

# Managing Complex Projects

As our projects become more complex, project success becomes more elusive. In PMI's in-depth *Pulse of the Profession* report titled Navigating Complexity, PMI listed three very critical reasons why organizations must address the nature of complexity within their projects:

1. Complexity is not going away and will only increase.
2. Large budgets are at stake — according to the report, the average budgets for projects that are highly complex are nearly twice as large as the average project.
3. Effectively navigating complexity delivers a competitive advantage.

What makes a project complex? Many things. Multiple stakeholders, a virtual project team with diverse languages and cultures, dependence on emerging technologies, political uncertainty, replacing key systems within a live environment — just to name a few.

In this highly interactive and discussion based 2-day workshop, participants will explore actual high profile examples of complex projects, identify what made them complex and the impact of the complexity on their eventual success or failure. Participants will also learn how even a basic understanding of complex theory, together with project management best practices, can be applied to complex projects in order to improve project outcome. Participants will also be given the opportunity to explore a complex project in which they or their colleagues are currently involved, so that they may better understand how the learned techniques apply to their actual project environment.

## Who should attend

- Project Managers
- Project team members
- Functional Managers

## Materials

- Course workbook
- Course reference files
- A framed certificate of completion

## Participants will learn how to ...

- Apply basic concepts of complexity theory in order to create project metrics and enhance project outcomes
- Identify how project risk factors influence project complexity and our decisions on how they are handled
- Identify key drivers of project complexity
- Apply key project management techniques — including your soft skills — to help harness complexity and improve project outcomes

## Style of session

- Collaborative learning through...
  - Group discussions
  - Challenging of assumptions
  - Exploring of complex projects through case studies
  - Applying learned techniques

## Prerequisites

- 3-day *Project Management Essentials: Part 1* (or its equivalent)

## Course outline

### DAY 1

#### Introduction

- What challenges do you face regarding complex?
- Definition - Complexity
- Definition - Complexity Theory
- Characteristics of a Complex Project
- A framework for measuring project complexity
- Definition - Systems Thinking
- Exercise: Identify a complex project that you are (or have recently been) involved

#### Case study #1

- Read Case Study
- Discussion - What makes this a "complex project"?
- Identifying what drives complexity in projects
- Harnessing the power of complex systems
- Regaining control in a complex environment

### DAY 2

#### Case study #2

- Read Case Study
- Discussion - What makes this a "complex project"?
- Exercise: Identify the drivers of complexity within this scenario?
- Discussion: Had the drivers of complexity been identified at the time by those involved in the project, could they have anticipate what eventually took place?
- Discussion: How could an application of complex theory, together with the application of sound project management best practices, have positively influenced the eventual outcome?

#### Participant Group Project

- Identify a current (or recent) *Complex Project* in which you are (were) involved
- Discussion - What makes this a "complex project"?
- Exercise: What are the drivers of complexity within the project?
- Discussion: do the drivers of complexity help to explain what is being (or was) observed?
- How can an application of complex theory, together with sound project management best practices, positively influenced the eventual outcome?

#### Wrap-up

- Summary of key points
- Action items
- Next steps

## Additional Information

- Participants qualify for 14 Professional Development Units (PDUs) or 14 Contact Hours

For more information or to arrange an in-house delivery of this workshop, call us toll free at 1-800-214-8096 or email us at [info@wcpconsulting.com](mailto:info@wcpconsulting.com)