



# PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department



# ISSUES DEMANDING NEW PRACTICES

[HTTP://PMSYMPOSIUM.UMD.EDU/](http://PMSYMPOSIUM.UMD.EDU/)

*Chris Seat, General Atomics Aeronautical  
Systems*

*Carole Rickard Hedden, Aviation Week  
2016 Project Management Symposium*

## Three Questions for Interactive Session

- **Tailoring programs: What are best practices in applying “speed with discipline” when planning and executing programs?**
- **Customer relations: What are best practices for working with a “difficult” customer or improving customer relations?**
- **Exerting authority: How can a PM exert authority when the organizational structure doesn’t naturally foster that authority?**

# Tailoring Programs

**Some considerations (discussions at an AF PEO/  
Executive Roundtable this last Feb):**

- **Military acq system optimized to a cold war period**
  - Laws, regs, number of stakeholders, budget systems
  - Laws, regs have built one by one over time due to program problems or failures
    - They never get less, only build
    - Attempting to avoid any mistakes at the price of speed and cost
  - Difficult to tell whose fault it is when a breach occurs

## Tailoring Programs (cont)

- **Govt managers are driven to risk averse behavior based on present acq system**
- **These managers need top-cover that assures them they can take measured risk**
- **Industry execs opinions: The one most effective cost saving initiative that could be implemented in mil acq is shortening program lengths**
  - With the number of people that are required to work all the additional requirements now placed on traditional programs, simply shortening the time they work on a program would yield the best cost savings
  - This may imply a schedule driven program, deferring capabilities to spiral in that can't make the schedule

# Tailoring Programs (cont)

Special Program		Traditional Program	
<b>Attributes</b>		<b>Attributes</b>	
80-90% solution		Attempt to gain 100% solution	
Close and frequent customer coordination		Coordination through formal reviews	
Schedule driven		Event driven	
Streamlined testing, limited OT		Extensive testing	
Requires customer leadership to tailor acq requirements		Follow all acq requirements	
Tailored cert and accreditations		Full cert and accreditations	
<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
Quicker to field	May require operational workarounds	Less risk of fielding deficiencies	Higher risk of scope creep
Lower cost	Higher risk of masked sustainment issues	Full sys engineering artifacts	

## Tailoring Programs (cont)

- **How AFSOC tailors acq programs vs the regular AF would be a good study.**
- **Question #1: What are best practices in applying “speed with discipline” when planning and executing programs?**
  - Example: Show customer cost and schedule savings with certain process tailoring

# Customer Relations

## Some considerations:

- **Avoid misunderstandings and scope creep**
  - With more detailed SOWs
  - Freeze requirements as early as possible
- **If customer won't work with the contractor to resolve and only resorts to "holding the contractor's feet to the fire," then issues won't resolve as quickly as possible or to the best advantage of the customer**

## Customer Relations (cont)

- **Good working and trusting relationships with customer are extremely important**
- **Trust between the customer and contractor is key to optimizing the cost/schedule/performance**
- **Question #2: What are best practices for working with a “difficult” customer or improving customer relations?**
  - Example: Bring the customer onto the team

# Exerting Authority

- **Some considerations:**
- **Organization may not naturally afford authority**
  - Matrixed
  - Large/geographically distributed
- **Can't depend on PM title to get groups to execute**
  - Especially in resource constrained environments
  - Must build professional relationships
    - Groups must gain trust in PMs judgment

## Exerting Authority (cont)

- **Ensure budgets are flowed down to groups executing and they take ownership of the budgets**
- **During proposal phase, development of resource loaded schedule (IMS) that is the frame for the BOEs helps ensure buy-in by executing groups**
- **Question #3: How can a PM exert authority when the organizational structure doesn't naturally foster that authority?**
  - Example: Ensure budgets are flowed down

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- **Exerting authority: How can a PM exert authority when the organizational structure doesn’t naturally foster that authority?**