



Project Management Institute - Northern Alabama Chapter

Comanche Helicopter Program Management
A 21st Century Acquisition Case Study

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Getting Started as New Project Manager

Finding Your Paradigm Is Not Easy

“Fielding a New MS Product”



- **Everyone Thinks They Know What It Does**
- **Few Take the Time to Learn About What is Really Important**
- **Capabilities Are Built-in Based on What Few Understand, But Everyone Will Want**
- **The Products Always Take Time to Appreciate**
- **Only the Flaws Get Noticed**
- **Always Takes Longer to Field Than Advertised**

Going In “Knowns” What We’ve Learned Since DSMC



- **The Army/DoD Do Not Like Programs in Trouble!**
- **Letting Everyone Know Early Does Not Mean You Reported it Early Enough**
- **Telling Leadership That A Program is Broke Means You’re Telling Them that “They” Screwed it Up**
- **We Don’t Shoot the Messenger– Does Not Apply To Multi-Billion Major Program Problems**
- **The 4th Law of Thermodynamics Applies-You Will Be Loved**
- **All Those Involved in Previous Program Decisions Have Selective and Very Short Memories**

Getting Started

Understanding The Program Plan

“What Am I Getting In To?”



- **Acquisition Strategy Analysis**
 - How Did We Get Here?
 - Politics/Funding/Timing----Constant Change is Reality
 - What Does Not Make Sense
 - Funding Profile/Schedule/Reqts Mismatches
- **Determine What A Balanced Funding Profile Looks Like**
 - Team Work is A Must- Contractor/User/PM
- **Determine Who Are the Players Driving A Solution**
 - Who Can Help and Who is in the Way....Players Change
 - What Are Everyone’s Expectations
- **Be Fearless And Honest-There is No Other Way**

What’s in your three envelopes?

Comanche- A Case Study of Risk Management

Was This Really News?



- **Funding Profile To SOW Mismatch**
- **Inadequate Contractor Organization and Performance**
- **Incomplete Flow Down of Requirements to Suppliers**
- **Unrealistic Cost and Schedule Estimates**
- **Unbalanced Requirements To Specification/Contract**
- **Little Fiscal or Requirements Stability**
- **Inadequate HW/SW Integration Resources and Tools**
- **No Internal Review Processes in Place**
- **No buy-in or support from the Test Community**
- **No history of success....Trail of Failures**
- **Little Understanding of the Program at the Senior Army Level**

....**"Comanche is a Done Deal"** ...Gen Eric Shinseki, AUSA OCT 2000

Three Phased Approach Realistic Program Execution



A model for adjusting your program

1) Convince Your leadership (Army) that the Current Program Plan Won't work

- Use Understandable Metrics
- Be Willing to Lose the Program...Get it Right or Stop the Bleeding

2) Develop and Sell the Solution To Your Leadership (Army)

- Gain Buy-Ins from the Nay Sayers
- Don't Make Estimates Fit into a Funding and Schedule Box

3) Convince OSD and Congress Why They Should Believe You Now

- Development Termination Criteria
- Frequent Status Briefings...Give Them Opportunities to Vote
- **Perform to Plan**

MANAGE THE PROCESS

The Project Manager Must Be the Trail Boss



- **Articulation of Plan Across Entire Team is Essential**
- **Realistic Time Lines To Get Work Done Cannot Be Underestimated**
 - **Going Back To Change Milestones is Hard**
- **Provide Frequent and Informative Updates to Leadership**
 - **Keep the Team Working on The Process**
- **Work the Media and Nay Sayers**
- **Understand it is Not An Exact Science**
- **Don't Declare Victory Too Soon----The OSIFs Are Out There**

RISK MANAGEMENT

As Much an Art as A Science



- **Risks Define Your Program Success Potential**
- **Get Outside Help-Don't Believe Your Own Analyses**
 - **Gray Beard and OSD Reviews Builds Support**
- **Beware if You Have the Same Team Working Successive Restructures and Risk Reviews**
 - **Institutional Knowledge is Good But Fresh Analyses Helps**
- **Risk Management Must Be From the Bottom Up and Continuous**

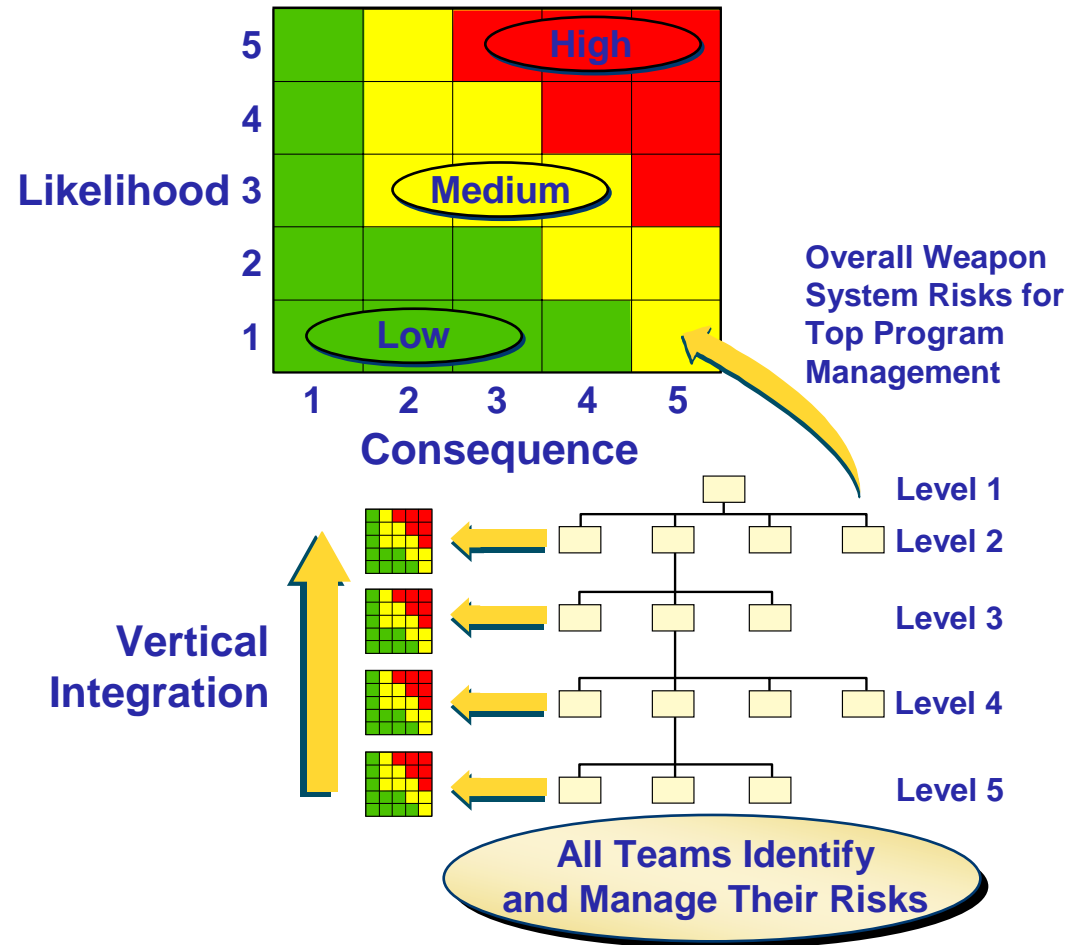
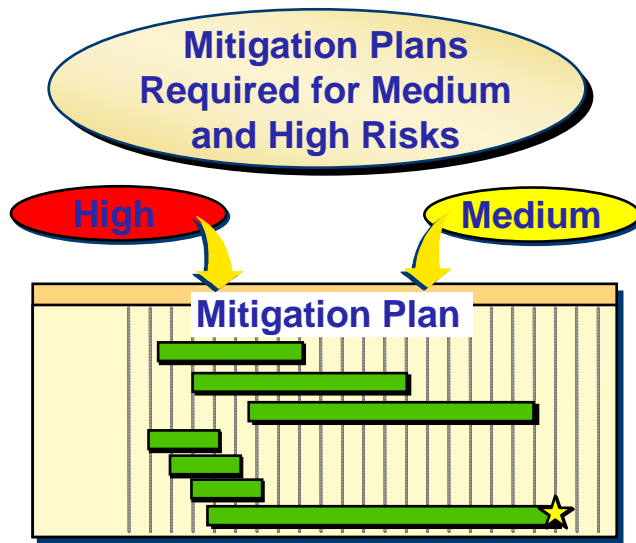
RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

One Example



Reduce Risk By:

- Eliminating Uncertainties
- Lowering Consequences
- Preparing and Implementing Contingency Plans



Risks On-Line in Management Information System

Final Lessons Learned



- **Closure Requires Persistence and Patience**
 - **Not Everyone Will Agree**
- **Confidence Milestones Build Support...if you meet them**
- **Understand What Your Risks Mean in Terms of Success and Funding**
- **Confidence Factors are Important**
 - **Deliver What You Sign Up For**
- **Know When To Cut your Losses-Termination Criteria**
- **Realize the Value of The Program To Your Service and Corporation**
- **Only One Restructure Per PM Tour is Allowed**

DoD Acquisition Realities

Comanche Case Study



- **No good process to deal with obsolescence exists**
 - Color of Money
 - Problem Prediction
- **Evolutionary acquisition is not compatible with our POM to budget process**
 - Technology insertion planning is an oxymoron
- **Testing system-of-systems architecture is difficult**
- **Modeling and Simulation in lieu of LFT still not accepted**
- **Dealing with a shrinking technology base builds greater interdependencies**
 - DoD helicopter industry
- **Cost realism of complex integration efforts is hard**
- **Integrated (vs. federated) may not always be the best approach**
- **Fiscal stability is critical to success**