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International Journal of Project Management

Volume 20, Issue 1, January 2002, Pages 1-11

Current practice in project management – an empirical study

Diana White ... Joyce Fortune

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863\(00\)00029-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863(00)00029-6)

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Abstract

This paper reports the findings of a survey designed to capture the “real world” experiences of people active in project management. The survey took the form of a questionnaire that was sent to 995 Project Managers and which achieved a response rate of 23.7%. Each respondent was asked to describe a recent project and identify factors that were regarded as critical to that project's outcome. The extent to which the project gave rise to side-effects was explored and particular emphasis was placed on the use that had been made of any of the many project management methods, tools and techniques that are available. Respondents were also asked to judge the effectiveness of the methods, tools and techniques they had used and to report any limitations or drawbacks they had encountered. The results showed that most respondents used only a small number of methods, tools and techniques with project management software and Gantt charts being the most widely used aids. Almost half of the respondents reported drawbacks to the methods, tools and techniques they had employed. The criteria for judging project success most cited in the project management literature (on

criteria for judging project success most cited in the project management literature (on time; to budget; and to specification) were the criteria used by the respondents to judge their projects' success. However, two further criteria were reported as being of particular relevance. These were both concerned with the consequences of the project on the organisation involve. In contrast to the finding of many surveys of project success rates, a remarkably high proportion (41%) of the projects reported upon here were judged to be completely successful, though it should be noted that the judgements were made by Project Managers who had worked on the projects being judged.



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Keywords

Survey; Project management; Project success criteria; Methods, tools and techniques

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