

EXTREME PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

There are many methodologies and techniques used when it comes to project management. Some of these methodologies have been there in practice for decades and some of them are brand new.

The latter methodologies have been introduced to the world of project management in order to address some of the difficulties faced by the old methodologies when it comes to addressing modern requirements and challenges of project management.

Extreme project management is one of the modern approaches to project management in software industry. As we all know, the software industry is a fast growing and fast changing domain.

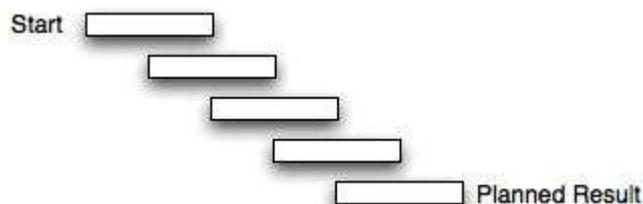
Therefore, most of the software development projects do have changing requirements from the inception to the end of the project. Adding new requirements or changing the requirements during the project execution period is one of the main challenges faced by the traditional project management approach.

The new approach, Extreme Project Management, mainly addresses the aspect of changing requirements.

The Definition

Let's do some visual comparison between the traditional project management approach and the extreme project management approach in order to understand the nature of extreme project management clearly.

In the traditional approach, the project phases look like below



In the extreme approach, a project will take the following form



By comparing the two visual representations, you will now understand the dynamics of the extreme approach. In extreme project management methodology, there are no fixed project phases and fixed set of guidelines on how to execute the project activities.

Rather, extreme methodology adapts to the situation and executes the project activity the best way possible.

By nature, extreme project management methodology does not have lengthy deadlines or delivery dates. The delivery cycles are shorter and usually they are 2 weeks.

Therefore, the entire project team is focused on delivering the scope of the delivery in short term. This allows the team to welcome any scope or requirement changes for the next delivery cycle.

Extreme Vs Conventional Project Management

The best way to compare traditional project management and extreme project management is through a comparison between classical music and jazz. Extreme project management is like jazz music.

The team members are given a lot of freedom to add their variety to the project team. Whenever a team member feels making a decision that will add value to the overall project, it is allowed by the project management.

In addition, each individual of the project team is responsible for the management of their own assignment and the quality of the same.

In contrast, the traditional approach is much more streamlined, well-defined approach where the project manager guides the entire team towards project goals.

In extreme project management approach, team members collectively share the project management responsibilities.

The Mindset

Mindset is the most critical factor when it comes to extreme project management. First of all, the team should undergo a comprehensive training on extreme approach in order to understand the basics and core principles of the approach.

In this training, the individuals also get to gauge themselves and see whether they are a fit or not.

In extreme approach, things are done totally a different way, when compared to tradition approaches. Therefore, changing the mindset of the project team is one of the main requirements and responsibilities of the management team.

When it comes to changing the mindset, consider the following rules as the ground rules for extreme approach for project management.

- Requirements and project activities being chaotic is normal
- Uncertainty is the most certain characteristic of an extreme project
- This type of projects are not fully controllable
- Change is the king and you need to welcome it every possible way
- The feeling of security is increased by relaxing the project controls

Self-Management

Self-management is one of the key aspects of extreme project management. As we have already elaborated, there is no central project management authority in such projects. The project manager is just a facilitator and a mentor.

Therefore, the project management responsibilities are distributed among the project team members. Each member of the project should execute their management responsibilities and indirectly contribute to the management function of the project.

Conclusion

Extreme project management is like living in a different planet. You cannot compare extreme approach to the traditional approach and try to find truce.

Therefore, moving from traditional approach to extreme approach is not quite as easy as moving from Windows to Mac.

If you are having the responsibility of managing a team through extreme approach, first see whether you are ready for the challenge. Go through a good training on extreme project

management and learn as much as you can.

Never try to define or approach extreme project tasks through conventional definitions and approaches.