

The Four Types of Projects You Need to GUARANTEE Your Next Promotion

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In this edition, we do a deep-dive into the **four** types of projects that you need to nail your next promotion.

- **Technical,**
- **Financial/Commercial,**
- **Stakeholder,**
- **and Strategic.**

These projects are crucial for your development and to ensure progress on your career path.

By mastering each of these types of project, not only will you expand your expertise but you will also elevate your profile and set yourself apart from others in your field.

Let's jump in and look at each type of project on our list in detail:

1. Technical Complexity:



Technical complexity involves projects with intricate systems, standards, processes, or technologies. They may be operating in uncertain environments or reliant on novel or unproven technologies. Or simply operating with no clearly defined outcome.

The following models provide some insight into how levels of complexity from various contexts have been codified.

VUCA - *volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous*. The **VUCA framework** is mainly aimed at addressing challenges in the corporate environment.

Cynefin - *a notion that everyone carries connections to the world (tribalistic, religious, geographical, political, emotional, etc.) that aren't immediately evident, until we observe ourselves from a grounded position.*

VPEC-T or VIPER - *The premise of this model is that **friction in enterprise architecture (EA) often arises because different entities** (specifically business needs and IT solutions in their case) **lack a common language** and a lot of what is said gets lost in translation.*

I-Space - *This tridimensional framework analyzes the relationship between the way data is structured and codified, the level of abstraction, and the ease of diffusing (distributing) information. We can call this exchange of information a "data economy".*

and SECI - *This is a bidimensional view that segments knowledge into **explicit** and **tacit**. **Socialization** is all about distilling knowledge by observing, and **Externalization**, where previously tacit knowledge is standardized into a format that can then be shared with others, whereby creating the foundation for fresh knowledge.*

As a project manager involved in these types of complex projects, there is a demand for deep understanding of specialized knowledge and progress often requires innovative and iterative problem-

solving. To excel in such projects, ensure thorough research, keep abreast of industry advancements, and cultivate a network of experts. Plan meticulously, anticipate challenges, and leverage appropriate tools and resources to navigate technical hurdles effectively. There is no guarantee of success with such projects, and as leaders and managers you will likely be venturing into uncharted project territory.

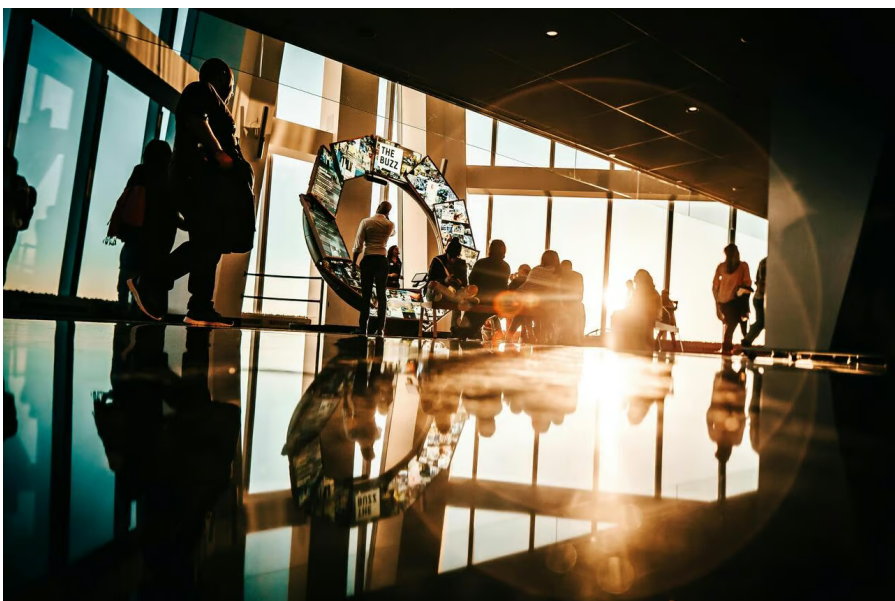
2. Financial and Commercial Complexity:

Projects with financial or commercial complexity revolve around budgeting, resource allocation, and cost management. Or have additional challenges around commercial viability. As a project manager, honing financial and commercial acumen is imperative. Understanding the financial implications of your decisions, analyzing data meticulously, and collaborating closely with finance and commercial teams. You may need to develop robust financial models, be competent in the contingency planning, and be able to assess and implement risk mitigation strategies to ensure project success within budgetary constraints. Understanding the commercial indicators and levers across your project and taking the necessary actions when called upon.

3. Stakeholder Complexity:

Stakeholder complexity arises from managing diverse interests, expectations, and relationships. Effective communication, negotiation, and stakeholder engagement are paramount. Identify key stakeholders early, establish clear channels of communication, and foster trust and collaboration. Understand stakeholders' motivations, concerns, and objectives to align project outcomes with their expectations. Regularly solicit feedback and adapt your approach accordingly to maintain stakeholder satisfaction. The role of your project's sponsor is a key part of managing your stakeholders, as a primary relationship within your project, as the project lead you must skillfully and adequately manage this relationship and ensure your access to critical resources, sponsor support and advocacy.

4. Strategic Complexity:



Strategic projects involve aligning organizational objectives with long-term vision and goals. These projects require a holistic understanding of business strategy, market dynamics, and industry trends. As a project manager, focus on the big picture, prioritize initiatives aligned with strategic objectives, and anticipate future challenges and opportunities. Collaborate closely with senior leadership, drive cross-functional alignment, and continuously evaluate project alignment with strategic priorities. As you undertake more of these types of projects, you may knowingly or unknowingly be transitioning to program management type opportunities. This is a significant step in your professional project management career and a sure fire way of knowing that you are on the right track to career growth and progression.

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Enhancing Your Project Management Journey:

As you embark on each new project, assess which aspects you aim to focus on and enhance. Typically you should be aiming for at least one, if not several of the following: **Knowledge, Experience, Capability, Network, Profile, Visibility.**

Let's take a deeper look at each of these aspects and consider how you can use them to enhance your project management journey:

1. Experience: Experience is the cornerstone of growth for any project manager. It encompasses the practical application of knowledge and skills gained through hands-on involvement in various projects. As you progress in your career, seek diverse project opportunities that expose you to different industries, methodologies, and challenges. Embrace new responsibilities, take on leadership roles, and actively participate in project execution. Reflect on past experiences, learn from successes and failures, and leverage lessons learned to inform future decision-making. Remember, each project experience adds depth and breadth to your expertise, contributing significantly to your professional development.

2. Capability: Capability refers to the proficiency and competency required to effectively manage projects of varying complexities. Invest in continuous learning and skill development to enhance your capabilities as a project manager. Identify areas for improvement based on project feedback, performance evaluations, and self-assessment. Pursue relevant certifications, training programs, and workshops to acquire new skills and knowledge. Engage in peer learning, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing initiatives within your organization and professional networks. Strengthening your capabilities not only enhances your project management prowess but also boosts your confidence and credibility in the field.

3. Network: Building and nurturing a robust professional network is instrumental in advancing your project management career. Your network comprises colleagues, mentors, industry peers, and stakeholders who provide support, guidance, and opportunities for growth. Actively engage in networking events, conferences, and industry gatherings to expand your circle of contacts. Cultivate meaningful relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and reciprocity. Seek mentorship from seasoned professionals who can offer valuable insights and career advice. Collaborate with peers on projects, share best practices, and leverage your network to access new opportunities and resources. Remember, a strong network opens doors to career advancement and fosters lifelong learning and collaboration.

4. Profile/Visibility: Your professional profile and visibility play a crucial role in shaping your reputation and career trajectory as a project manager. Establishing a strong personal brand and professional presence enhances your credibility and influence within the industry. Actively contribute to thought leadership forums, publish articles, and speak at conferences to showcase your expertise and insights. Engage in online communities, social media platforms, and professional forums to share your experiences and connect with peers. Seek opportunities to lead high-impact projects, serve on industry committees, and participate in professional associations to elevate your visibility and credibility. Remember, managing your profile and visibility effectively enhances your professional reputation and opens doors to new opportunities and collaborations.

Strive for a balanced approach, continually refining your core skills such as planning, reporting, risk management and assurance skills, and honing soft skills, including team management, communication and negotiations. Enlist processes to support your navigation of complex information and relationships effectively.

Remember the art of project management is to work towards a managed equilibrium, in a world of constant flux.

Project Legacy and Career Development:

As you engage each type of project, consider how they will contribute to your professional development and career trajectory.

1. **Reflect** on the legacy of your projects in terms of the skills gained, networks expanded, and impact achieved.
2. **Learn** from past experiences, including failures and missed opportunities, this is integral to personal growth and career development as a project manager.

3. **Consider** the whole journey throughout your project as a learning opportunity, don't overlook skills such as team recruitment, conflict resolution and process implementation as important learning pillars.
4. **Identify** any shortcomings or failures encountered during the project journey and extract valuable insights from them. What would you do differently if faced with similar circumstances again? What new skills do you need to develop to ensure this is avoided in the future.
5. **Acknowledge** your successes and achievements, celebrate your strengths and accomplishments, recognizing the skills and strategies that contributed to project success. Are any of these superpowers that you can further develop and raise to a new level of excellence.
6. **Analyze** any setbacks or failures encountered, understanding the root causes and implications for future projects. Did you overlook crucial details, misjudge risks, or fail to effectively manage stakeholders?
7. **Take ownership** of any mistakes and embrace them as opportunities for growth and development.

Moving forward, apply the lessons learned from past experiences to enhance your project management approach. Identify areas for improvement and develop actionable strategies to address them proactively. Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement within your team, encouraging open communication and constructive feedback. Embrace innovation and adaptability, leveraging past experiences to refine your decision-making process and enhance project outcomes.

Mastering the four types of project complexity is pivotal for your growth as a project manager. Embrace this as an opportunity to expand your expertise, cultivate relationships, and leave a lasting legacy.

Remember, your journey towards promotion and professional advancement is a continuous pursuit of excellence. But with these skills under your belt, you are guaranteed to see your prospects soar.

Wishing you continued prosperity in your career journey!

Best Regards,



Nicola Benjamin