THE PROJECT SUCCESS MODEL

A Guide to Defining Project Success

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by

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Content

1. When Is a Project a Success?

> *Alice: Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?*
> *The Cheshire Cat: That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.*
> *Alice: I don't much care where.*
> *The Cheshire Cat: Then it doesn't much matter which way you go.*
> *— Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland*

Project success and project failure are **NOT** absolutes. It may not be possible to be a little bit pregnant, but you can be a little bit successful.

Every project has multiple success criteria related to business results, product/service results, and project delivery results (cost, schedule, scope, and quality).

Some criteria are absolute, meaning they must be completed on or before the original planned date, and some are relative, meaning they must be completed by a date acceptable to the client.

Project success is determined by how many of your success criteria are satisfied, and how well.

Whether or not a project is successful also depends on **who** you ask;

> The very happy project manager that implemented the SAP project as scoped on time and below budget (I know, this will NEVER happen).

> The end users who absolutely hate the complexity and slowness of the new system.

> The COO that has seen IT costs double whilst none of the expected savings materialized.

They may all have very different opinions on the success of the project.

Project success also depends on **when** you ask.

Twelve months after the go-live, the users will have a better grasp of the system and initial performance problems will have been solved. And slowly but steadily, the expected savings will often start to materialize as well.

So in order to define success and failure of your project you should;

1) Define all the criteria relevant to your project.
2) Define how you will measure them.
3) Define when you will measure them.

That is where the ***Project Success Model ™*** can help you.

2. Project Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, Impact and Results

> *"A thing is worth what it can do for you, not what you choose to pay for it."*
> *—John Ruskin*

Many people and organizations seem to have serious trouble separating between the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impact, and the results of a project.

This leads to lot's of confusion, bad communication, disappointed project teams, and disappointed stakeholders.

Below you will find my take on these terms and their relevance for your project.

Inputs

Inputs are very often confused to be synonymous with activities. However, these terms are not interchangeable.

Inputs, in simple terms, are those things that we use in the project to implement it.

For example, in any project, inputs would include things like time of internal and/or external employees, finances in the form of money, hardware and/or software, office space, and so on.

Inputs ensure that it is possible to deliver the intended results of a project.

Activities

Activities on the other hand are actions associated with delivering project goals. In other words, they are what your people do in order to achieve the aims of the project.

In a software development project, for example, activities would include things such as designing, building, testing, deploying, etc. And in an upskilling initiative the training of employees would be an activity.

Outputs

These are the first level of results associated with a project. Often confused with “activities”, outputs are the direct immediate term results associated with a project.

In other words, they are the delivered scope. The tangible and intangible products that result from project activities. Outputs may include a new product or service, a new ERP system replacing the old one, or employees being trained as part of a digital upskilling initiative.

Success on this first level of results is what I call “Project Delivery Success”. It is about defining the criteria by which the process of delivering the project is successful.

Essentially this addresses the classic triangle "scope, time, budget".

It is limited to the duration of the project and success can be measured as soon as the project is officially completed (with intermediary measures being taken of course as part of project control processes). It is always a combination of measurements on inputs and outputs.

Outcomes

This is the second level of results associated with a project and refers to the medium term consequences of the project. Outcomes usually relate to the project goal(s).

For example, the new ERP system is used by all users in scope, uptime is 99.99%, customer satisfaction has increased by 25%, operational costs have decreased by 15%, and so on.

These criteria need to be measured once the product/service is implemented and over a defined period of time. This means it cannot be measured immediately at the end of the project itself.

Success on this second level of results is what I often refer to as “Product or Service Success”. It is about defining the criteria by which the product or service delivered is deemed successful.

Impact

This is the third level of project results, and is the long term consequence of a project. More often than not, it is very difficult to ascertain the exclusive impact of a project since several other projects, not similar in nature can lead to the same impact.

For example, financial value contribution (increased turnover, profit, etc.) or competitive advantage (market share won, technology advantage).

Success on this third level of results is what I call “Business Success”. Business success is about defining the criteria by which the product or service delivered brings value to the overall organization, and how it contributes financially and/or strategically to the business.

Results

Project results are the combination of outputs (level 1), outcomes (level 2), and impact (level 3). These levels combined will determine your overall project success. You can be successful on one level but not others.

Simply put, project success occurs when the results of the project add value to the organization. And the value of a project is defined by subtracting all of the costs from all of the benefits the project delivers.

Value = Benefits - Costs

3. The Three Levels of Project Success

> *"If you do not know how to ask the right question, you discover nothing."*
> *— W. Edwards Deming*

As stated in the previous chapter, project success occurs when the results of the project add value to the organization, and results are a combination of output, outcome, and impact.

This can be roughly translated to three levels of project success:

1) Project delivery success: Will the project delivery be successful? Essentially, this assesses the classic triangle of scope, time, and budget. These are your **direct costs**.

2) Product or service success: This refers to when the product or service is deemed successful (e.g., the system is used by all users in scope, up-time is 99.99 percent, customer satisfaction has increased by 25 percent, and operational costs have decreased by 15 percent). These are your **direct benefits**.

3) Business success: This has to do with whether the product or service brings value to the overall organization, and how it contributes financially and/or strategically to the business's success. These are your **indirect costs and indirect benefits**.

The total value of your project can also be written as:

Value = Total Benefits (Direct and Indirect) - Total Costs (Direct and Indirect)

Overall, a successful project depends on the combination of these criteria. Some argue that product/service success is the same as business success, or argue that product/service success automatically means business success. But this is not true.

Below you will find four true stories that illustrate how product success can be completely different from business success.

Examples of product/service success not resulting in business success
1) A new investment product for a bank that has a high margin but also carries a significant risk for the bank, not just the customer. The product was wildly successful and many clients bought it. Many more than expected, which made the risk profile for the bank too high too continue with the product. **2)** This one product is very successful and is creating revenue and happy customers but it goes against everything that is defined in the new strategy of the company, and this is blocking the company from moving in a different direction that is needed to be relevant in the future. **3)** The very successful product with many happy clients is not helping the company to get additional clients. It is actually cannibalizing their existing clients. **4)** The very successful new service in the direct business of the company is competing with services offered through the partner channel of the business. And these partners are so pissed that they jump ship and it results in a huge net loss.

For smaller companies with only one product, or a very small product/service portfolio, you might argue product success and business success are similar and very tightly correlated. But for larger companies with bigger portfolios, I'm of the opinion that product success and business success are fundamentally different. This is reflected in the three separate levels I recommend to define project success.

In terms of accountabilities, the **project manager** is accountable for project delivery success; the **product/service owner** is accountable for product or service success; and the **project sponsor** is accountable for business success.

While this may sound simple and straightforward, the challenges arise in clearly defining the success criteria for each level, establishing baseline values for them, and then periodically reviewing and measuring them.

That is where the ***Project Success Model ™*** can help you.

4. The Project Success Model

> *"All models are wrong, but some are useful." — George Box, statistician*

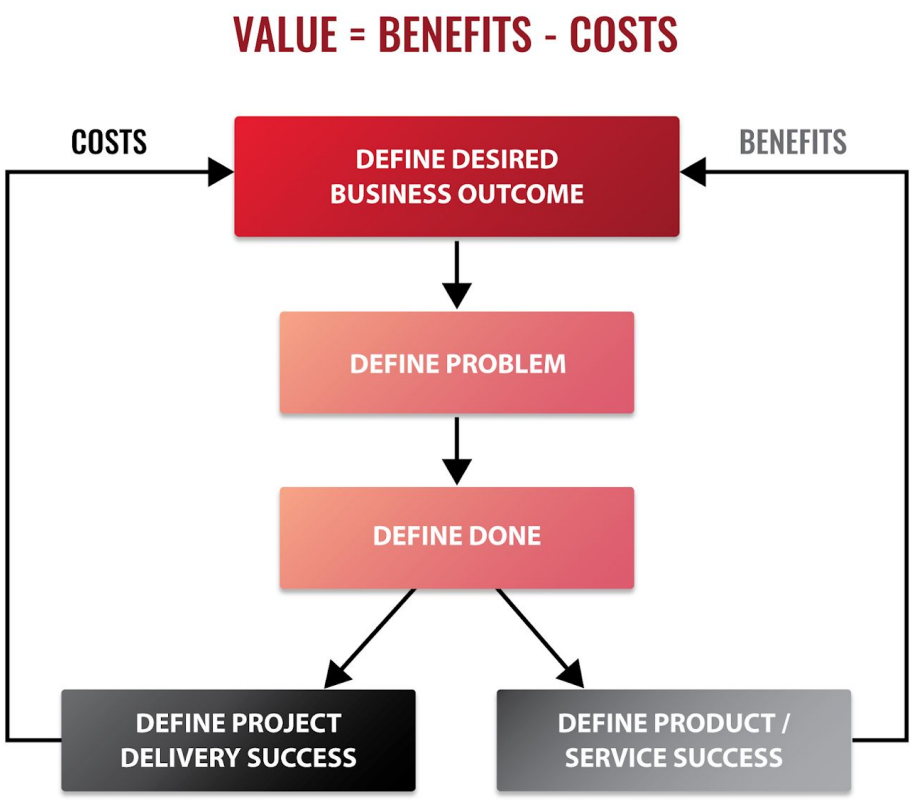
The ***Project Success Model ™*** is a so-called conceptual model. Where a mental model captures ideas in a problem domain, a conceptual model represents 'concepts' and relationships between them.

A conceptual model in the field of computer science is also known as a domain model. The aim of a conceptual model is to express the meaning of terms and concepts used by domain experts to discuss the problem and to find the correct relationships between different concepts.

The ***Project Success Model ™*** contains five concepts (or steps). These concepts and the relationship between them can be understood as a reinforcing cascade, with the choices at the top of the cascade setting the context for the choices below, and choices at the bottom influencing and refining the choices above.

1) Define the desired business outcome
2) Define the problem
3) Define the scope (project completion)
4) Define project delivery success
5) Define product/service success

The diagram below offers a visual path of these steps and how they interrelate.



Although it is often easiest to start by defining the desired business outcome, there are no restrictions as to where to begin. What is most important is that you go through multiple iterations—to refine your definition of project success until it is stable, clear, and feasible on all three levels.

Following this overview, let's take a deeper look at each step.

4.1 Defining the Desired Business Outcome

> *"Of all the things I've done, the most vital is coordinating the talents of those who work for us and pointing them toward a certain goal." — Walt Disney*

Business success results from defining how a new product or service will create value for the organization, measured in both financial and strategic terms.

Examples of business outcomes
> Financial value contribution (e.g., increased turnover, increased profits, or decreased costs) **>** Competitive advantage (e.g., winning a share of the market or a technological advantage) **>** New markets (e.g., reaching a new location or rolling out a new product)

The moment you have defined a desired business outcome, you have created a new problem to solve.

4.2 Defining the Problem

> "We fail more often because we solve the wrong problem than because we get the wrong solution to the right problem." — Russell L. Ackoff

Before you can solve a problem, you need to know exactly what the problem is, and you should put a good amount of thinking and resources into understanding it. And because today's problems are so complex, you know they can't be solved by being broken down into specific components.

Russell Ackoff—an American organizational theorist, professor, and researcher in the field of systems thinking and management science—offered one of the most compelling metaphors for complex problems I have encountered to date. He referred to them as "messes." How many times have you heard or have uttered the phrase "this project is a mess" yourself? For me, the number is too high to count. With respect to management science, Ackoff defined a "mess" forty years ago as follows:

> *"Managers are not confronted with problems that are independent of each other, but with dynamic situations that consist of complex systems of changing problems that interact with each other. I call such situations messes. Problems are abstractions extracted from messes by analysis; they are to messes as atoms are to tables and chairs."*

According to Ackoff, dialogue is the only way to achieve a shared understanding of a problem. Unfortunately, in this day and age, where the hours are equated with cash and simplicity reigns supreme, time spent on understanding problems is often viewed as time wasted.

> *"Given one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem and five minutes finding the solution." — Albert Einstein*

Management demands action, not talk and collaborative analysis. The kind of meetings that involve debate and discussion are especially seen as "just talk." This is understandable considering the number of meaningless meetings most people experience, but I believe debate and discussion are necessary to create a shared understanding of a problem. While I would not use the same time split as Einstein (in the quote above), that is only because the problems I work on do not involve saving the world.

> *"It's so much easier to suggest solutions when you don't know too much about the problem." — Malcolm Forbes*

This brings us to a critical juncture: What happens if you don't understand the problem? The "solutions" that are generated will create new problems and without any guarantee that they will even touch upon the existing issue they are meant to solve.

Understanding the problem is the first step toward any kind of problem-solving.

4.3 Defining Done

> *"A project is complete when it starts working for you, rather than you working for it."*
> *— Scott Allen*

Project failure starts when we can't tell what "done" looks like in any meaningful way. Without some agreement on our vision of "done," we'll never recognize it when it arrives, except when we've run out of time or money or both.

We've all seen the project failure numbers before. We've all been told how bad things are. We've all heard that large numbers of projects fail because of poor planning or poor project management. Whether this is true or not, how can we increase the probability of our own project's success?

First, we must recognize that without a clear and concise description of done, the only measures of progress are the passage of time, consumption of resources, and production of technical features. These measures of progress fail to describe what business capabilities our project needs to produce or what mission we are trying to accomplish.

Capabilities drive requirements. Therefore, without first identifying the needed capabilities, we cannot deliver a successful project, and we will end up a statistic like all the other failed projects.

Note that not every project needs to deliver new capabilities. Improving existing capabilities is a very good reason to do a project.

What exactly are capabilities, then?

A capability is the expression of the capacity, materials, and expertise an organization needs to be able to execute its business strategy (e.g., enable e-payments, tailor solutions at the point of sale, demonstrate product concepts with customers, or combine elastic and non-elastic materials side by side).

In short, capabilities encapsulate what a business is doing *right now* and *what needs to be done* in order to meet its current and future strategy.

Another way to think of capability modeling is to think about capabilities as organizational-level skills that are embedded in people, processes, and/or technology.

Capabilities serve as something of a catchall to reflect the primary dimension of the needs of a business.

Each capability is unique

A capability is a crucial element of the organization and as such is clearly different from other capabilities. A capability might be applied throughout the organization and can be applied in different ways to bring about different outcomes.

Capabilities are steady

Well-defined capabilities seldom change. The capabilities provide a much more stable view of organizations than do projects, processes, applications, or even strategies. Capabilities only change when there is a significant shift in the underlying business model or mission, which might occur through a business transformation initiative or in conjunction with a new merger or acquisition.

Capabilities are abstracted from the organizational model

Capability models are more than a simple restatement of the enterprise's organizational model. They are organizationally neutral, meaning changes in the organizational structure don't require a change in the capability model. In simple organizations, the capability model may indeed look similar to the corporate organizational structure. However, in more complex organizations, capabilities arise that are both common to, and unique to, the organization.

Common practice is to identify capabilities at different levels that can be mapped to each other. For example, business capabilities may be identified at the organizational, departmental, or team levels and then mapped to one another.

Examples of capabilities
> Managing client risk: A bank manages risks by Know Your Customer (KYC), Anti Money Laundering (AML), and other processes. **>** Managing credit risk: A bank's global credit department manages its credit risks. **>** Analyzing client credit ratings: A team of analysts in a bank's global credit department analyzes its clients' credit ratings. **>** Sales pipeline management: The sales department of a telecommunications company manages its sales pipeline.

> Qualifying sales leads: A sales operation team qualifies sales leads before they enter a sales pipeline.

With capabilities as our starting point, we're now going to look at project delivery success as they apply to any project.

4.4 Defining Project Delivery Success

"Beware the time-driven project with an artificial deadline." — Michael S. Dobson

Project delivery success has to do with defining the criteria by which a project can deliver as intended. Essentially, this addresses the classic triangle of scope, time, and budget. Project delivery success is limited to the duration of the project to the extent that success can be measured as soon as the project is officially completed (with intermediary measures being taken along the way as part of project control processes). Considering we have already defined scope (in the previous section on capabilities), we are left to define time and budget.

Time

Let's start with time. What criteria drive this parameter? New regulations? Other big projects planned for next year? To be clear, time is **not** about planning. Planning is carried out later by the project team. This process involves defining a time window that will enable a successful project to be delivered. But first, we must think about the costs associated with delays and artificial deadlines.

Costs of delay

A business exists to make money, so it's logical to prioritize profit-maximizing activities. Calculating your *cost of delay* allows you to do exactly that. It's a way of communicating the impact of time on the outcomes that you hope to achieve. Let's use a simple example to illustrate this concept.

If you're developing a product that will add a value of $10,000 per week to your company, you are essentially losing that amount for every week that you're late. A delay of six weeks will cost the company $60,000. If you have the benefit of knowing this up front, it would make sense, for example, to hire an additional programmer for

$15,000 to get the product released on time. After all, you would still be $45,000 better off.

Artificial deadlines

Artificial deadlines are those imposed by management rather than a customer's expectations, legal requirements, or a deadline negotiated fairly between a project's stakeholders and the project team. Quite simply, an artificial deadline does not materially affect the end product. Of course, practically any artificial deadline can be justified. The question is one of its importance relative to other deadlines and priority items.

Examples of deadlines
Real deadlines **>** The customer wants the product by July 31. **>** The new compliance law is active as of January 1. **Artificial deadlines** **>** We need to implement the CRM tool by March 31. **>** We need to finish our reorganization by the end of this month.

Budget

Your project budget should always be expressed in terms of expected project value.

As stated before, project success occurs when outcomes add value to the business. This implies that the value of a project is defined by subtracting all of the (in)direct costs from all of the (in)direct benefits the project delivers.

Using this logic, when your expected project value is USD 3M and your company wants a return on investment (ROI) on each invested dollar of 50%, your project budget is USD 2M. In other words, project budget = project value / 1.5.

If the estimated value of your project goes down, your project budget goes down. It is that simple.

Many people confuse real project budget with authorized project budget. The authorized project budget is the total amount of authorized financial resources allocated for the particular purpose(s) of the sponsored project for a specific period of time. It is usually based on a mixture of project cost estimations, department budgets, free cash flow, and other factors.

But as soon as your costs go over the authorized project budget (which is highly likely for technology projects), or the estimated benefits are not as big as planned (highly likely as well) you should ask yourself what the real budget of your project is and if you are willing to spend it or not.

How do you know whether you're looking at the right factors when it comes to determining the real budget?

Whether or not your company can spend this money is a financing and risk question, not a budget question. You could even secure a loan to do certain projects. This increases risk and reduces ROI (because of paid interest) but can be a valid option.

Whether or not this budget is enough to realize the project is a cost estimation and risk question, not a budget question. You should never confuse your cost estimations with your budget. Budget is what you can spend, while cost estimation is what you think you will spend. Ideally, the latter is less than the former.

And whether or not your organization is willing to spend their money on this project is a prioritization question, not a budget question.

Always express your project budget in terms of expected value delivered and you'll have a better idea of the real budget of any project.

4.5 Defining Product/Service Success

> *"It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be." — Isaac Asimov*

Product or service success involves defining the criteria by which the product or service that is delivered is deemed successful.

Examples of product/service success
> The system is adopted by all target users
> System uptime is **99.99%**
> Customer satisfaction has increased by **25%**
> Operational costs have decreased by **15%**

Importantly, these criteria must be measured once the product/service is implemented and over a defined period of time. This means that you need to adopt a long-term view since product and service success cannot be measured immediately after the project ends.

4.6 Model Relationships

> *"Correlation does not imply causation." — statistics adage*

The problem that you need to solve critically determines which solution is needed. In turn, the solution that is needed determines what capabilities are required to achieve the desired outcome. Aligned with this, the efforts that are required to build these capabilities have a significant impact on your project delivery success, which will correspondingly have a big impact on the cost side of things. The success of the product or service determines the direct benefits, just as it impacts the indirect benefits and business value.

From	To	Description
Business outcome	Problem	When your desired business outcome changes (e.g., a change in strategy or the market entry of a competitor) there is a high probability that you will need to solve a different problem than you started with.
Problem	Completion	The solution to the problem that you want to solve determines the capabilities you have to cultivate and/or improve upon.
Completion	Project delivery success	When the scope of your project changes (definition of scope) the costs and necessary time to build/improve upon these capabilities will also change.
Completion	Product/service success	When the scope of your project changes (definition of completion), the direct impact of the resulting project service/product will change as well.
Project delivery success	Business outcome	If your project costs explode, or if the project will be delayed by a number of months, your business outcome will change (perhaps even from net positive to net negative).
Product/service success	Business outcome	When your product benefits are less than expected, your business outcome will change (perhaps even from net positive to net negative).

5. Making Project Success Measurable

> *"You can't manage what you can't measure." — Peter Drucker*

Objectives and key results (OKRs) were first articulated by the Intel Corporation, and are now widely used among the biggest technology companies in the world today, including Google and Zynga.

OKRs were originally meant to set strategy and goals over a specified amount of time for an organization and teams. At the end of a work period, your OKRs provide a reference to evaluate how well you did in executing your objectives.

The same concept can be used to define project success. Identifying your project goals and describing it with OKRs can help your project team and stakeholders to see how they are contributing to the big picture.

5.1 Objectives and Key Results

There are one or more objectives at the heart of any project, which are also known as the desired business outcomes. The act of setting an objective involves listing what you hope to accomplish.

Not only does this provide clarity in the planning phase, it can be used at a later time to assess whether you have reached, or have a clear path to reaching, that objective. Choosing the right objectives is one of the most important, and at the same time, hardest things to do for any project.

Assuming that your objectives are well thought out, the key results can be introduced into your OKRs. In more detail, key results are numerically based expressions of success or progress toward an objective. All key results must be quantifiable and measurable.

The important element here is measuring success. It's not good enough to make broad statements about improvement (which are subjectively evaluated). The bottom line is that we need to know how well we are succeeding. Accordingly, qualitative goals (which are more *felt* than measured) tend to under represent our capabilities, because the solution tends to serve the lowest common denominator.

For example, if I create a goal to "launch a new training program for the sales team" I might do that for one sales team member. If I set a key result to "train fifty sales team members" and only train ten, I've still exceeded my original goal ten times over.

5.2 Don't Turn OKRs Into a Project Activity List

> *"If it does not have a number, it is not a key result." — Marissa Mayer*

Activity-based results measure the completion of tasks and activities, or the delivery of project milestones and deliverables.

Examples of activity-based results
> Releasing a beta version of a product
> Launching a new feature
> Creating a new training program
> Developing a new lead generation campaign
> Writing a solution design document

Activity-based results usually start with verbs such as "launch," "create," "develop," "deliver," "build," "make," "implement," "define," "release," "test," "prepare," and "plan."

The critical questions to ask yourself are: Do you want to measure efforts or results? Are your OKRs focused on your objective or on the means to get there? As mentioned before, when used correctly, OKRs define success criteria *for* a project and whether or not it has achieved success. But to do that, OKRs cannot be based on activities. There are three main reasons for this:

1) We want a results-focused culture, and not one focused on tasks.
2) If you did all your tasks and nothing has improved, that is not a success. Success is improving something: customers are more satisfied, sales are higher, costs have been reduced.
3) Your project is just a series of hypotheses. An idea is just a non-validated hypothesis. In the same way, we don't know if our project will improve our

results or add value to the organization. The project is just a hypothesis so you cannot attach your OKRs to a non-validated bet.

The reality is that nobody works on projects as a hobby. Behind every project is the desire to improve upon one or more metrics. So, instead of tracking the delivery of a project, we should measure the indicators that motivated it in the first place.

5.3 Using Value-Based Key Results

Value-based key results measure the delivery of value to an organization or its customers. They measure the outcomes of activities.

Examples of value-based results
> Increasing a net promoter score from **X** to **Y**
> Increasing a repurchasing rate from **X** to **Y**
> Maintaining customer acquisition costs under **Y**
> Reducing revenue churning (cancellation) from **X**% to **Y**%
> Improving average weekly visits (per active user) from **X** to **Y**
> Increasing non-paid (organic) traffic from **X** to **Y**
> Improving engagement rates (e.g., users complete full profile) from **X** to **Y**

The typical structure of a value-based key result is:

Increasing/reducing the metric **M** from **X** to **Y**, where **X** is the baseline (where we begin) and **Y** is the target (what we want to achieve).

Using the "from **X** to **Y**" model is preferred to writing a change in percentages, because it conveys more information. To see why, compare the two options below:

1) Increase the number of new users by **20%**.
2) Increase the number of new users from **4,000** to **4,800**.

Option 1 can be confusing, since it's hard to tell how ambitious the target is. Are we talking about increasing the number of new users from **500** to **600**, or from **4000** to **4800**?

When project teams start to work with value-based OKRs, it is common for them to get stuck listing activities as key results. To convert those activities into value, think about the consequences of succeeding in this task. What are the desired outcomes?

In other words, *if we are successful with the project, we will:*

> Key result #1
> Key result #2
> Key result #3

Examples of OKRs
If we are successful with the new campaign, we will… > Increase our net promoter score from **29** to **31%** > Reduce churn from **3.2** to **2.7%** If we successfully migrate the platform, we will: > Reduce infrastructure costs from **1.5M** to **1.1M** > Maintain availability during migration to **99.99%** > Maintain revenue of **6M**

5.4 OKRs vs. KPIs

OKRs should be the driving force behind your project and product direction. They boldly state where you're going and they give you metrics to judge when you've arrived.

OKRs should be fail-by-default. To succeed in an OKR you shouldn't be able to sit on your ass and play defense.

Objectives like "don't release any new bugs" make terrible OKRs. A guaranteed way to achieve that objective is to stop releasing software. But despite "no new bugs" making an awful OKR, it's still an important measure of business health. It's worth keeping an eye on.

There are plenty of metrics like bugs released (a proxy for code quality) which are important to watch but don't fit well in OKRs. Rather than trying to wedge them into a container where they don't belong, consider adding a second tool to your toolkit—key performance indicators (KPIs).

If OKRs give your teams direction, KPIs make sure nothing is going off the rails. Practically any metric—site uptime, conversion rates, user retention—can be used as a KPI. KPIs are a metric that's important to watch, but not something you're trying to change right now.

Keeping track of relevant KPIs will help you uncover problems as they emerge. If you decide a KPI is out of line enough to justify investing in a fix, then it simply becomes part of an OKR. The passive KPI "Conversion rate—5%" becomes the active objective "Double conversion rate by September."

Use KPIs to keep an eye on things. Use OKRs when you want to make a change.

6. Closing Thoughts

> *"Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion." — Jack Welch*

The ***Project Success Model ™*** contains five concepts (or steps). These concepts and the relationship between them can be understood as a reinforcing cascade, with the choices at the top of the cascade setting the context for the choices below, and choices at the bottom influencing and refining the choices above.

1) Define the desired business outcome
2) Define the problem
3) Define the scope (project completion)
4) Define project delivery success
5) Define product/service success

As you learn what you should be measuring and what truly matters for your project and business success, it becomes easier to define measurable results.

And as it becomes easier to define measurable results it also becomes easier to achieve them.

Newsletter

You can subscribe to my weekly newsletter here. You will receive articles I have written, how-to guides, and case studies around project management, program management, and portfolio management.

7. About the Author

Hi, my name is Henrico Dolfing, and I help C-level executives in the financial service industry with interim management and recovering troubled technology projects.

I have done project reviews, recoveries and advisory for over a decade, and have worked in the trenches of software development for more than 15 years.

Projects fail for a variety of reasons. Technology projects in particular have a low success rate. Typically more than half of them are considered a failure. If your current project is off-track, chances are I can bring the necessary knowledge and experience to get the job done.

Troubled projects are never pretty. Often there isn't time for guessing, just acting. I have helped companies to save projects from the brink of failure. By combining my deep technical knowledge with a proven process, I quickly address major problems and bottlenecks, putting the project back on track.

I provide the leadership necessary to solve complicated problems. I am not afraid to deliver bad news; I am not afraid of putting my reputation behind the decisions I make; and most of all, I am responsive and sensitive to the intricacies of troubled projects.

I have a strong technical background as a software developer and solution architect, including an M.Sc. degree in Computer Science and a B.Ec. in Economics.

My diverse international experience allows me to successfully collaborate with people from all over the globe. Born in the Netherlands, I have lived in Germany, the USA, and Switzerland. I have worked on both longer and shorter projects all through Europe, the Channel Islands, the Caribbean, and North America.

I spend my spare time in the Swiss mountains enjoying alpine marathons, climbing, downhill mountain biking, river rafting and leisurely hikes with my wife and toddler son.

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