Project Scope is Project Quality

Simon's Observations on Projects – SOOP

Sensible solutions for an often irrational world   Training, Mentoring, Consulting
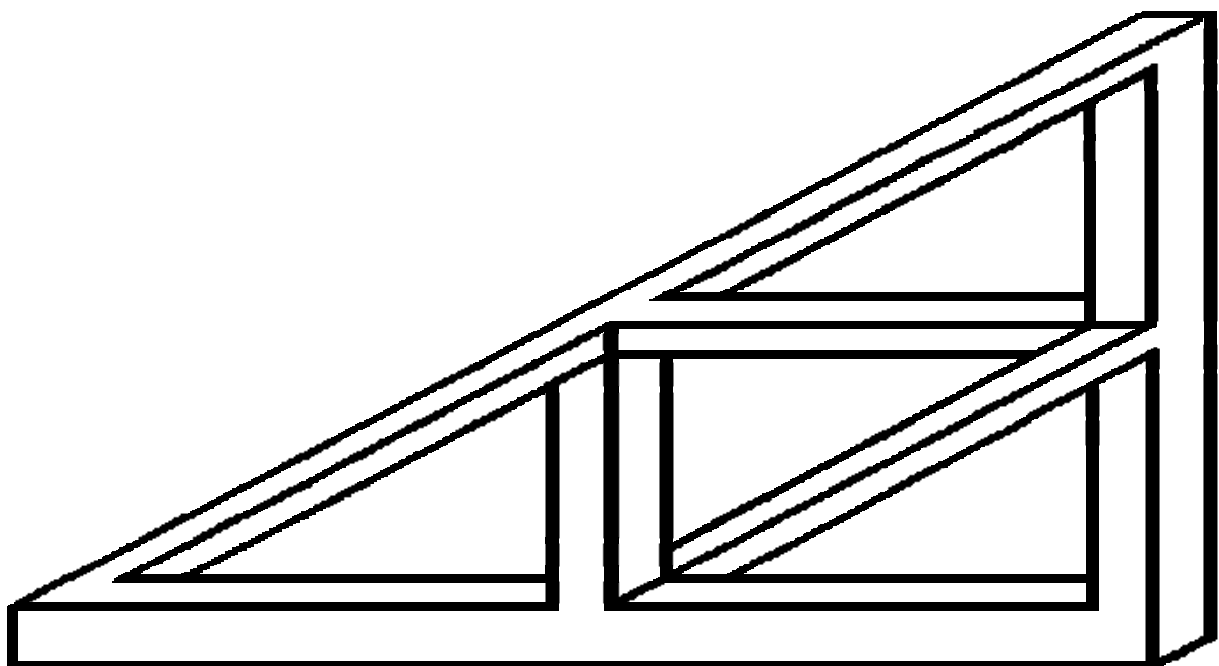
Who We Are

Simon᾿s experience applies to technically complex, large-scale blue-chip environments within finance and banking, defence, oil & gas, government and not-for-profit.

Simon spent 11 years at the London Stock Exchange, where he was well trained. Since leaving in 1990 Simon has run Logical Model Ltd (LMLtd) mixing training, mentoring and consulting assignments.

Roles include set-up of programme offices (eg for £100m programmes),, Rationalisation of Mid-Range IT Service Delivery in a retail bank, Reorganisation of the management structures in a $6bn GE-Capital subsidiary, implementing an IT Governance framework using CobiT™ for a UN agency

Simon covers the full spectrum of project topics, tools and techniques from establishing an initial basic structured approach to topics such as Advanced scheduling, Leading Complex Projects, and Performing Project Recovery.

Simon is PMP, PRINCE2™, MoR and CGEIT qualified and also delivers APM aligned training. Simon was previously a PRINCE2™ examiner. LMLtd is audited and authorised by APMG to train in and administer P2 exams..
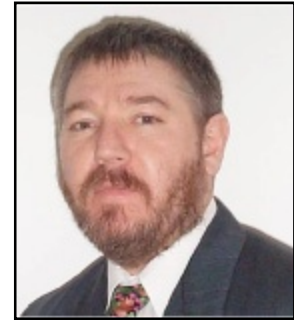
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Logical Model Ltd's Services

A typical LML assistance cycle to an organisation might run:

- *Session 1: Orientation for all stakeholders*
2. *1 day training in planning for Sponsor & project management team's*
3. *Facilitated workshop to define project goal & deliverables*
4. *Project manager & technician's training in planning*
5. *Facilitated workshops to define team tasks, schedule and resourcing*
6. *Routine facilitated progress assessment (repeated until support is unneeded)*
7. *Periodic facilitated steering committees (repeated until support is unneeded)*
8. *Facilitated close-out meeting for the project*
9. *Facilitated benefits realisation review (until unneeded).*

Simon's Observations on Projects – SOOP:

Scope and Quality

Confusing words often show us where there are poorly understood concepts lurking below the surface. One such area is scope and quality (yes **one** area).

Problems with both the labels 'scope' and 'quality' are grounded in the same simple fact: they have two parallel equally valid but different definitions. Both the titles are the same element of project management described twice and neither is the insightful label that "acceptance criteria" would be.

Two Definitions of Scope

1. Everything that must be delivered (product/ outcome/ result). A customer oriented view of the impact any project must make to avoid a threat to business as usual or pursue an opportunity.

2. Everything that must be done (task/ activity/ work-package) to. A technical team oriented or project internal view of the work to provide the deliverables.

Two Definitions of Quality

1. Fitness for purpose (independently of whatever was actually asked for) - the perspective of a project's customer who will take deliverables into usage to generate benefits.

2. Conformance to specification - the limit of what the team can target. Unless they are clairvoyant the team can only produce what they are asked to create.

Customer Perspective

The customer wants deliverables that are fit for purpose, generally has no interest in how they are created as log as they meet expectations and may not be able to express what deliverables they need or the qualities i.e. attributes that will make the products fit for purpose.

Project Team Perspective

The team generally has no interest in what the customer needs or wants only in what they have to do to create what was asked for.

Tools for Capturing Scope and Quality

PBS

The tool to capture the customers view of both scope and quality is the Product (or Impact/ Result/ Deliverables) breakdown structure. A decomposition of the project's results/Products to the level of detail at which the customer says "I don't know (or care) what that comprises". The PBS is a collection of nouns or things.

For each item in the decomposition about which the customer has expectation of its qualities or attributes the customer's criteria for acceptance must be recorded (or gaps/ ambiguities noted)

The creation of a PBS is an important opportunity for the project manager to involve those sponsoring the project and affected by the projects outputs. Run as a collaborative activity it allows the project manager to gauge the politics and generate customer side motivation.

WBS

The tool to capture the technical team's view of both scope and quality is the Work (Task/ Activity) breakdown structure. A decomposition of the lifecycle of each product or sub-product the customer expects to the level of detail at which the project manager and team says "we don't need more detail to maintain control and track progress".

The WBS is a collection of verb-nouns pairs or achievement oriented phrases Eg "Build house" or "house built" that reflect as much of the products life-span as the project manager and team are accountable for. The WBS may start life as an extension of the PBS before being regrouped by project phase to aid scheduling or by skill group to aid assignment of responsibility

For each item in the decomposition about which the supplier has process or product standards in their quality management system technical testing criteria from unit to integration and system level must be recorded (or gaps/ ambiguities noted).

The creation of a WBS is an important opportunity for the project manager to involve those creating, acquiring, amending and integrating the project's outputs.

Run as a collaborative activity it allows the project manager to create understanding across the team of the project's goals, alternative solutions, assumptions, constraints, dependencies and risks.

Simple Steps
The simple steps to solve (some) of project manager's problems with successful project delivery are to recognise the correct mindset is "product and task" not scope and quality.

When the sponsors and users are identified workshop (develop description of) "product", when the products are known workshop "activity". Activity must include all those required to build products, verify products, report progress or run configuration management, change control, communications etc, and then all that is left is to estimate, build the schedule, execute to plan, track achievement handover and close out – easy.