



**GSD LEADERSHIP INSIGHT:**

# **YOUR TRANSFOR- MATION PROJECT HAS BEEN FUNDED, NOW WHAT?**

**By J. Scott**

**DECEMBER 5, 2019**

**120VC CHANGE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS  
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# YOUR TRANSFORMATION PROJECT HAS BEEN FUNDED, NOW WHAT?

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**Choose your Quarterback:** You have gone through all of the right steps – identified the need, found the solution, built a business case and justification, received funding, and you are ready to go. Now that your large, complex, transformative enterprise-wide project, is approved you need to deliver. Do you have the expertise and resource bandwidth to focus on the successful implementation? Who will lead the effort? It is critical to reflect on that leader's job. The right Program Leader will need the skills, background, and resources necessary to deliver the business-critical outcomes required to take advantage of the market opportunity you are investing in. They will need to deliver these outcomes while staying within budget, managing and meeting expectations and delivering the mass-market adoption or end-user adoption you need to get the results your business case was built on. Easy right?

## When choosing the right delivery leader for a successful outcome, you have a few choices:

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**Option #1:** Select an internal candidate with a consistent track record of delivery large enterprise-wide projects efficiently/effectively that has consistently achieved near 100% market or end-user adoption on day one. And then make sure they are 100% dedicated to this project. It's not unusual for organizations to appoint an Executive to this role and expect that they can handle it in addition to their full-time job.

First, no one has any spare time in today's workplace. Second, Program Management is a very tactical leadership role that most executives aren't necessarily skilled in or interested in. Third, you are transforming, which requires that you think different to work differently. Choosing someone that has never lead a transformational initiative successfully is going to add undesired complexity and could decrease odds of a successful outcome. If you are tempted to take this route, make the Executive you have in mind the Project Sponsor, and then assign them a full-time Program Manager. If assigning an executive and a Program Manager sounds more costly than assigning a single person with the authority and skill set to get the job done, consider what it will cost you to relaunch the project when it's late and over budget because you chose the wrong leader.

**Option #2:** Select a Management Consulting firm that has a successful track record delivering the outcomes your project requires. During the selection process, there are two critical steps I see organizations consistently miss. Many companies rely on large consulting partners who offer cookie-cutter solutions, and once the pre-sales team is gone you get green associates who are responsible for delivering your successful outcome. How many new graduates have you had assigned that have virtually no delivery experience, but still have a high bill rate? It is easy to be lulled by a huge RFP with lots of standard text – it seems safe, and you can select the partner based on the lowest cost or rapport developed with the sales team. Don't forget the age-old power of client reference calls, including references for those who will actually be delivering as part of your team! It doesn't matter what these firms promise you; if they don't have any clients that will take your call and assure you they can deliver, they probably can't.

Second, the vast majority of the management consulting firms are selling solutions, not outcomes. They are all reselling the same products, and have

super-smart subject matter experts capable of deploying and customizing the required solutions, but they don't have strong proven Project or Program Management disciplines capable of consistently delivering the successful or transformational outcomes. Most management consulting firms claim to have strong Project/Program Management disciplines, but they don't have any Project/Program Management standards, training programs, or quality assurance programs to back this claim.

**According to a study by McKinsey “on average, large IT projects run 45% over budget and 7% over time while delivering 56% less value than predicted.** When evaluating a Management Consulting firm's ability to deliver the outcomes they are committing, in addition to client reference calls, it is critical to evaluate their Project & Program disciplines. Do they have a discipline? Or are they just assigning people with the title Project or Program Manager?

**Option #3:** Select a Transformational Leadership firm like 120VC that is 100% focused on successfully delivering their clients outcomes with zero conflict of interest. 120VC isn't selling ERP, CRM, or Cloud; we aren't selling solutions; we sell outcomes. We don't have a bench of solution-oriented subject matter experts; we need to keep billable, and we aren't reselling products. We are outcome obsessed, and 100% focused on Getting Sh\*t Done.

**Over the last 20+ years, our model enabled us to complete 98% of our client's transformative enterprise-wide projects near on-time & budget with near 100% mass market or end-user adoption on day one.** We do this by providing our clients with the Project, Program, Product, and Change Leadership to pull their team members, their vendor team members, and their end-users into a single, integrated, high-functioning team with a single plan to lead them all. In addition to Quarterbacking, we assist our clients with vendor selection to ensure they select the vendors that are the right fit, with the right skillsets, with verified client endorsements, for the required outcomes.

**Key Point:** Regardless of the option you choose, achieving the outcomes you need requires that you appoint a single, dedicated Quarterback or Program Leader for the entire team. Most complex enterprise-wide projects require the cooperation of client team members and several vendor team members. The biggest mistake I see made is that everyone assigns their own Project Manager, and then each of them comes up with their own Work Plan. When this happens, there is no single plan that contains the tasks, dependencies, and resources assignments for everyone on the Project, and balls get dropped. In the model where everyone has their own Project Leader and Plan, each team's focus is on the completion of their work without any insight into how their outcomes impact the other team's outcomes. This model creates waste, blame and according to McKinsey leads to a loss of \$450K for every one million dollars invested in large projects.



**"I highly recommend 120VC. They are a firm with a strong methodology, a proven track record of success at Trader Joe's Company, and a group with the requisite know-how and emotional intelligence to deliver mission-critical projects."**

**- RON GLICKMAN**

Chief Information Officer Trader Joe's Company

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120VC led Trader Joe's nationwide merchant processing system upgrade. We completed it in 6 months with zero downtime. Visa called it a flawless implementation in record time.

**"As we wind down our major program here at SPE, I wanted to let you know that our program and project management team, supplied by 120VC was the cause for the program's success. There is NO doubt in my mind that we could not have done this Data Center Consolidation program without any single one of the team. Jake, Niloo, and Randy worked tirelessly throughout the program and really led the project to what many here at SPE are citing as one of our most successful projects. I am sharing my appreciation with you and the team as they truly deserve the recognition."**

**- SUSAN BLACK**

Executive Director PMO Sony Pictures Entertainment

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120VC led the Sony Pictures Entertainment Cloud Transformation. We moved their entire application environment to the cloud in 9 months with no service disruption. That's over 240 applications and 900 environments.

**"Jason and Asad, I can't thank you enough for all of your support. The risk you've helped mitigate on our largest project with T-Mobile was huge, and you made it look easy!!! You've exceeded all expectations and demonstrated world-class professional services that are second to none!!! 120VC Rules!!!!!"**

**- MICHAEL D. BEASLEY**

Director of Enterprise Services West at OKTA

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120VC led Okta's single sign-on identity management rollout at T-Mobile. We deployed the tool to all T-Mobile retail locations in under two months with zero service disruption. That's was over 40k users.

## 7 Step Game Plan After Choosing Your Quarterback:

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There is a lot involved in choosing the right person to run your large program, and that's because leaders are a single point of failure. No one hires a leader because they want their organization to be the same in a week, month or year. But things like Sears, ToysRus, Blockbuster, and Barnes and Noble happen. **On average large IT Projects go 45% over budget and deliver 7% late. That's because they had managers at the helm, but they didn't have the right leader.** Now that you have taken the time to select the right leader for your large, complex transformative enterprise-wide Project, there are a couple more things to keep your eye on to ensure you get the expected outcomes.

**1. Introduce the Law of Diffusion of Innovation:** Address the single worst assumption everyone makes—that you will communicate the need/vision for change to team members, and they will immediately get behind it and begin transforming your organization. A much better assumption is that 2.5% of team members will respond this way, and you will have to work really hard to connect with the rest. If you are interested in learning more about the Law of Diffusion of Innovation, we would be happy to hear from you!

**2. Assess Your Change Readiness:** Partner with a Change Manager to assess your cultural readiness for change in relation to the outcomes you need to achieve. This allows the development and socialization of a culturally appropriate approach and timeline. If you try to drive more change than your team can absorb in their current state, you will burn time and money while getting nowhere fast. Read the Harvard Business Review article titled “Why Your IT Project May Be Riskier Than You Think,” and learn how attempting to drive change too fast almost put Levi Strauss on the list with Sears.

**3. Co-Create a Single Unified Plan:** Pull the client and vendor subject matters experts (SME's) together to co-create a single culturally appropriate plan for all of the work that includes cross-organizational/team dependencies. I frequently see vendor team members left out of this process because they have already committed to a fixed bid contract. Leaving them out of the planning exercise and leaning on a proposal that was submitted based on assumptions and little to no information almost ensures you will come in late and over budget. This is your opportunity to create accountability by having the SME's that will complete the work, define the work. It also allows you to eliminate as many assumptions as possible before you start the work. If you find that the original estimates were grossly inaccurate, you can adjust, refine scope, or take a different approach before launching your initiative. And yes, you will have to pay the vendor for their team members' time. Again, this is a much better alternative than

finding out their estimates were based on inaccurate assumptions after you have gone grossly over budget or time.

**4. Get Buy-In:** Ensure the outcome of the planning process yields near 100% buy-in from all stakeholders, especially those that will be affected by the change. Also, work to eliminate any resistance associated with the unknown. People don't resist change—instead, they fear the potential loss associated with change. When people have clarity, even if the outcome is not ideal, they have choice. Choice overcomes fear of the unknown and helps people to engage in the process.

**5. Get Sh\*t Done:** Move the Project toward completion efficiently and cost-effectively with a transparent people-centric leadership approach that fosters autonomy, mastery, and purpose for all involved. Avoid the tendency to blame, deliberate about process, or the evaluation of excuses. Stay 100% focused on the results, the elimination of obstacles, and lessons learned. Only work on activities that move your project forward; everything else is just noise.

**6. Provide Training:** Teach all of the stakeholders how to engage the change process according to their role on the journey. This approach allows the project to move quickly and improves your team's cultural and experiential readiness for change, innovation, and agility.

**7. Remove Roadblocks:** It is impossible to complete a transformative enterprise-wide Project without identifying and working through most of an organization's roadblocks. Work to solve these organizational challenges and begin fostering efficiencies for your team along the way; this will improve your change readiness for future projects, and enable you to realize true closure of the current project.

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**J. SCOTT** From the start of his career spent jumping out of helicopters as a Rescue Swimmer in the United States Navy, J. Scott has a long history of leadership, servanthood, and bearing witness to the transformative power of getting shit done. Since starting 120VC in April of 2000, he's personally overseen the global transformational efforts within organizations such as DirecTV, Trader Joe's, Blizzard Entertainment, Sony Pictures, Mattel, and others. His team's unique, irreverent approach to change has generated breakthrough results and created meaningful jobs. In addition to being a successful entrepreneur, J. Scott is a devoted husband and father and author of "It's Never Just Business: It's About People," and "The Irreverent Guide to Project Management," both available on Amazon.com.

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