

Principles for Project Success

- Define the Job in Detail
- Get the Right People Involved
- Estimate the Time and Costs
- Break the Job Down
- Establish a Change Procedure
- Agree on Acceptance Criteria

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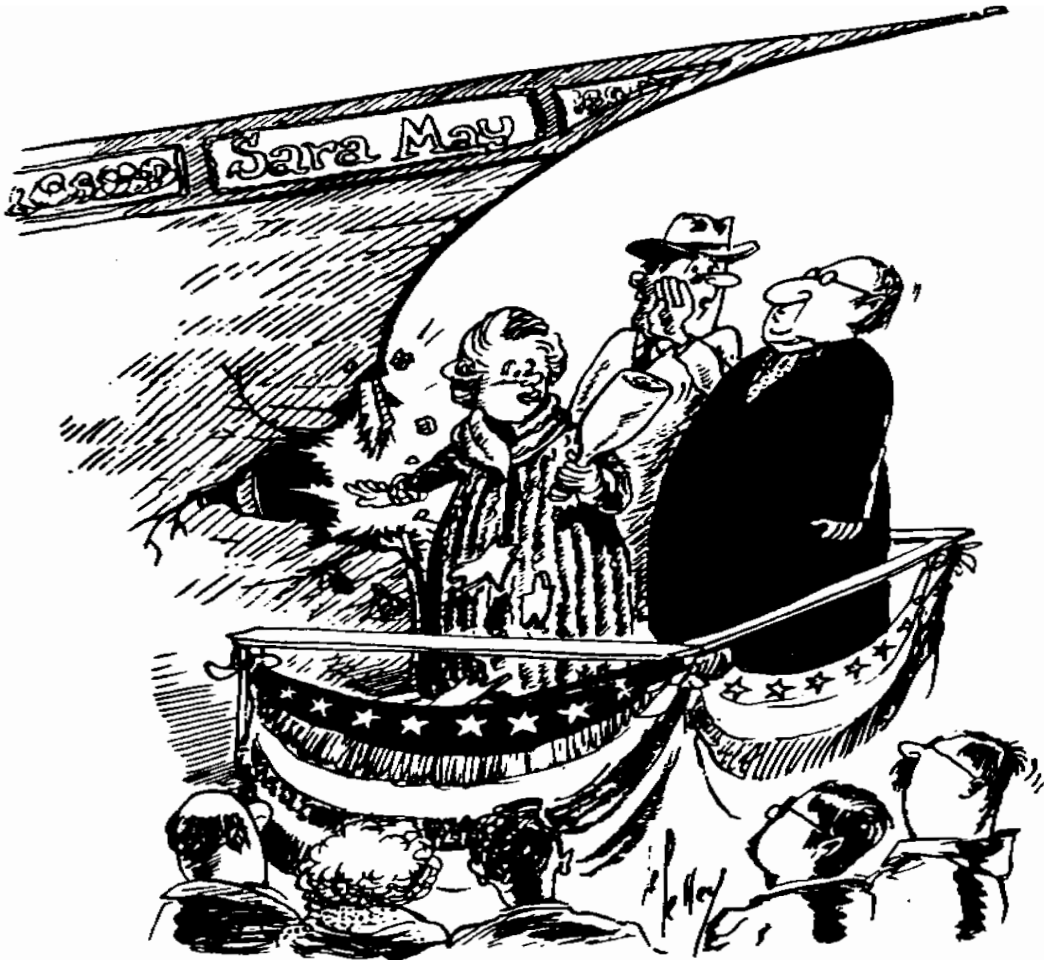
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Principle One: **Define the Job in Detail**

Identify Customer Needs and Expectations



“Tell Throckmorton we have to revise the design again.”

Define the Job in Detail

Corollary: Identify Customer Needs and Expectations

The opening cartoon for this Chapter shows Sara May christening the ship named in her honor with a bottle of champagne and breaking the bow in the process. The customer's *need* was for a ship delivered on-time and within budget. Those objectives were met. However, the customer's *expectation* was that the ship would also be able to withstand the blow from a bottle of champagne and would actually be able to float as well. Although the cartoon is a little silly, it conveys an important message. Many a project manager has responded to a customer's stated needs and failed to meet the customer's expectations. It is the project manager's responsibility to define both the needs and expectations and to incorporate them into the design of the finished product. You are not *done* with a project until the customer says you are done. "Done" includes satisfying both needs and expectations.

The seeds of a project's success or failure are often sown at its very beginning. If you are looking for a rose bush but plant a radish, you're going to get a radish. That may seem patently obvious, but some project managers are planting radishes and expecting rose gardens. That is, they are starting with a poorly-defined project and are expecting winning results. Their optimism is admirable, but a healthy dose of realism is in order. Only if you have a clear idea of *what* you are planning to do will you have any chance of doing it successfully. If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there. *Defining the job in detail* creates the clarity needed for a successful project.

How Much Definition is Enough?

Most people would not have a philosophical or cerebral disagreement with the idea that we ought to define what we are going to do before we do it. But ... how much "Definition" is enough? Nobody wants "Analysis Paralysis" to set in, but on the other hand, if development starts too soon, before appropriate requirements definition and analysis has been completed, rework