



Project Remedies Inc.

# Effective Project Management For Large Enterprise Organizations

Using the Game-Changing Capabilities from Project Remedies Inc.



A White Paper from Project Remedies Inc.  
June 2021



## Effective Project Management.

### Executive Summary.

Effective project management is effective management. Rather than “project management” being done by a small group of people in an office, effective project management involves everyone on the team. If projects are not managed, most will not finish.

This white paper is divided into the following sections:

- Measure what you manage. What you need to measure.
- Measuring a large organization with multiple teams doing the same things. Comparing “apples with apples” is critical. Consistency and Transparency. Define processes centrally / implement them globally.
- To implement an enterprise-wide application, it has to be easy enough for your weakest links to use.
- The importance of the Weekly Team Meeting.
- Nothing is managed uniquely. It is all based on processes. The “operational processes” are the ones to measure, not the ITIL processes.
- Improving performance. What can be done? “Metrics-based decision making vs. opinion-based decision making.”
- Implementing and maintaining a Continuous Process Improvement Program. Eliminating the need to train people on the process.
- Summary
- Project Remedies and our ActionProgram Manager Plus. Priced like a Chevy.

## Effective Project Management.

One of the truisms about projects is: if you don't manage a project, it's not going to finish let alone on- time and on-budget. Are there exceptions? Of course. But if the well-known statistic, 70% of the projects don't finish, is true, that's an indication of poor project management but also an indication of poor management. At any management training class, you are taught to “measure what you manage.” At IBM sales training, they taught that a manager's job requires two skills: “delegate” and “inspect” and “inspect” is more important.

### Measure what you manage. What you need to measure.

To be an effective manager, you want to know if a project is not going to finish on-time and or on –budget at the earliest time possible. That gives you the chance to adjust your plan, to figure out what needs to be done to get the project back on schedule. The earlier you know that a project is not going to finish on-time and or on-budget, the better your odds of any adjustment being successful.

Effective management answers the question “How do you know?” At any level of management for any type of company, a manager wants to know: “Are my people working on what they



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should be working on, what I want them working on?” To be an effective manager, you need to be able to answer this question. How frequently you need the answer depends on your personality.

Effective project management is in the same vein? If you are managing projects, managing the people working the tasks that make up the project plan is critical. And if you multiply the time people spend on a task by a rate, that's cost. They all work together.

Measure what you manage. How do you measure managing projects? How about:

- Did it finish?
- On-time?
- On-budget?

How do you measure the people working project tasks? How about:

- Did they do what you wanted them to do, i.e. finish their tasks?
- When they were supposed to do it?
- For the time / cost they told you it would take / cost?

Do you call this project management? Resource management? Cost management? What about all three rolled together, because they all work together.

And if you are managing and measuring people, the best way to do that is to include them in the system. When assigned to tasks, the task detail should tell the workers what they need to do, when they need to do it and how much time they have to complete the task. If you give the workers the ability to status their tasks, they are documenting their performance. At the weekly team meeting, the workers are right there in front of you to explain what they did, when they did it and how long it took. No excuses. Someone called this “implementing discipline.”

For this white paper, let's define several terms. “Tasks” are the things people work on. Let's call the people doing this work “workers.” A “project” is a series of tasks worked in a specific sequence. A “process” is also a series of tasks worked in a specific sequence. A “manager” leads a team of people. Among the things managers are responsible for are: 1) finishing projects, 2) on-time and 3) on-budget.

Two plans and the actual time it took to complete each task needs to be tracked. The “baseline plan” is the schedule and cost plan the performing organizations agreed to, i.e. they agreed that they will finish the tasks by the dates in the plan for the cost in the plan. The “baseline plan” is agreed to before the project starts. After the project starts, the “current plan” is based on the actual performance for some of the tasks as well as a new plan for the remainder of the tasks. The “actuals” are when each task was completed and the time / cost it actually took to complete.

“On-time” means that you have an agreed upon schedule and as the work is performed, the dates when the work is done is compared with the agreed upon schedule, i.e. the baseline plan. Similarly “on-budget” means you have an agreed upon budget for the project and as the work is performed, the actual cost of the work is calculated and compared with the agreed upon budget.

From a management standpoint, comparing the actuals to the baseline plan is important and comparing the current plan to the baseline plan is critical to insuring that a project will finish on-



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time and on-budget. If a project is falling behind, either the schedule or the cost, you want the system to notify you in time to take action. Knowing weeks or months late is not helpful.

From an applications standpoint, all of the above includes process management, project management, resource management and cost management. Bottom line up front, Project Remedies' ActionProgram Manager Plus (APM Plus) incorporates and integrates all of this functionality and is a great tool for use during the Weekly Team Meeting. It includes all of the reports necessary to measure resource performance against project tasks.

**Measuring a large organization with multiple teams doing the same things. Comparing “apples with apples” is critical. Consistency. Define processes centrally / implement them globally.**

If your organization has “multiple teams in multiple locations doing the same things,” to measure these teams, one metric you will want to know is “which teams are doing what they are doing best?” Having these answers helps measure the various teams. In order to compare, apples need to be compared with other apples. There needs to be consistency is what is measured. That's why putting processes into production becomes a factor. “Best” can involve multiple factors, but surely three are: finishing, on-time and on-budget.

Documenting your processes and then using them to generate projects plans and cost plans is the best way to manage disparate teams that do the same things. If every team decided on their own plan, comparing “apples with apples” is out the window. For example, if multiple teams on-board new employees and off-board employees who have left the organization, documenting the tasks that are involved in each process and then using those processes to generate project and cost plans helps you achieve your “effective management” goal. Assigning the tasks to specific people and then having them status the tasks is best. That way, they are accountable for their work and if each person is doing the statusing, there are no excuses. A distributed project management system, where the tasks are assigned to the workers, and then the workers status the tasks, is best.

(I used to say that processes need to be “defined” but that's wrong. Your people have been doing what they do for years. “Documenting” what they do is the much more accurate term. A documented process is leadership's statement of how something should be done.

- When a new employee joins the company, they want to know how the company wants each one of these processes performed. They either learn this over time by sitting with employees who have been with the company for years, or . . . you tell them: here's how we do it.
- If your company buys another company, what the people in the new company want to know the same thing, i.e. how their new employer wants things done. If a merger goes badly, often the problem is described as “cultural differences.” How are the people in the merged company supposed to know how you want things done if you do not tell them?
- When a company outsources operations to an outsourcer, having your processes documented tells the outsourcer how you expect things to be done. If you don't give them this information, how are they supposed to know?)

But let's say that each organization insists on developing their own plans, another alternative is to say “OK. You can use your own plan for 3 -6 months, but you need to capture the metrics. At the end of the period, we will compare each organization's performance to see which is best.”



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Let's say, to on-board a new employee, one team's plan has 5 tasks; the second team's plan has 10 tasks; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> team's plan has 15 tasks. The question is: how long did each team to on-board employees? Let's say that 1<sup>st</sup> team did it in, on average, in one week. The 2<sup>nd</sup> team did it on average in 2 weeks. The 3<sup>rd</sup> team did it on average in 8 weeks. Interestingly, none of these teams know this and leadership does not know it either. When you see the metrics, in order to improve efficiency, your first question is: why did it take the 3<sup>rd</sup> team so much longer than the other teams to do the same thing? At that point, you need to be able to look at the task detail. If the teams were using the same tasks, i.e. had consistency, it would be easier to see the issue(s), and then take action.

### **To implement an enterprise-wide application, it has to be easy enough for your weakest links to use.**

What if you do not have confidence in your team, that they can do this? What if your team is "not disciplined enough?" In fact, to implement a project management system application enterprise-wide, you will not have enough trained project managers even if you have a few good ones. The team will only be as effective as the weakest link, right? That's why the system has to be easy enough for everyone in each of their roles to use. In addition, the system has to be able to automatically notify people to remind them when they have to do their job, continue to remind them until they start their job and or finish their job, and if necessary, notify leadership of the situation in time for leadership to take action.

These were a key design goals of our ActionProgram Manager Plus. Using processes to automatically generate project plans means there is consistency in the project and cost plans. In addition, if the system is generating the project and cost plans, the Team Leader or whoever is in the project manager role does not have to do that. Similarly, if the workers are statusing their tasks, if the system is notifying the workers and reminding them when they need to do their work, the Team Leader does not have to do that either. This is also why an application like MS Project is not a good choice for a large enterprise. It is not easy enough for all of the people in each role to use enterprise-wide, and you do not need many people to not comply in order for the system to be ineffective.

### **The importance of the Weekly Team Meeting.**

The Weekly Team Meeting is a key management tool. For effective management, the Team Lead, the lowest level of management, sits with the workers i.e. his/her team. Two of the things they discuss are: 1) what is the status of the tasks that were supposed to be completed last week in order for the projects to be completed on time, and 2) what are the tasks that need to be completed this week in order for the projects to be completed on time? The "workers" are the people working the tasks so they are right in front of the Team Lead. No excuses. All managers up to the President of the company want visibility into this level of detail at different points in time, again depending on their personality and or who was on their last phone call.

"Effective (project) management" means, at least weekly, managing and tracking the project tasks that were supposed to be completed last week, and the project tasks that need to be completed this week in order for the projects we are working to be finished on-time, and hopefully on-budget.



**Nothing is managed uniquely. It is all based on processes. The “operational processes” are the ones to measure, not the ITIL processes.**

Nothing is managed uniquely. The things done might be unique but how they are managed is not unique. For example, at the General Electric Corporation, whether your division is making light bulbs or diesel locomotives, the same accounting system is measures revenues and costs.

If you are building a house, a process is followed. When you are building a new network or processing an acquisition, there is the right way to do it. On-boarding a new employee? Same. Responding to a cybersecurity attack? Same. You can think of lots of examples. These are called your “operational processes.”

Let’s divide this up between a “request” (someone submits a request that a new employee named Bob is going to join the company on a specific date) and the process, i.e. the list of tasks that must be completed for Bob to be effective when he starts. The sooner Bob is effective, the better. These processes, the “operational processes” are the processes you want to measure.

The Information Technology Information Library (ITIL) processes are important to implement well. These include service request management, incident management, problem management, change management, asset management and others. While it is important to know how many incidents an organization performed in a month for example, knowing this does not improve operational performance nor pinpoint opportunities for efficiency. Operational processes might be considered multi-task requests while an incident, problem or change would be considered a single-task request. For example, on-boarding a new employee or building a new network or acquiring an asset or responding to a cybersecurity attack are operational processes. Each might be initiated with a service request but they all involve usually multiple organizations performing a series of tasks.

When measuring the effectiveness, you want to measure the effectiveness of the team, not an individual team member except as that person is a member of the team. If you go up to a worker, without having the metrics, and ask if they are working efficiently or effectively, whatever word you want to use, they look at you like you are crazy and say: “Of course.” You need the metrics.

**Improving performance. What can be done? “Metrics-based decision making vs. opinion-based decision making.”**

The great Nelson Couvertier told me “When you take an organizational improvement class, in the end, they tell you 3 things can be done. You can 1) change the process, 2) train the person, or 3) fire the person, and to do any of the three today, you need the metrics.” And it’s true. The metrics are: task duration and time at task.

Let’s continue with our example. One team adds a new employee in one week. Another does it in two weeks. A third team does it in 8 weeks. Knowing that helps pinpoint the problem, but to improve efficiency, you need the detail. How long did each task in the process take and how much time was spent on each task? Let’s continue with this example. If all of the tasks except one are performed by the 3 teams in roughly the same length of time and amount of time spent, you need to talk with the person or people performing that specific task on Team 3 with the metrics in hand. With the metrics, the Team Lead can say to this person: “Let’s review the



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metrics. The other teams are doing this task in 1 day and you have been consistently doing the task in 8 days. What's up?" Or something to that effect. With the metrics, you can have a conversation. Without the metrics, there is nothing to discuss.

A friend told me about their experience involving acquisitions and their Legal Department. One task in their acquisition process is to send the package to Legal for review. Their standard is for the package to be in Legal for a month. Why? Because that's the time the manager wanted. 6 weeks after submitting a package to Legal, he got an email telling him there are several spelling errors in a particular paragraph that needed to be corrected and sent back to Legal to get their approval. His question was: How long did the people in Legal work on this during that month? Did the people in Legal spend 3 hours on this document during the 6 weeks? 6 hours? 120 hours? Surely, if you had these metrics, this seems like an opportunity for efficiency. But without the metrics, there is really nothing to talk about. One manager calls this "metrics-based decision making vs. opinion-based decision making."

### **Implementing and maintaining a Continuous Process Improvement Program. Eliminating the need to train people on the process.**

To implement and maintain a continuous process improvement program, I do not want this to sound stupid but 1) your processes need to be documented, 2) these processes need to be put into production, 3) the performance metrics, i.e. the metrics needed to improve performance, need to be captured and 4) reviewed so you know how to improve each process over time.

This is "compliance." Reviewing performance is done monthly by the Process Owner of each process. How do you know that the people are working the tasks in the process? The answer is: implement a system that generates the tasks automatically, have the responsible person assign the tasks to the workers, and then have them, the workers, status the tasks as they work them. The system should automatically capture the actual start date for each task and the actual completion date for the task, and allow each person to easily enter their time-spent. Implementing the ITIL processes is not the answer. Implementing the ITIL processes, however important, will not give you the results.

Just training the people on the process is not enough and not effective. An employee at a major Florida utility told me that they brought in a major accounting firm that spent 1.5 years documenting their processes. They made hundreds of copies and put the copies into 3-ring binders. They brought everyone in and reviewed the processes in detail. At the end of the training, as they were leaving, all the workers said "Yes, sir" and "Yes, ma'am, that's exactly the way we are going to do it." Watching them leave, the leadership and the trainers realized they had no idea what they people were going to do. They had no idea how much the people would remember by the following Monday.

Also, if you have teams all over the world, exactly how are you going to train them anyway? And we know that in the first month after you put a process into production, the process will need to be tweaked. How are you going to train them on the revised process? If processes are used to generate the project and cost plans, the workers do not need to be trained on the process. All they have to know is how to status the tasks assigned to them. If they want to learn about the process, they can click on the Gantt chart button. The Gantt chart is a representation of the process.



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I said I did not want to sound stupid because a recently sat through a 2 hour review of a major government agency requirements for a new ITIL-based tracking system. When the Team Lead, who is a really smart person, came to the paragraph on implementing a continuous process improvement program, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in his presentation, he stopped and said, as an aside, “We’ve really had a hard time implementing a continuous process improvement program.” What went through my mind was: “No kidding. You have not documented your processes; have not put them into production; and not capturing the performance metrics needed to improve the processes. 1 + 1 is still 2.”

### Summary.

Effective management means effective resource management. This involves several steps.

At the Weekly Team Meeting, in order to complete projects on-time and on-budget, a main part of the agenda is to discuss 1) the tasks that were supposed to be completed last week and 2) the tasks that are scheduled to be completed this week.

Working backwards from the Team Meeting:

- The people working the tasks should be responsible for statusing the tasks. That way, there are no excuses for not getting the work done on-time and on-budget.
- The tasks need to be assigned to the people so they know what they are responsible for, when the work needs to be done and how much time they have to do the work. To hold people accountable, you have to tell them your expectations first, and then check that they met your expectations.
- Use processes to generate project plans and cost plans. That way, all of the teams are tracking the same task plans and cost plans.
- Document your work and approval processes so they can be used to generate project plans and cost plans.

### **Project Remedies and our ActionProgram Manager Plus (APM Plus). Priced like a Chevy.**

Project Remedies Inc. is a 28 year old Veteran Owned Small Business and has a great deal of experience in process and project management. We are both a services and technology company with excellent, close working relationships with our customers. Our focus is on helping organizations automate processes and capture the performance metrics needed to establish and maintain a continuous process improvement program. Both processes performed by computers and processes performed by people.

Our application, ActionProgram Manager Plus (APM Plus) is used for the latter. It is a robust end-to-end solution that automates process management, project management, resource management and cost management functionality, and captures the performance metrics needed to implement and maintain a continuous process improvement program. The most complete product on the market, it is nevertheless priced like a Chevy, not a Cadillac. It is now available as a service on Microsoft Azure. Our first user, Bear Stearns, licensed APM Plus to support their enterprise-wide Six Sigma Program. The National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency was our largest user. The Navy’s Facility Engineering Command is implementing it now. Measure what you manage.