

No Wishing Required

Rob Prinzo

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It's probably no surprise to project managers that nearly seventy percent of software projects fail. Some large IT projects will warrant bringing in third-party consultants to do Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) for quality assurance to help reduce defects, but the results typically don't offer strategic solutions to project issues.

During his fifteen years in the enterprise software implementation field as a project manager, project executive, and consultant, author Rob Prinzo developed and used the project assurance methodology he refers to as "collaborative intervention" to increase his odds of project success. Prinzo maintains that traditional "waterfall methodology of project management doesn't provide the checks and balances required to ensure success in early project phases, and it doesn't provide the mechanisms for project intervention."

Unlike IV&V, which is reactive, the project assurance methodology is a proactive process that creates a collaborative environment for key project stakeholders to identify and resolve issues at the points where they are likely to occur during the project's development.

Written in a storytelling style similar to management expert Ken Blanchard and other business authors, *No Wishing Required* tells the story of a fictional project team that is implementing an enterprise application. Prinzo intends to help project managers avert project failure by identifying and addressing potential failure points early and throughout the process. It gives them the tools to identify, assess, and intervene, with seven steps for collaborative intervention. It identifies six key points in the project life cycle where an assessment can potentially have the greatest impact. It also focuses on the soft skills, such as how to intervene without causing friction with members of the project team. The key to intervention is that "the leadership may need to come from someone who is not in the position of authority, but who needs to convince the people in positions of authority that change is required for project success." The story illustrates how anyone involved in software implementation projects can apply the techniques of collaborative intervention to navigation of the organization and implementation of the solution, along with some tact and diplomacy, to perform the difficult task of convincing the project team that it's in the project's best interest to make changes.

Project assurance is similar to risk management, but the difference is the element of intervention. Where risk management focuses on the techniques to identify and mitigate or address risks, the project assurance methodology's "collective intervention" process is a teamwork approach to increasing the odds of success by resolving issues early before they lead to failure.

No Wishing Required is based on the very basic premise that project failure can be avoided by project assurance. Although the book is geared toward software development projects, the concept is applicable to projects in any field. The book is well written in simple language and without any technical detail. The fictional story is entertaining and injected with humor. Prinzo believes that project managers don't need a "Genie" bearing wishes to avoid project failure once they master the technique of collaborative intervention.

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