

Big Bang - It does not make sense

I was at the TMForum Management World in Dublin last week and had the opportunity to listen to the keynote speakers in the morning. Erik Hoving, board member of KPN international, gave a compelling speech suggesting that IT projects should be discontinued. While some of his comments were intended to be tongue-in-cheek, the sea of bobbing heads in the audience led me to believe that many people agreed. I personally do not believe that the majority of IT projects themselves are the problem. However, I do understand where he is coming from, as does anyone that has been involved in a failed IT project.

Depending on the client, "failure" may be defined as over budget, delayed delivery, diminished functionality, etc. The reasons projects fail are myriad and range from poor planning to lack of skilled implementers. The problem with projects is that CSP's focus too much on the product. The product, whichever one it happens to be, is important, but ultimately is only one piece of a much larger puzzle. Each product comes with specific delivery considerations. Once the decision of which product(s) is going to be implemented, and by whom, which are two major decisions, the next question is how will it be delivered?

I have seen successes and failures happen several ways. In order to give yourself the best chance for success, and to deliver true value to your organization, follow three simple delivery guidelines: keep the releases Small, Short and Collaborative.

- Small - Big Bang does not work. Do yourself a favor and don't even try it. Let's pretend for a minute that it does; now how will your organization handle this massive change? Abrupt, massive changes are not typically keys to success within an organization. Rather, the architecture should focus on quick, tangible wins, starting with small functionality, and building upon that after successful deliveries have been proven.

- Short - Despite the complexity of the overall end-goal, projects can be scoped into small manageable releases. Do not plan beyond 12 months, or expect functionality to be misunderstood or implemented in a way different from your expectations.
- Collaborative - Every organization is different—while some expect to be involved every step of the way, others are hands-off. Regardless of how your organization typically operates, you should make it a priority to get involved. If you do not “see” anything until the last month of a project, expect to be disappointed. Engage yourself in some capacity to ensure the solution meets your needs. Consider it a red flag for potential issues and problems if you get push back from the team implementing the new solution.

Also remember that sales people are not around when delivery issue occur.

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