

# Making Advances in Project Management by Removing Barriers to Improvement

*“Proven Methods to effect real and sustained improvements in PM”*

## Executive Summary

( Full paper at [www.manageprojectsbetter.com](http://www.manageprojectsbetter.com), free download )

### ***“The Need, the Problem and the Solution”***

**The Need** – Organization success is dependent on project success. Businesses, government agencies, non-profits and educational organizations all have projects, often of increasing complexity and all of these organizations experience challenges in making projects consistently successful. Late schedules, over budget and missed technical commitments and other issues are unfortunately, too common. Many organizations are becoming more and more aware of the need to make improvements in how projects are managed and are taking action to do so.

**The Problems in Making Improvements** – Many improvements in project management are attempted and most fail to achieve desired outcomes. Organizations try training, make organization structural changes, acquire or build new management systems, dictate policy, buy or develop new tools and attempt other improvements that individually are understandable decisions. Unfortunately the end result is often limited, if any, as multiple barriers to attaining real and sustained improvements in PM exist.

**The Solution** – Two decades of internal corporate studies that focused on root cause analysis of improvement failures have resulted in the identification of specific barriers to making effective and lasting improvements. As each barrier was defined and understood, a set of solutions to remove these barriers to improvements were defined, implemented and refined. The specific barriers to improvement and proven solutions are described in the following.

## **Known Barriers to PM Improvements and the Solutions**

*“Understanding the Barriers to Improvements is Key to Implementing Effective Solutions”*

To understand the nature and value of solutions needed to advance the function of project management, it is important to have an awareness of the multiple barriers that can exist that prevent productive and lasting improvements. Common barriers follow and proven solutions are noted for each.

### **List of Barriers to PM Improvements**

- 1) No Single Stakeholder 1) Understands the Real Need and 2) Knows What Must Be Done and 3) Has the Wherewithal to Effect Change - *“No One Party Can Do It”*
- 2) No Accountability for PM or No Focus on PM Improvements - *“No One Owns Project Management”*
- 3) Improvements are Incomplete Due to a Narrow View of the Problem - *“Simplistic Problem Viewpoint”*
- 4) Point Solutions are Attempted Only, Not a Complementary Solution Set - *“Single Dimension Solutions”*
- 5) New Improvements are Not Sufficiently Integrated into Existing Operations - *“Islands of Improvement”*
- 6) Improvement Skills Learning Methods are Inadequate to Support Improvement Implementation - *“Insufficient Learning Methods”*
- 7) Upper Management Does Not Know or Does Not Believe that Anything in Project Management Really Needs Focused Attention - *“Upper Management Is Not Aware of the Need”*
- 8) The PM Role is Undefined, Not Supported or Not Accepted - *“The PM Role is Not Standard, It Is What the PM Can Make It to Be”*
- 9) Improvements are Not Adequately Sold to Stakeholders - *“I Never Agreed to This”*
- 10) Volatile Organization Structures Can Kill Improvements and Reduce the Energy to Make Future Improvements - *“Any Good Idea Can Be Negated with an Organization Change”*

*( Read the full paper that has solutions for all improvement barriers at [www.manageprojectsbetter.com](http://www.manageprojectsbetter.com), free download )*

### **Mark Waldof Consulting, LLC.**

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