

Compare Your Organization's Project Performance Versus the Best

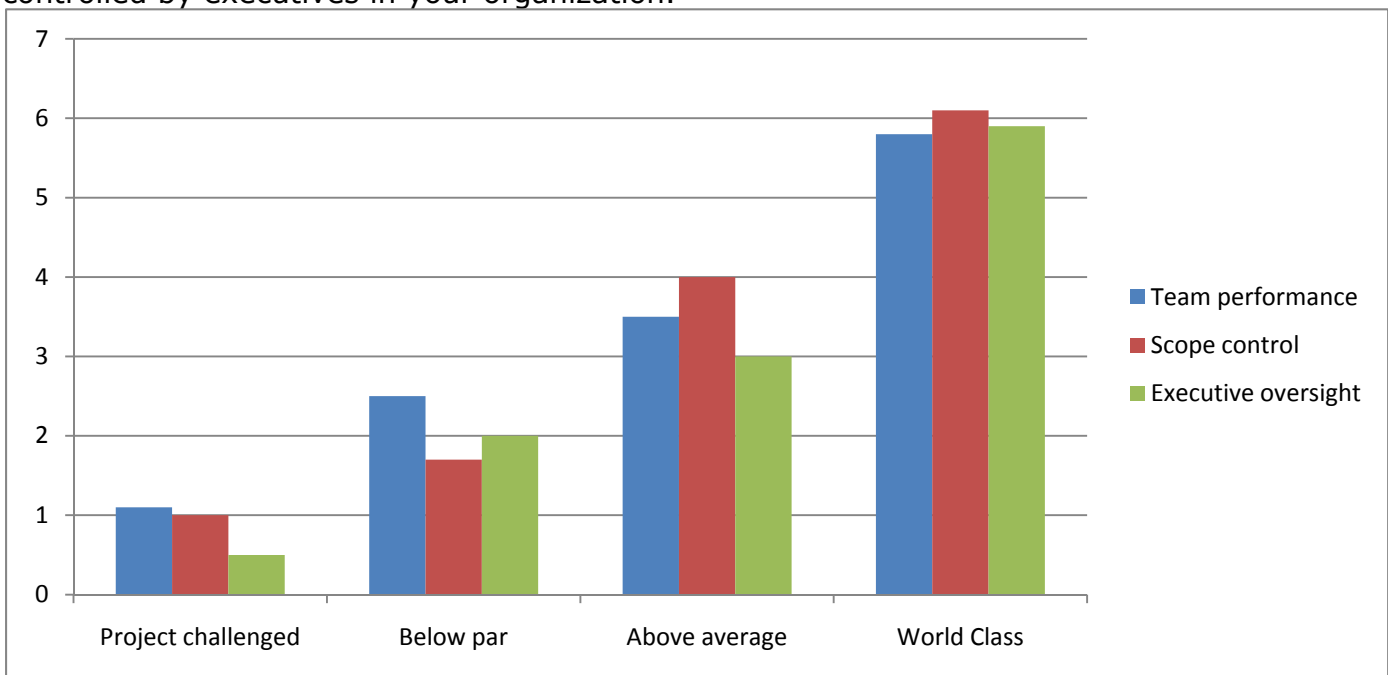


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Summary: In our work with over 300 organizations, we've seen the best and the worst in project management. Compare your organization and see how you stack up against the best on 9 critical success factors.

Organization Project Effectiveness

Answer these questions about how projects are initiated, planned, scheduled, tracked and controlled by executives in your organization.



1. How does your organization set project due dates?

0 PTS – The executives decide the project due date and then the PM tells all the team members they are committed to that date.

2 PTS – The sponsor gives the PM the due date and the PM then calculates everyone's start and finish date so we hit the sponsor's date.

3 PTS – The project manager has the team members estimate how long their tasks will take then the PM shows those estimates to the sponsor who cuts them all by 30%.

5 PTS – The PM and team member jointly estimate the work and the team member's availability to calculate the duration for each task and then the project.

2. How are projects initiated in your organization?

0 PTS – Anyone can start a project whenever they wish. All they need to do is pick a name and ask people to work on it.

3 PTS – Managers can start a project whenever they wish. All they have to do is complete a form discussing the feasibility of the project which is always approved.

5 PTS – project sponsors who want to initiate a project demonstrate the business value which the project will produce in writing and take responsibility for delivering it. Then the management committee evaluates projects, rejects many of them, and approves those which deliver real value.

3. Does your organization prioritize projects?

0 PTS – No, people are on lots of projects and work on the project that interests them the most or the one that has the most intimidating project manager.

3 PTS - Yes, every week we have a new priority number one project and everyone drops everything else to work on it. Each of these top priority projects is soon replaced by another and quickly forgotten.

5 PTS – Yes, when projects are authorized by the organization they are given a priority rank which determines what people work on first.

4. Does the organization manage peoples' workloads?

0 PTS – No. Lots of people, like first level supervisors, are on so many projects they can't do their real jobs and often leave because they get sick of 70 hour weeks.

2 PTS – A little bit, line managers battle with project managers who want their people for their project teams.

5 PTS – The organization lays out maximum project availability for each employee and limits project work to that so it stays within that limit.

5. Is there a project schedule?

1 PTS – No, the PMs make long "to do" lists of tasks on paper or in Excel and spend hours trying to stay current.

2 PTS – We talk about the schedule and decide who will do what in the next week.

5 PTS – Everyone is assigned a task and a schedule for getting the work done and it is updated each week to reflect what happened.

6. Do people on projects know what is expected of them?

0 PTS – No, because the bosses and PMs don't decide what they want until the end.

2 PTS – Not really, because their assignments are vague and change each week.

5 PTS – People are assigned deliverables and have a clear understanding of how their work will be measured when they are finished.

7. How are changes made to the project plan?

0 PTS – The sponsor, managers, the PM, and really almost anyone, adds stuff whenever they want with no change to the time allowed to do the work.

2 PTS – The project manager is always battling to control scope and limit the changes but the PM loses most of those battles.

5 PTS – The PM analyzes the effects of all proposed changes and the sponsor must approve. When they add new features the time estimates are increased too.

8. What information do executives receive about project status?

0 PTS – The executives get subjective assessments of progress and are often surprised by bad news when it is too late to fix things.

2 PTS – The executives receive detailed information on each task in the project but cannot exercise effective control due to the lack of big picture information.

5 PTS – Executives receive exception based reporting showing them the progress measured against quantified check points with forecasts of completion date and cost.

9. Do you succeed with projects involving multiple departments?

0 PTS – No, those big projects always fail because it is so hard to get multiple departments to cooperate. So we do lots of small projects.

2 PTS – We do some big projects but they go on forever and get changed all the time.

5 PTS – We plan and deliver strategic projects, scheduling people so the big projects can deliver results on time.

Score for Your Organization

0-10 pts – 20th percentile - project failure rates above 80% (success = on time, within budget & deliver business value) organization expends significant resources with little return.

11-20 pts – 40th percentile – 66% of projects fail putting the organization at a competitive disadvantage.

21-35 pts - 70th percentile - project success is above 66% and executives count on projects delivering value on time.

36-45 pts – 90th percentile - projects are a competitive weapon that drives the organization's success.

For help in improving your organization's project success rate, contact us for a custom designed project methodology and training your people to use it.