



BECOME A GREAT  
PROJECT MANAGER  
THAT LEADS EACH  
PROJECT TO  
SUCCESS!



**10 REASONS WHY PROJECTS FAIL  
AND HOW TO FIX IT!**

**BY ADRIANA GIRDLER, PMP**

# SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE...



If we haven't officially met, my name is Adriana Girdler, CET, PMP and I'm the president of CornerStone Dynamics and a certified project manager with over 20+ years in the business. Not only am I passionate about efficiency and improvement and tie that into everything I do, I've also helped countless companies and individuals achieve successful projects goals.

My clients have seen such success after my help on their projects.

Here are a couple of examples of what people have said about the help I've given them with project management:

"Adriana **really knows her stuff**. As a new Project Manager, I found myself working a lot of evenings sorting through email and getting prepared for the next day. Adriana, through her coaching, has shown me with **good planning and prioritizing**, most of the job can be done during core business hours. My organizational systems have been **upgraded** and I am now **more confident** that I am spending my time on the **most important tasks** during my workday and daily planning is now a breeze. This has resulted in a greater sense of organization, more time with my family, and **less overall stress**." Sheril Cave-O'Leary, Product Manager, Diabetes

"I recently received some coaching sessions from Adriana as I've been looking at ways to **enhance my skill set as a Project Manager**. I am so glad I spent the money to get Adriana's coaching as she provided many **great insights**, exposed me to **tools** that I could benefit from, and gave **great advice** and feedback...I highly recommend Adriana's services to anyone looking to **optimize** the way they work."  
Dan Harren, Senior Project Manager

And people like Sheril and Dan are not alone! If you follow my steps for SLAYING project management, you will also see improvement. The better you manage projects, the more positive impact you can have on your team. I'm honoured to be your guide! Let's SLAY Project Management!



# 10 REASONS WHY PROJECTS FAIL

Project success is about knowing how to navigate and stay clear of roadblocks, issues and problems. Understand the top 10 reasons why projects fail and what to do to avoid them.

## 1 - PROJECT TEAM EXPECTATIONS ARE VAGUE OR UNREALISTIC

A project is more than just completing tasks. It's about having a team in performance mode, working together to creatively resolve issues.

To do this, having clear expectations and ways of working is key when it comes to project success. Not only is it critical for the team to know **WHAT** needs to be done, but before the project is in full swing, they need to know **HOW** to accomplish it all within the project timeline while doing their regular day job.

If these expectations and ways of working aren't set, project team members often get frustrated, tired and burnt out. This leads to a cycle of procrastination, exhaustion and individuals not caring which will not set up your team for success.

So, set realistic expectations and clear goals before the project starts. A **GREAT** project manager checks in with their team members to ensure everyone understands their role and the part they play in the success of the project. **EVERYONE** contributes to the project's success, and it's important for each team member to understand this in order to prevent the project from falling off track!

## 2 - POOR RISK MANAGEMENT

Here's the truth: there are risks in every project. A sure-fire way to see your project fail is by failing to account for these risks. Change and risk are sure to arise as you move forward with a project. But by preparing for this from the start, you're setting your team up for success to deal with risk in the right way, that might otherwise throw off your project if you hadn't been prepared.

Risks need to be proactively anticipated. Identify risks (known and potential) and as a team, rank the probability and put together mitigation and contingency plans. Don't let your project fail because of improper risk management!

### 3 - POOR COMMUNICATION



Ever think that you communicated something well, but you find out later that your team just didn't get the message, or someone misunderstood your instructions? Or perhaps it's been the other way around, and you've completely misunderstood someone. I think we've all been on both sides of that situation, and both ways are equally as frustrating.

If you've watched many of my videos, you'll know that one of my favourite tips to give is to **OVER-COMMUNICATE!** This may sound like a simple tip, but don't skim over it - let me **COMMUNICATE** to you how important this is because there's more to understand here than you think.

The key to project success is to over-communicate project information. Even if you feel like you've said everything, you need to say, say it again; people are busy, preoccupied, and distracted, and it's better to be on the safe side when it comes to communicating things that are critical to the project's outcome.

The last thing you want on a project is to have everyone on a different page. As a project manager, you ought to be involved with your team, meaning, don't just tell everyone as a group what to do; do one-on-ones, check in with individuals, and ask your team if they're facing any issues or confusion.

And, for the sake of over-communication, I'll say it again: **REPEAT** instructions, **ASK** clarifying questions and **LISTEN** to what is said to **ENSURE** team understanding...then do it again!

### 4 - THE NON-PROJECT MANAGER

I'm sure you've heard of (or experienced) a situation that goes something like this...

An individual in the organization is succeeding and **THRIVING** in their department or position. Because of their success, they get promoted to leading a project. Great! ...Right?

Wrong. If this person, who's been successful in one area, has no experience in project management and doesn't get the proper training to be an adequate project manager, they're likely missing the skills and understanding required to successfully do the job. I've seen many careers negatively impacted and projects fail because of this!

Good news for you, this won't be a reason your project fails - after all, you're here, doing the dedicated work of learning how to be a great project manager! Stick with me for a while longer, learn more of what I'm here to teach you, and you'll be able to avoid **ALL** ten things on this list and see a successful project. Sound good? Keep reading!



## 5 - WHAT'S THE PLAN?

I'll let you in on a secret...

You CAN'T wing a project and have it be successful.

You need a solid plan!

Don't skip out on planning your project - poor planning is a common reason for projects to fail. A **SOLID PLAN** enables you to understand what needs to be done from start to finish, by whom and when.

Remember, a project plan is not just a task list but a guide that helps you manage project scope, quality, timelines, budgets, risks, resources and more.

Think about it this way... When you're properly planning your project, you're mapping your way to success!



## 6 - NO PROJECT CHARTER

Let's look at a quick overview on what a basic project charter tells you:



Why are we looking at this overview?

Well, what happens if you don't have these foundational elements outlined?

You guessed it: the project fails!

What better way for a project to fail than to simply set it up for failure from the start by not highlighting these key pieces of information at the beginning of the project.

The charter is the project's foundation.

Without it, the project is sure to start off on the wrong foot. Overlooking the project charter means your project is starting off severely lacking all the key elements it needs to succeed. Don't make this mistake!

## 7 - MISSING EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

This is a sad but true way that projects are **GUARANTEED** to fail...

Why is executive support so important? Well, the senior executive team can ensure that the project is aligned with corporate objectives and strategies as well as remove any project roadblocks. Trying to complete a successful project without this support is difficult!

The executive team ought to be engaged in the project, ensuring that the project is seen through to the end and that the project team is **DEDICATED** to its progress!



## **8 - LACK OF DOCUMENTATION**

If you've been around my videos for a while, this is another one you've heard me say before...

Document, document, DOCUMENT!

The mistake many people make on projects is that their documentation is not organized or centralized, or worse yet, there is a lack of detail regarding tasks, status and deliverables. Great documents have real, measurable points!

A project needs multiple documents to be successful such as scope statements, charters, project plan, change management plan, etc. Formalize and centralize documents! Make sure they are ALWAYS updated. This is key to ensuring that everyone is working on the latest and greatest information.

## **9 - SCOPE CREEP, POORLY MANAGED**

A project's requirements often change over the course of the project or need to be reassessed due to customer needs that are ever-changing. When important project stakeholders change requirements, this is called scope creep!

A GREAT project manager (like the one you will be) KNOWS scope creep is a likelihood, EXPECTS it and PLANS for it.

A GREAT project manager knows how to analyze a project and respond to changes in such a way that scope creep is well-handled and doesn't cause a project to fail.

A GREAT project manager knows how to manage scope creep effectively within the project and from external stakeholders that don't understand that "adding this one simple thing" CAN and WILL negatively impact project timelines and budget.

## **10 - DODGING CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Trust me... failing to address a team dynamics issue is one of the worst things you can do for your project and your team.

If an issue is brought to your attention or you notice a conflict, address this right away! Failing to address a team dynamics issue promptly and properly only cultivates a negative work environment, rather than a positive one.

By practicing good conflict resolution, your team will not only trust you, but there will be less bumps in the road, they'll work better together, and the work environment on the project will be POSITIVE. Every individual on the team has the power and choice to help cultivate a positive environment, but it's up to the project manager to lead by example.

When conflict resolution is ignored, the right environment for project failure is being cultivated. But it doesn't have to happen that way. This is easily fixed if you, as a project manager, deal with conflict immediately!

# NOW, WHAT'S NEXT?



Now you know reasons why projects fail and how to avoid them. But, how do you become a GREAT project manager who puts all these elements into practice?

## I'M HOSTING **FREE TRAINING** ON THE 5 SECRETS TO GO FROM ZERO TO HERO IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

We are going to cover things like:

- ✓ How to get everyone on the same page - and keep them there
- ✓ The 5 project management steps you need to run every project
- ✓ The balancing act between scope, time and budget
- ✓ How to pick the right moment to have your kick-off meeting
- ✓ Why asking "what can go wrong" is so important plus strategies to deal with that

