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## Achievement-driven Project Management

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# Achievement-driven Project Management

**Conceiving, managing & tracking projects  
with measured achievements**

Achievement-driven Project Management is a methodology specially developed for managing cross-functional corporate projects. It's quite different from the traditional project management approach that comes from the construction industry. There, you get a set of blueprints before you start that specify where every nut, bolt and window is supposed to go.

In cross-functional corporate projects, we don't get that same set of blueprints before we start. Even if we did, much of the output in a corporate project is intangible... people's ideas about software design, training that increases knowledge about handling a problem or doing a job. These are intangible outputs and we can't count them in the same way we can nuts and bolts. As a result, project managers often get lost trying to apply the construction project management techniques to cross-functional corporate projects. AdPM™ allows us to manage projects around measurable business achievements and avoid projects that are planned at such a detailed level that the plans are useless for making good assignments to people, tracking progress or solving problems.

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Achievement-driven Project Management lets us avoid the problems we see with increasing frequency in “project dense” organizations... those organizations where many people are on several projects. In those organizations, executives can’t exercise control over the organization’s portfolio of projects. Projects and their managers drift from one vague mission to another. Team members feel “stolen from their real jobs” and have no sense of accomplishment but know they’ll share the blame.

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First AdPM has a big dose of strategic project planning where we develop measured results for projects rather than starting with unusable and mushy mission statements like “Delight the Customer.”

Second, AdPM looks at the organization’s protocol for doing projects, covering issues like how we manage the portfolio of projects and how we handle cross-functional accountabilities. We do this by defining projects as having “Four Corners” each of which is measurable... the MOS™, budget, duration and level of confidence in delivering the MOS™ on time and on budget. Executives can then decide on the trade-off between the Four Corners (i.e., what will it cost to finish 4 months earlier?)

Third, it creates a project plan where each individual has a clear measured achievement for which they are accountable.

Last, AdPM sets up Control Tower Monitoring. Yes, just like at the airport, we monitor projects to be sure they are following the flight plan and will land where we expect and on time.

Let’s look at the components in detail.

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### Slide 4

*Ways of increasing the organization's capability to harness project management*

#### **Organizational Protocol for PM**

- Portfolio of projects
- Cross-functional structures
- “4 corners”: budget, duration, risk, MOS

Organizations have ways of allocating resources, granting authority and rewarding performance that either help or hinder overall project performance. When we understand how these things should work, PMs can do much on the front-end of a project to increase the odds of success.

Executives who are fed-up with one failed project after another can also do much to increase the organization's overall project success rate by revising the project protocol.



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*Driving projects from business relevant outcomes, is the most difficult part of our approach but it sets up our measured achievement orientation for everything that follows*

**MOS  
Measure of Success**

Conceiving a measure of success (MOS™) is the most intellectually challenging part of the achievement driven process. We are all focused on what we are going to do but the skill we need during project planning is the ability to conceive a business relevant outcome and then to decide how to measure it. Often this process requires the PM to politely question upper-level executives who are also consumed with the activities in the project and not the measured strategic results.

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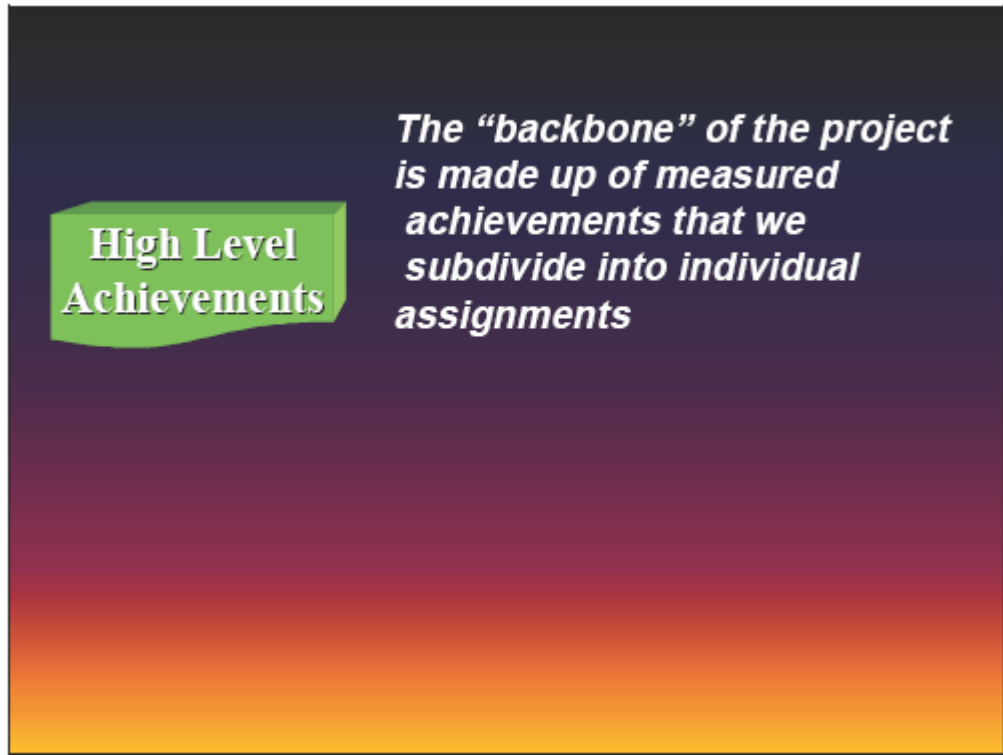
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With the MOS™ approved by the sponsor, we proceed to detail the backbone of the project, developing a network of measured achievements that lead us from where we are to where we want to go... the project's Measure of Success. This is also a difficult thinking task but it creates the "blueprint" which construction project managers are handed.

We continue this top-down planning process, subdividing the high level achievements until we reach down to the level where we have defined measured achievements for each assignment in the project.

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One very valuable use of the high-level achievement network is that it clearly details the accountabilities needed to deliver the project. We use this network to select the individuals who will be accountable and then provide them with the authority to deliver their achievements.

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**Individual achievements  
with linked rewards**

*Our previous steps allow us to  
assign individuals achievements  
where they know what is expected  
and what a “good job” is before  
they start*

Our planning process gives us measured achievements for each individual working on the project. We will use them for our work estimating process wherein we gain people's commitment to the achievement and the resources (hours of work) they need to deliver it. The wise PM also crafts what we call “just fruits” for each achievement which can be positive or negative. These “fruits” provide an incentive to high achievers and “bitter grapes” to those who don't deliver on their commitments. The result is that everyone knows before they start work what's expected and what will happen if they perform well.

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**Control Tower Tracking**

*We track progress against our measured achievements and find that all our previous steps allow us to spend time solving problems, not trying to find out if we have any*

With the planning done and the project's "Four Corners" approved, we begin work on our Control Tower tracking. We use weekly status reports and PM software to track what's happened and layout solutions to the problems we encounter. Rather than spend endless hours in mind-numbing status meetings trying to decide if we have a problem, all our work to date allows us to spend our time solving the problems we have.

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Cross-functional corporate projects are different and Achievement-driven Project Management provides the skill set than PMs need to succeed. The methodology requires more thinking up-front but repays that investment with better project results and more effective PMs.

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