

Velocity

FAST, FOCUSED DECISIONS TO IMPROVE PROJECT RESULTS

I have often been asked to evaluate reasons for poor performance in a Continuous Improvement deployment. Problems have ranged from disengaged leadership to ineffective coaching to lackluster results, but the biggest issue I have found is a lack of project velocity. By breaking down key elements of velocity, I have discovered a simple test to evaluate a project's health and project a project's likelihood of successful completion. It has been a wonderful way to focus client expectations and reorganize a stable of improvement projects.

If a project CAN be killed it SHOULD be killed!

When teaching classes on project management, I discuss the importance of working on projects that matter. How do you know if a project really matters? If at any time during your project you ask, "Can this project be killed?" and the answer is, "yes", then the project doesn't matter and should be killed!

This is typically the first question I ask when evaluating a project's health. If the answer isn't a clear 'Yes' or 'No', then I use Velocity to evaluate the usefulness of the project. Velocity is the measurement of the rate and direction of motion. The value of velocity is speed or rate of change.

Velocity Predicts Success

But why kill ongoing projects? Because organizations spend a lot of time working on things that add no value. Get rid of the wasteful projects first and then improve the projects that remain. Here are some things to look for when assessing the value of a project:

High-Value projects with Velocity	Low-Value projects that should be killed
High Value projects are moving in a direction.	Low Value projects are fast, but pointless.
High-Value projects have speed.	Low Value projects are important, but stalled.
High-Value projects change things.	Low Value projects don't produce results.

If a project is worth doing, (can't be killed), try these things to inject some Velocity and add value:

- Evaluate project charter expectations to make sure it is moving in the right direction. Move project sponsorship up or over to people who have the greatest interest in the project outcome.
- Inject speed into a project by temporarily renewing or adding resources. Consider a different team lead. Bring in a subject matter expert with passion. Add a team member with no skin in the game just to shake things up and ask different questions.
- Identify the desired change ahead and focus on making that change happen. Accomplish small tasks in line with the desired result to incrementally demonstrate the change ahead.

When all is said and done, get more done than said. If **VELOCITY** cannot be injected into a project, kill it or re-start it with a new purpose and goal. No matter what the investment to date, no investment is justified if it won't achieve results that matter. Velocity helps leaders make better decisions that lead to better results.

Contact Joe to see how you can use Velocity in your enterprise.



Better Decisions.

Better Results.

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