in other ABC Ltd locations, and perhaps in different languages

I'd also like to know where you store documents and how you find them when you need them

B. Collaboration 10-15 minutes

Set out below are three different ways in which collaboration can be of value. Could you give me examples from your own experience, and talk about successes and problems?

Document centric

Collaborative authoring, editing and discussion of documents or other content items, including sectional editing of large documents

Conversation centric

Discussions to develop new products, solve production problems and respond to customer queries, taking advantage of the expertise of employees on your own site, and also at other ABC Ltd locations.

Project centric

Collaboration around a very specific set of goals and objectives for a project. Usually there is pressure on achieving a result by a specific date.

C. Digital workplace benefits 10-15 minutes

This is a list of some of the benefits that other organisations have gained from investing in digital workplace applications. In preparation for our conversation could you think about which 4 or 5 benefits would make the biggest impact on the business performance of ABC Ltd.

1. Reduction in business risk
2. Easier and more effect collaboration across the company
3. Increased speed and quality of decision making
4. More responsive product development
5. Easier to find people with specific expertise
6. Improved product and service quality
7. Faster speed of reaction to market opportunities and threats
8. Improved customer satisfaction
9. Efficiency gains – more work with the same staff
10. Unifying the organisational culture of Megger
11. Better customer retention
12. More effective induction and integration of new employees

D. Anything else? 5-10 minutes

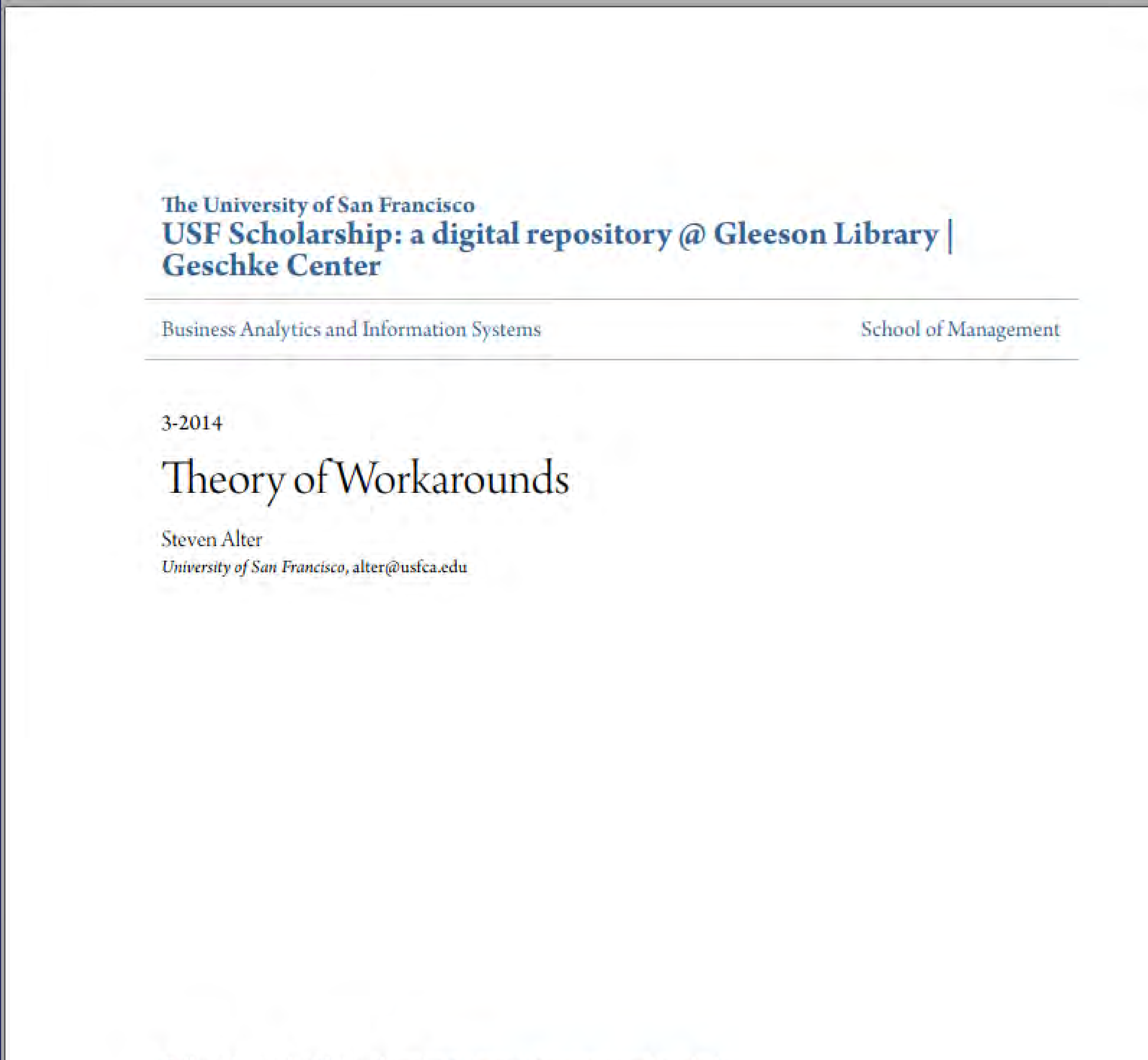
An opportunity to raise other issues or to go back to something we talked about earlier in the interview

Managing user interviews #3

- Always, always, pilot test the interview format
- Never take verbatim notes – you lose eye contact
- Not everyone speaks fluent English
- Hand your “pen” to the interviewee towards the end of the interview
- Agree a summary of the interview before leaving
- Check back the summary a week later
- Keep the interviewee in the loop on project progress, though not on outcomes of the research

Uncovering workarounds

The project is derailed by two (or more) versions of the truth that drive different expectations


The University of San Francisco
USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center

Business Analytics and Information Systems — School of Management

3-2014

Theory of Workarounds

Steven Alter
University of San Francisco, alter@usfca.edu

All types of workarounds

Table 1: An Overview of Workaround Types

Types	Definition
Workaround	Anomalous IS use where actual practices are not consistent with the designed uses and official rules [8]
Shadow System/IT/work	Software applications or extensions to existing software that are neither developed nor controlled by an organization's central IT department [26]
Resistance	Behaviors intended to prevent the implementation or use of a system or to prevent system designers from achieving their objectives [27]
Non compliance	Security best practices and policies that are avoided [28]
Employee/ Workplace Deviance	Voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threatens the well-being of the organization or its members, or both [29]
System Misuse	Perform a behavior that misuse of IS resources [30]
Decoupling/ Loose Coupling	Separating formal rules from actual working practices [8]
Customization	Privately-owned IT resources, such as devices or software that are used for business purposes [31]
Rule Breaking	Violations of formal rules depending on the interests of specific actors and groups inside and outside the organization [32]
Fraud	Ill-intentioned employees use the system for prohibited aims [33]
Computer Abuse	Unauthorized, deliberate, and internally recognizable misuse of assets of the local organizational information system by individuals [10]
Tweaking	Deviation from a prescribed work processes by using a system in a slightly different way [19]
Reinvention	Practices that can be altered or tailored in order to accomplish specific tasks that were not initially planned or supported [34]
Non conformity	Striving for legitimate goals in illegitimate ways [35]

Santa Clara University
Scholar Commons

Operations Management & Information Systems Leavey School of Business

1-2016

Toward an Ontology of Workarounds: A Literature Review on Existing Concepts

Nina Röder

Manuel Wiesche

Michael Schermann
Santa Clara University, mschermann@scu.edu

Helmut Krcmar

Focus groups

- Focus groups seem to be such a good way of getting a spectrum of responses from a spectrum of people
- They are very difficult to manage and always need to be double-headed by the consulting team
- Always always pilot test
- They work best when everyone in the group is known to you already
- It takes only a single person with a personal objective, or new to the group, to wreck a focus group
- In general, it is best to use them to validate outcomes from one-on-one interviews and not as a primary source of information

The definitive guide

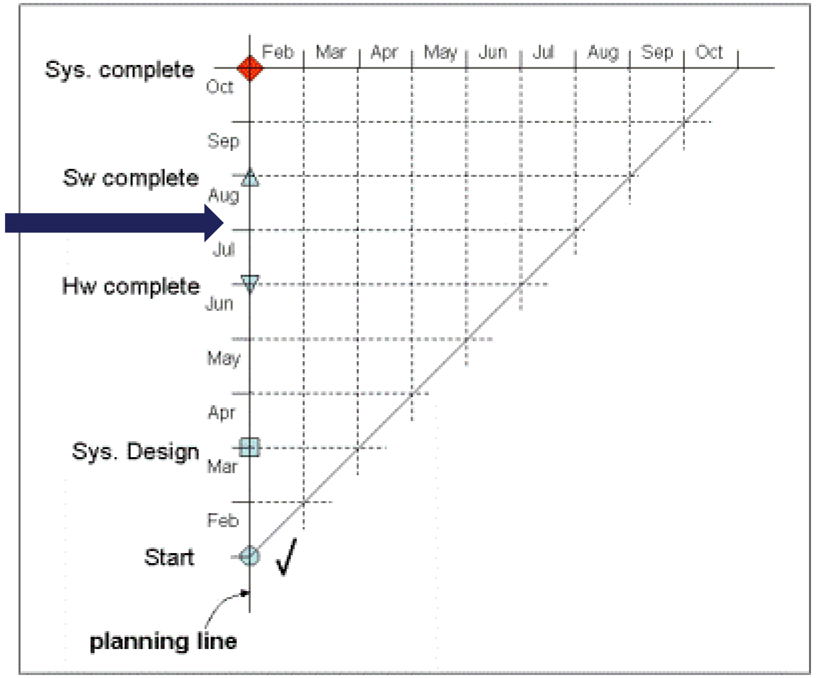
The big concerns… and my Roadmap

- #1 How can we build a win-win relationship?
- #2 How can we ensure we get value for money
- #3 How will we manage scope creep
- #4 How will risks be identified and managed?
- #5 How will we define user requirements?
- #6 How will we keep track of the project?

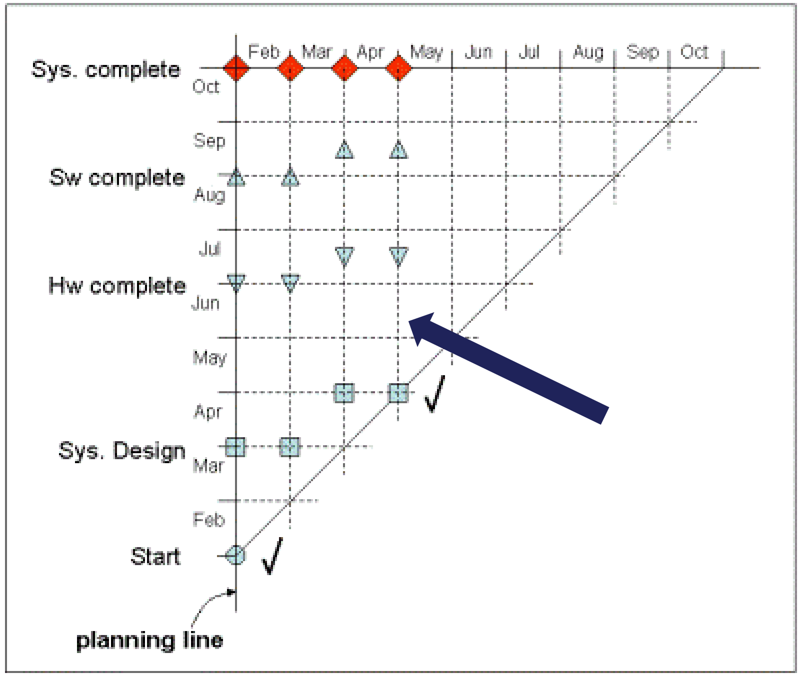
#6 How will we be able to keep track of the project?

Milestone trend analysis diagrams

The initial forecast



Forecast at Month 4



[Milestone Trend Analysis (project-management-knowhow.com)](https://project-management-knowhow.com)

Avoiding failure

Lessons from my experience

1. Never assume that what worked in a previous engagement will work this time around
2. Never assume that all the relevant information has been passed on to you
3. Never try to out-maneouver the client – you do not know who their friends are and they make pay-days possible
4. Never assume that the project team will be consistent and informed
5. Never close out an engagement without having established an enduring relationship with the client

Achieving success

My good practice suggestions

1. Be transparent in the partnership with your client. A consulting engagement should never become a game of power politics
2. Every stakeholder has to feel they have what they expected from the project. Have you personally met all the stakeholders?
3. Make sure that everyone you meet feels that they are vitally important to the successful outcome of the project
4. Recognise that circumstances and objectives may change day to day, and be ready with solutions
5. Always have a helicopter/drone view of the project and don’t get lost in the detail, the excitement and the enthusiasm of the project team

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#3 How will we manage scope creep

#4 How will risks be identified and managed?

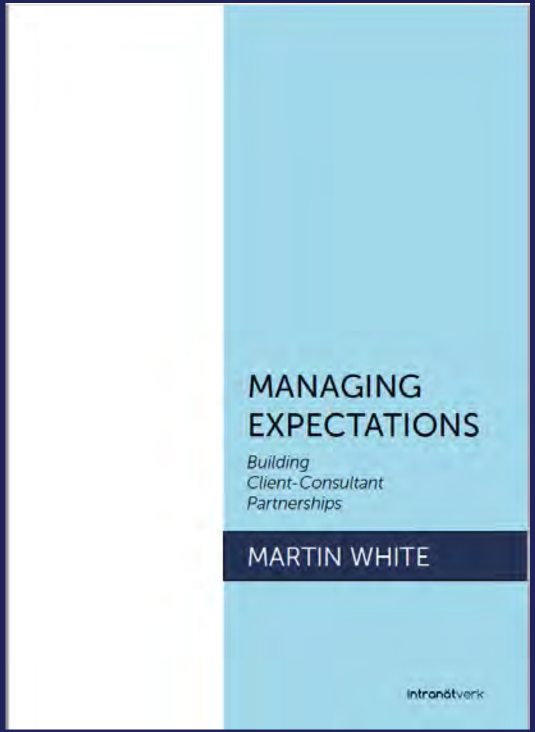
#5 How will we define user requirements?

#6 How will we keep track of the project?

Thank you

- Consulting companies
  - Business International/Creative Strategies International, Link Resources, International Data Corporation and Logica
- Consultants I have worked with, learned from and have great respect for
  - Angela Abell, Howard McQueen, Steve Sieck, Sam Marshall and Peter Jackson
- Clients who taught me and allowed me to experiment
  - International Monetary Fund
  - World Bank
  - MITRE
  - Hoffmann La Roche
  - Atlas Copco
  - Open University
  - Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge

Time for reflection



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