



### **Education, Certifications, Special Skills**

Masters of Business Administration  
*Stanford Graduate School of Business*  
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering  
*Rice University*  
Texas Engineering 38724

### **Experience**

Management of construction organizations for 42 years.  
Member of 51 project teams

### **Professional and Community Affiliations**

AGC Project Delivery Systems National Subcommittee – 1998-99  
Lorman Seminars 2003-2014  
*USGBC and CEFPI speaker*  
Adjunct Faculty Texas A&M 2012-2013

Founder and First President, West University Recycling

In looking over our long history of newsletters, we realized that the most common request was for information on how to prevent really bad performance of project teams. So this month's newsletter is a review of the four attempts we have done in the past, plus the newest information on ways to improve outcomes.

By collapse we mean the project stopped for a significant time because of disputes, and cost someone a significant penalty. Think of the nuclear power plants in South Carolina and Georgia last year, or the Big Dig in Boston, or the Sydney Opera House. Something that would ruin your career.

### **So...how common is that?**

We can't find many statistics, but the State of California has 2% of its contracts that result in a lawsuit, and half of them go to trial. Most are not as bad as we are worried about, so the answer is "less than 1%". There is a lot of information from EC Harris and Arcadis, but they don't judge probability.

### **What causes it?**

The people who go around trying to prevent bad team performance list fear of each other, different expectations, confusion, and unconscious incompetence. It seems to me that all those are resolved by previous experience on good teams. All of the members of a construction project team have objectives that are sometimes in conflict, but they can only succeed through mutual agreement, and that seems to need a previous example for each member to feel comfortable.

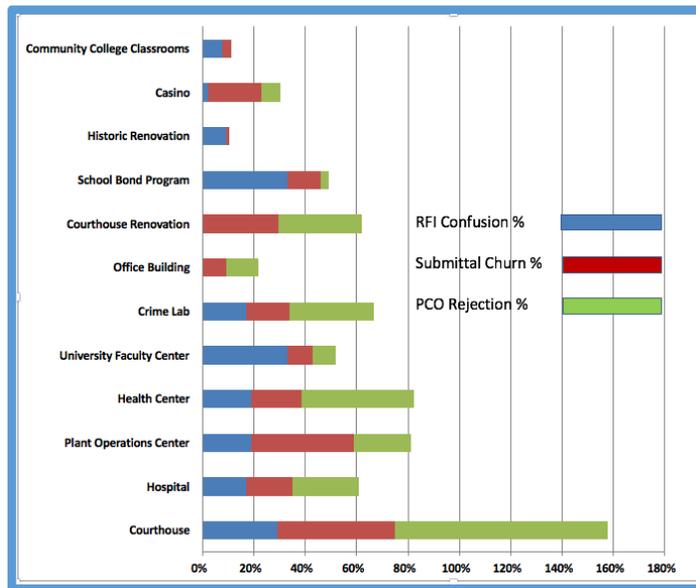
### **How can you measure cooperation?**

There are a lot of academic papers about how to score things once they are over, but we need an index we can score once a month that tells us when we are in real trouble and need to take strong action. The only one we know of is the Project Cooperation Index we developed a few years ago (Newsletter 34). It is the sum of some common statistics in every project database, and you can ask for it in every monthly report.

**Look at [www.spms.us/writing.html](http://www.spms.us/writing.html). There's some good stuff there!**

If this gets above 60% you ought to be doing something special, and if it gets to 100% experience suggests universal staff changes.

After you publish this a few times people start trying to make the statistics go down, which is a good thing.



*Project Cooperation Index Examples*

### What can you do about it?

Well, a lot of every day every project procedures, and then some emergency things.

- You can use a contract type that lets you approve builder and designer personnel, and then ask everyone about their previous team work experience
- You can have serious partnering meetings to begin the projects, and when new organizations come on. These meetings are often vague airy fairy sessions, but I got a great example from the former Naval officers who ran the Santa Clara County program about how to be good leaders and strict disciplinarians in mutual respect and cooperation.
- You can have social occasions that everyone is expected to attend, to get to know everyone. One option is a social hour at a local watering hole after the monthly meeting, and a project golf tournament twice a year with nice prizes. It worked well on the Dallas Police Headquarters.
- If the Project Cooperation Index gets to 100, you can change out all the management personnel of all participants, including owner, designer, and builder. We have only had to do that once, but it seemed to work.

### How well does that work?

It has worked pretty well for us, and better as we practiced. We haven't had any projects collapse, anyway.

We have prepared a book of all of the previous newsletters, which you can download from our website. They are sometimes good to send to your associates when they back up your opinion!

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