The Nine Unwritten Rules of Project Management

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IT Project Risk

- IT projects are often **disasters**
  - ➢ 53% in recovery
  - ➢ 31% canceled
  - ➢ 16% on time   -The Standish Group

"We know why projects fail; we know how to prevent their failure; so why do they still fail?"

- Cobb's Paradox

- Bridge building vs. software development

IT Project Risk

- Corporate America spends $275 billion each year on 200,000 software development projects

"…many will fail, not for lack of money or technology, but for lack of skilled project management"

-The Standish Group

Project Management

- "The accidental profession"

- People and process
  - Spans the full lifecycle of a project
  - Cornerstones of planning, execution and control
  - Not an isolated activity

- The four P's of project management
  …People Performing Perfect Process

  -The Standish Group

The Nine Unwritten Rules of Project Management

…a philosophy of project management that goes beyond training, tools and processes

Rule 1 - Projects are unique. Enjoy them.

❑ "It's like changing jobs without changing jobs."
- Deliverables
- Team
- Timeframe
- Location

❑ "Enjoy your work."

- Shelby Carter,
University of Texas
McCombs School of Business

Rule 2 – Expect challenges.

❑ **People are motivated by importance of their work**
- Theory X and Theory Y - McGregor
- Hierarchy of needs - Maslow

❑ **Professionals' needs**
- Esteem
- Self-actualization

❑ **Self-actualization**

… "Many good project managers find this level to be the most important and consider each new project as a challenge by which they can achieve self-actualization."

- Harold Kerzner

Rule 3 – Respect the unknown; don't fear it.

❑ Project managers are risk takers

❑ Risk management
- Measurement
  - probability of event (H, M, L)
  - consequence of not achieving a defined project goal
- Mitigation strategy & cost
- "Known unknowns" vs. "unknown unknowns"

Rule 4 – Apply proven project management methodologies.

❑ It is project management, not project magic

❑ Formal methodologies

FocusPM (HP)	QPM (Compaq)
Method1 (Accenture)	PMBOK (PMI)
SDP-21 (GM)	SDM (MBNA)

❑ Adherence vs. freedom

Rule 5 – Recognize that you learn from every project.

❑ Formal retrospective process
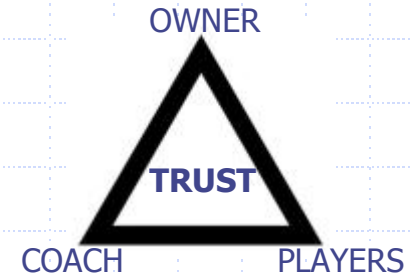
❑ Apply lessons learned to the next project

...*"If you haven't managed a bad project, you haven't managed enough projects."*

Rule 6 – Do what feels right!

❑ "Seat of the pants" vs. formal PM training

❑ "…having the right people in the right place doing the right thing at the right time."   - Mark Cuban

"Ask forgiveness, not permission."

OWNER

TRUST

COACH   PLAYERS

Rule 7 – Have fun!

❑Read Dilbert

❑Exercise team building

❑Focus on project objectives

Rule 8 – Celebrate success!

❑ Celebrate milestones

❑ Guidelines

- Give recognition
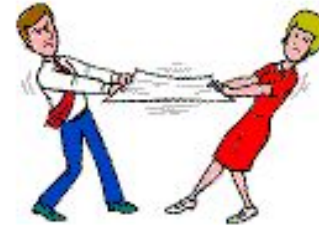- Give "mementos"
- Involve management

Rule 9 – Be flexible!

- ❑ "They keep moving the cheese."
  - Spencer Johnson, Who Moved My Cheese?

- ❑ Change is inevitable…acceptance and response are key

(Bonus) Rule 10 – Expect conflict.

❑ Conflict is inevitable

❑ High levels of conflict on projects

❑ Conflict management methods
  - Withdrawal, smoothing
  - Compromising, forcing, confrontation

"Project management is in fact managing in a highly conflictive situation, and in many ways can be considered almost synonymous with conflict management."

- Kirchof & Adams

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1. Projects are unique. Enjoy them.
2. Expect challenges.
3. Respect the unknown; don't fear it.
4. Apply proven project management methodologies.
5. Recognize that you learn from every project.
6. Do what feels right!
7. Have fun!
8. Celebrate success!
9. Be flexible.

(Bonus) 10. Expect conflict.

The Nine Unwritten Rules

...project management, an *art* or *science*?

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Reference Slide

Project Management Institute

- 92,000 members in 45 countries

- Local chapters
  - Presentations
  - Networking
  - Education

- PMI International
  - PMBOK/literature
  - Seminars
  - Annual conference
  - PMP certification