Project Management: A Study Considering the Success Criteria in a Contingency Approach

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summary

Based on the understanding that each project is unique, possessing characteristics and specificities inherent to each one, this work reinforces that the conduction of a project must align with a contingency approach that proposes the need to manage projects in a generic way, but according to the characteristics and specificities of each project. It was searched through the bibliographic survey on the success criteria of projects, identify from the perspective of a contingency approach, what criteria of success should be monitored and what level of importance for project management. The results of this work show the significant influence of the type of project in the selection of success criteria and their importance, and the selection of these criteria allows an immediate analysis of the needs of the projects and the most appropriate and rapid decision making, identifying actions which must be taken to meet the expected results.

Keywords: Project Management, Project Success Criteria, Contingency Approach.
1. Introduction

In recent years, organizations, due to the need to develop initiatives focused on innovation and competitive advantage, focus their actions in the execution of projects. Thus, projects have represented a significant share of the companies' investments, being their essential monitoring for the evaluation and decision making of the organizations' performance (Shenhar and Dvir, 2007).

For Vargas (2009), most projects start from a social, environmental, economic and political context in which they are planned and implemented according to their interests, triggering intentional and unintended impacts, being positive or negative.

Dinsmore (2010, apud MAZZINI JUNIOR and FERREIRA, 2010) complements that today, project managers are being more responsible and are looking at the results of their projects from a perspective that causes a smaller impact, analyzing the consequences for the environment for the people and the economy of the region concerned.

In this same line Pinto and Quelhas (2011) reinforce that industries, aiming to minimize losses in processes and environmental impacts directly or indirectly, invest more and more in the development of new technologies and integrated systems.

Since projects are the fundamental business of a project-oriented company, the success of the company is directly related to the success of the project and the core competencies to manage it. Therefore, it is difficult for two companies to manage projects in the same way, since each organization has particularities and a cultural base beyond the contracts for implementing project management (KERZNER, 2010 apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015).

In this line of reasoning, Kerzner (2010, apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015) complements that business management can not be seen as an isolated operational activity, since project management is increasingly related to business management of the company. In this project management scenario, the definition of success emerges from a simple combination of cost, time and quality elements to several other criteria, which involve the business of the organization as a whole and the project itself. Thus, there is a need to align the success factors of the organizations' projects with the company's business, in order to meet its strategic objectives.

According to the Project Management Institute - PMI (2013, p. 03), "(...) project is a temporary effort undertaken to create a unique product, service or result." Temporary, because each project has well defined, a beginning and an end; unique, since each product or service produced is different from any other product or service already produced or its like. Another characteristic that the project presents is that
its elaboration is progressive, that is, throughout the project, we acquire more detailed knowledge about it.

For Vargas (2014, apud HIRAYAMA and NOVASKI, 2016), the project is a non-repetitive enterprise, having as characteristic a logical sequence of well defined actions, with beginning, middle and end, whose purpose is to reach a well defined goal, led by people that meet criteria and well-defined standards of resources, cost, time and quality.

What makes a project unique is temporality and uniqueness, that is, every project has a deadline for its realization, with a beginning and a definite end. Successful management is considered when the means available during the project realization were applied with maximum efficiency. Already the success in project management, is in the purpose of using the appropriate tools of this discipline, added to the success of the direct execution of the project manager. The exception to any project, is related to the triad formed by cost, term and scope. Thus, the project is considered a success, if the initial goal was met, if the scheduled deadlines were met and if the costs did not exceed the budget forecast in the execution of the initial project. The challenge posed to the project manager is to manage this trade off, since there are inseparable conflicts between each of the parts of this triad, in order to achieve the maximum benefits that result from the realization of the project (CARVALHO, RABECHINI, 2011).

Considering the above, this work suggests an adjusted approach, since the projects have different degrees of difficulty, which leads to adapt the particularities of the project to a circumstantial perspective, since, a technique does not fit all the parts of a project.

This work is based on the understanding that each project is unique and has many specificities. In this way, the present research aims, from a bibliographical survey, to identify from a perspective of a contingency approach to project management, what are the criteria of success that should be monitored and their level of importance for this management.

2. Methodology

This article is structured in 6 sections. The initial stage was focused on a bibliographical research carried out in the review of the literature on Project Management in consultation with books, articles, specialized magazines and websites made available on the Internet. Section 2 presents the methodology used in the study. Section 3 presents the definition of success in projects and success criteria; Section 4 deals with the contingency question, the typologies of projects and the relationship management with the stakeholders; Section 5 presents the discussion and analysis of the results. The article ends in section 6, with the final considerations.
3. Success in Projects

The distinction between the terms Project Management Success and Project Success is important in defining "Project Success."

In relation to Project Management Success, De Wit (1988 apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015) and PMI (Project Management Institute, 2008), affirm that criteria evaluations are used to measure project management success. These criteria assessments cover traditional measures such as time, quality and cost.

In relation to Project Success, Barclay (2008, apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015) agrees with De Wit (1988) when he confirms the importance of the performance of stakeholders. De Wit (1988, apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015) goes beyond when it reinforces the consideration of the performance of all stakeholders involved in the project life cycle at all levels of management.

Cooke-Davies (2002) contributes by defining Project Success from the product or final result, always considering the satisfaction of the stakeholders.

3.1 Criteria for Success in Projects

To understand the success criteria in projects, it is necessary to understand and separate "Success Criteria" and "Success Factors".

For De Wit (1988, apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015), "Success factors" lead to project success directly or indirectly supported by inputs from the management system. Already, in "Success Criteria," the project is judged by its success, when criteria or measures are used from which a project is judged to verify its success or failure. The author criticizes the questioning of success measure by the triple constraint, reinforcing that they must be obtained through the objectives proposed in the projects and other success criteria such as compliance with the deadline and budget performance, contractor and client satisfaction and satisfaction of the entire team involved in the project including the project manager.

Both De Wit (1988, apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015) and Siegelaub (2010) mention PRINCE 2 (Office of Government Commerce, 2005) methodology, called the "sixth restriction", composed of known cost, scope and quality, plus risk and benefit constraints. The benefit dimension is expressed in achievable and measurable objectives; represents the value that the project is expected to deliver to the organization.

De Wit (1988, apud CARVALHO and BORGES, 2015) emphasizes that these restrictions have an interrelationship between them, and changes in one dimension affect the others. These dimensions need to be closely monitored, with the need to define tolerances; so actions can be taken when needed.
The author goes on to define the dimensions:

Atkinson (1999) attributes the success of projects to the performance measures of term, quality and costs, which later determined as a triple constraint or "iron triangle", which despite being widely reported in the literature, many authors consider these criteria as insufficient for measure project success. Thus, the same author proposes a division to understand the various criteria used to measure the success of projects separated by categories, as presented in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>SUCCESS CRITERIA</th>
<th>Information systems</th>
<th>Benef. for Organization</th>
<th>Benef. for Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iron Triangle</td>
<td>Cost; Quality; Deadline</td>
<td>Reliability; Shelf life; Information; Maintainability</td>
<td>Improved efficiency; Improved effectiveness; Profit increase; Strategic goals, Learn organizational</td>
<td>Social and environmental impact; Development. Folks; Professional learning; Profit of the contractor; Waste Reduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Atkinson (1999)

Shenhar and Dvir (2007) believe that most projects should be analyzed based on their contribution to the organization's bottom line, since most organizational projects are part of the company's strategic management. Due to this, they propose that the success of the projects be questioned multidimensionally, demonstrating the business objectives and the strategic intention of the company.

The authors also suggest an analysis of the success of the project in the short and long term, based on five categories: impact for the client; impact on the team; preparation for the future; business and direct success and efficiency. They point out that the suggested structure is not universal, that is, despite being applied to several projects, they may not fit into others. This leads to an analysis of a contingency approach, being necessary to verify if the structure initially suggested meets the project or else, to add new perspectives to the definition of success criteria that are relevant to the organization and its projects.

Based on the five groups of measures, the authors suggest an evaluation of the project's success in the
short and long term:

- **Efficiency** (or compliance with planned goals): presents operational focus to verify if the project was executed according to plan. It is a short term measure, with great relevance for the market.
- **Impact to the client**: it interpolates the interest of the main stakeholder of the project that is the client. It is the clear definition of how the final outcome of the project will meet the needs of the client, bringing benefits. Therefore, it is proposed to aggregate measures of quality and scope as well as qualitative measures of customer satisfaction.
- **Team Impact**: Measures the impact of the project on the work team. It is based on the idea that leaders provide a motivating environment for all members of their team, encouraging them and providing them with personal and professional growth. With this it is possible to evaluate the "value" that the team has for the organization.
- **Business and direct success**: this dimension reflects the financial performance of the company, that is, what direct and immediate impact the project represents for the company in relation to the achievement of results.
- **Preparing for the future**: reflects how the project will contribute in the long run with future improvements to the company's organizational structure in relation to new business opportunities and processes.

In Table 2, Shenhar and Dvir (2007) present the success dimensions of projects and their respective indicators.

**Table 2 - Success dimensions of projects and their respective indicators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT SUCCESS</th>
<th>EFFICIENCY</th>
<th>CUSTOMER IMPACT</th>
<th>IMPACT FOR TEAM</th>
<th>BUSINESS AND DIRECT SUCCESS</th>
<th>PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with schedule, Budget compliance, Gain, Other efficiency measures</td>
<td>Compliance with requirements and specifications; Customer advantage; Extension of use; Customer satisfaction and loyalty; Brand recognition</td>
<td>Team satisfaction Team morale Development of skills and abilities Team members growth Retention of team members No conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>