Successful Project Management In The Age of Knowledge

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Project Management 1.0 and 2.0

THEN

Defined hierarchy

Command & control

Cost   Schedule   Performance

NOW

Global supply chain | Cross-sector partners

Flat organization | Limited authority

Rapid technology development

Virtual teams | Global competition for talent

Cost   Schedule   Performance

Projects, Products, Entrepreneurship

	Complex Project-Based Organization	*Mass-Production Organization*	*Entrepreneurial Organization*
Product	One-and-only	Scalable manufacture	Permanent beta
Problems	Novel	Routine	Hackable
Technology	New/invented	Improved/more efficient	Frugal
Cost	Life cycle	Unit	Zero marginal
Schedule	Project completion	Productivity rate	Iterative
Customer	Involved at inception	Involved at point of sale	Involved in testing
Knowledge Need	Innovation	Continuous improvement	Bootstrap + innovation
	NASA	Wisk	airbnb

Project Knowledge

- What are we talking about when we talk about project knowledge?
  - Pulse of the profession (2015)
  - Knowledge is not information, data, facts, truth. It's unique
- What is "Knowledge"?
- Know What and Know How

Knowledge Characteristics

- Experiential. Have to do.
- Knowledge is Social.
- Expensive. Education, Assignments, Time.
- Knowledge expands with use.
- Intangible.
- Intermediate goal.
- Knowledge? Faster, better, cheaper, adaptive

Q: So what do successful project managers do?

The Research: What We Did

1. [40 interviews and 20 observations](#) of practitioners

2. [Convened teams and facilitated reflective dialogues](#) — participants shared stories/practices from recent projects

3. [Tested interim results](#) in real-life situations through consulting engagements – validated, refined and developed four-role framework for project managers.

4. Tested and refined framework with Boldt PM knowledge-development and knowledge-sharing community.

5. [Final refinement process](#): Interviews with 10 project

managers and 10 senior managers.

Four Roles of Successful PMs

	Develop Collaboration	Integrate Planning and Review with Learning	Prevent Major Disruptions	Maintain Forward Momentum
Driven by	Intention	Intention	Events	Events
Timing	Initially	Periodically	Occasionally	Continually
Key Activities	- Select the right people - Develop mutual interdependence and trust	- Develop stable short-term plans and flexible long-term plans - Conduct learning-based project reviews	Anticipate and cope proactively with a few major problems	- Resolve problems through hands-on engagement - Frequent face-to-face communication - Walk the floor frequently

1. Develop Collaboration

People-Oriented

- Select team members for ability to collaborate
- Collocate some team members
- Make the case for interdependence:

"*If they fail, we fail*"

2. Integrate Planning + Review with Learning

Information-Oriented

- Rolling wave approach to planning:
  "*What can we learn from the performance data to improve the next cycle of planning*?"
- Develop detailed short-term plans with firm commitments
- Prepare tentative long-term plans with fewer details
  - Include redundancies (e.g, backup systems)
- Orient project reviews toward learning
  - Focus on joint problem-solving, not reporting
  - Redefine review panel's role — not adversary

3. Prevent Major Disruptions

Action-Oriented

- *"Productive paranoia"*
- Anticipate disruptions and maintain flexibility
- Proactively address threats to prevent full-blown failures:

  "Administer anti-viral meds at first sign of flu"

4. Maintain Forward Momentum

People + Action + Information-Oriented
Diagnose and respond rapidly to problems

- Hands-on engagement – moving forward more important than always being right

- Frequent face-to- face communication
  - "Daily 10-minute huddles" with all the on-site team members

- Walk the floor
- Frequent, informal communication opens channels for information
- Immediate information makes it easier to identify problems rapidly
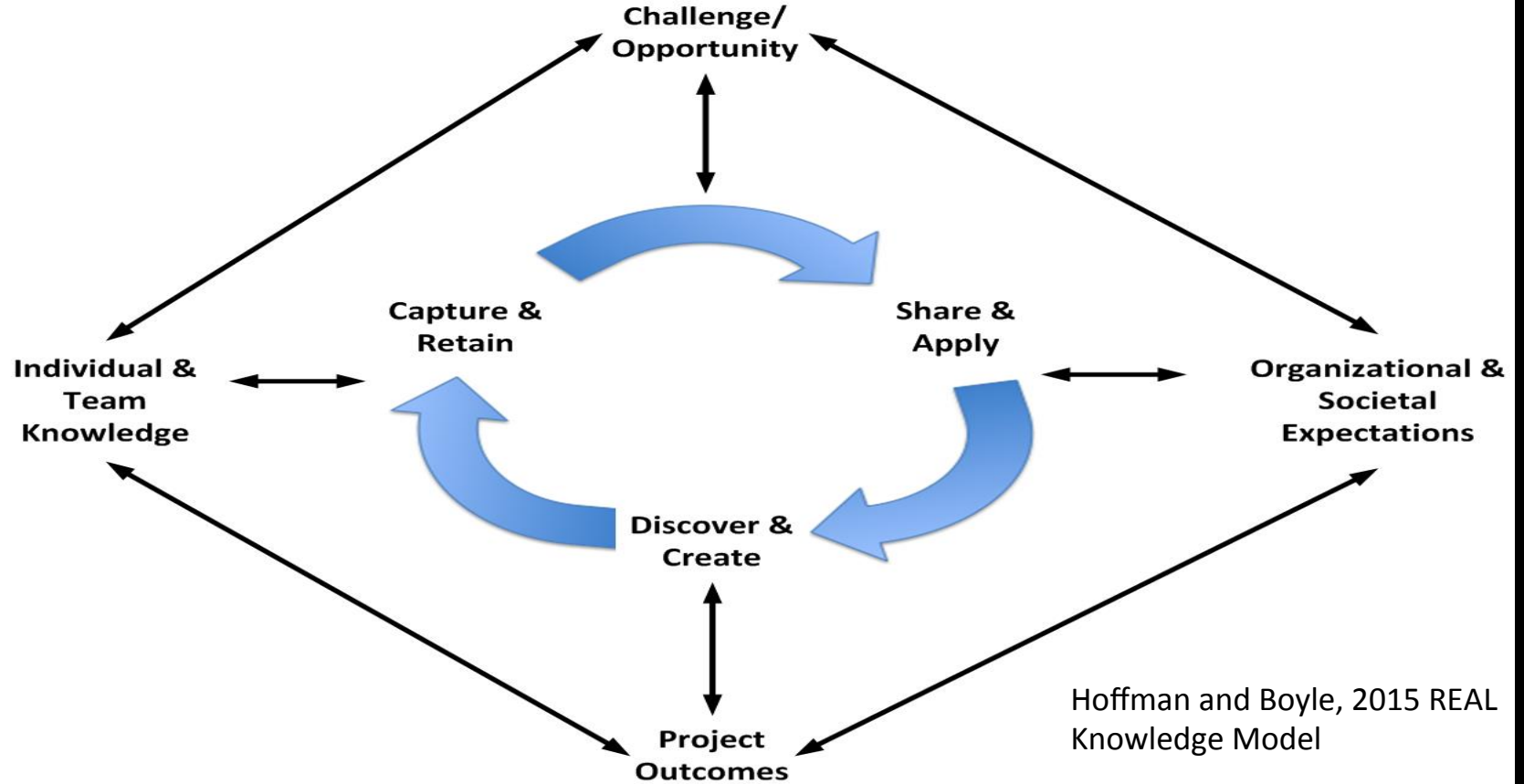- Detect conflicts before they become larger issues

Q: So what do successful project managers do?

A: Combine elements of traditional and agile approaches.

Rapid Engagement through Accelerated Learning (REAL) Knowledge Flow

Hoffman and Boyle, 2015 REAL Knowledge Model

Strategic Knowledge Imperatives

CONTEXT	FOUNDATIONAL NEEDS	WORKING PRINCIPLES	RISK MITIGATION APPROACHES
Project world	Leadership	Problem-centric approach	Certification
Digital technology	Knowledge	Accelerated learning	Portfolio management
	Talent management	Frugal innovation	
	Governance, management, and operations	Transparency	

Implications for Senior Managers

- Foster an organizational climate that embraces problems as an inherent part of a project's progression

- Ensure that all three orientations are considered when selecting project managers and developing project management methodologies.

Questions?