

## Project Success Method

### Aspire to complete victory



What self-respecting mountain climber would consider a climb successful if they only got two-thirds of the way to the summit? Yet in performing projects, people tend to be all too willing to accept and, in fact, often aim for only partial success.

Three dimensions of performance are applied to measuring the performance of any project:

1. Time (duration or completion date)
2. Cost
3. Quality of the deliverables produced

A frequently quoted but short-sighted project management philosophy is, “Time, cost, or quality – pick two.” This philosophy implies that it is not usually possible to achieve success on all three dimensions. The project customer will have to be satisfied with success on only the two most important performance dimensions. The third performance dimension must be allowed to slide.

But experience shows that well-managed projects are successful on all three-performance dimensions, whereas poorly managed projects are usually failures on all three dimensions. And the reason for this phenomenon is based on the fact that one of the three dimensions is the key to success on all three. If you manage one of the three dimensions effectively, the chances of success on the other two are greatly increased. Stated negatively, if you fail to manage the key dimension, you will have virtually no chance of success on the other two.

If you haven’t already figured it out, the key project performance dimension is time. If you do not manage the time dimension effectively, your project will end up in panic, where excessive costs will be incurred and quality will be compromised in a desperate effort to finish the project.

Don’t misconstrue this statement to imply that time is more important than quality or cost from your customer’s point of view. The most important performance dimension will vary from one project to another, but you must manage time to have any hope of achieving success on whatever dimension is most important to the customer.

As a project customer or sponsor, you should demand total project success. As a project manager, you must aspire to total project success and instill that same aspiration in every member of your project team.