



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

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

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
2026 PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

Rebuilding Momentum: Leading Teams Through Project Recovery and Renewal

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About Me



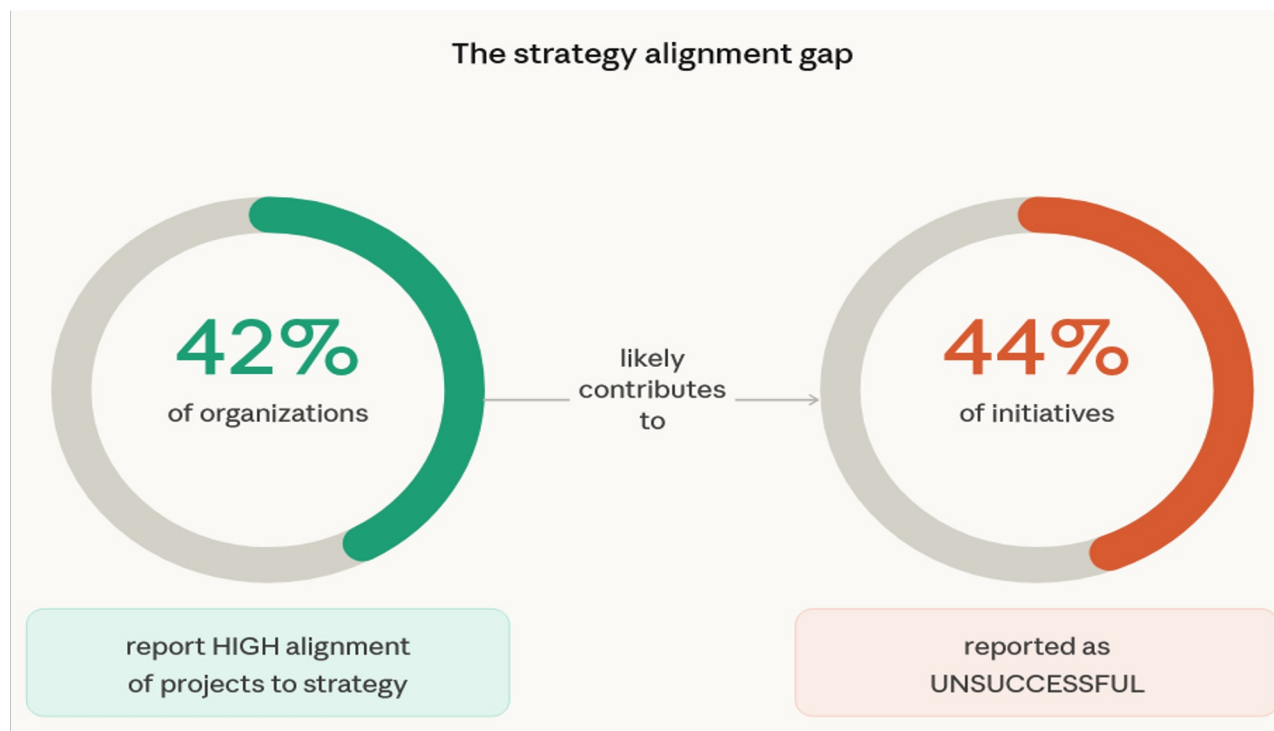
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- Program Manager, Project Director: 20yrs experience (Govt, Consulting, Higher Ed)
- Led enterprise transformations across ERP, cloud, and data center modernization
- Added structure to ambiguity, enabling disciplined program execution.
- Translated strategy into actionable roadmaps and results.
- Track record: ***problems into possibilities***



Alignment Gap: Lost in Execution

Only 42 percent of organizations report having high alignment of projects to organizational **strategy**. This lack likely contributes to the result that nearly half of all strategic initiatives (44 percent) are reported as unsuccessful. *[source: PMI]*



From Effort to Alignment



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**Different teams,
one rope,
alignment makes
the difference**



Scenario: The Burnt Cookies



- The first batch was burnt and couldn't be saved BUT we:
 - reset the timer
 - adjusted the temperature
 - got help from other chef(s)
 - tweaked the recipe



The Path to Recovery



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Project Stalled Due to Multiple Challenges

Disengaged Stakeholders

Stakeholders may have felt disengaged

Missed Milestones

Key milestones may have been missed

Overwhelmed Teams

Teams may have felt overwhelmed

Lacked Buy-in

Project goals may have lacked buy-in

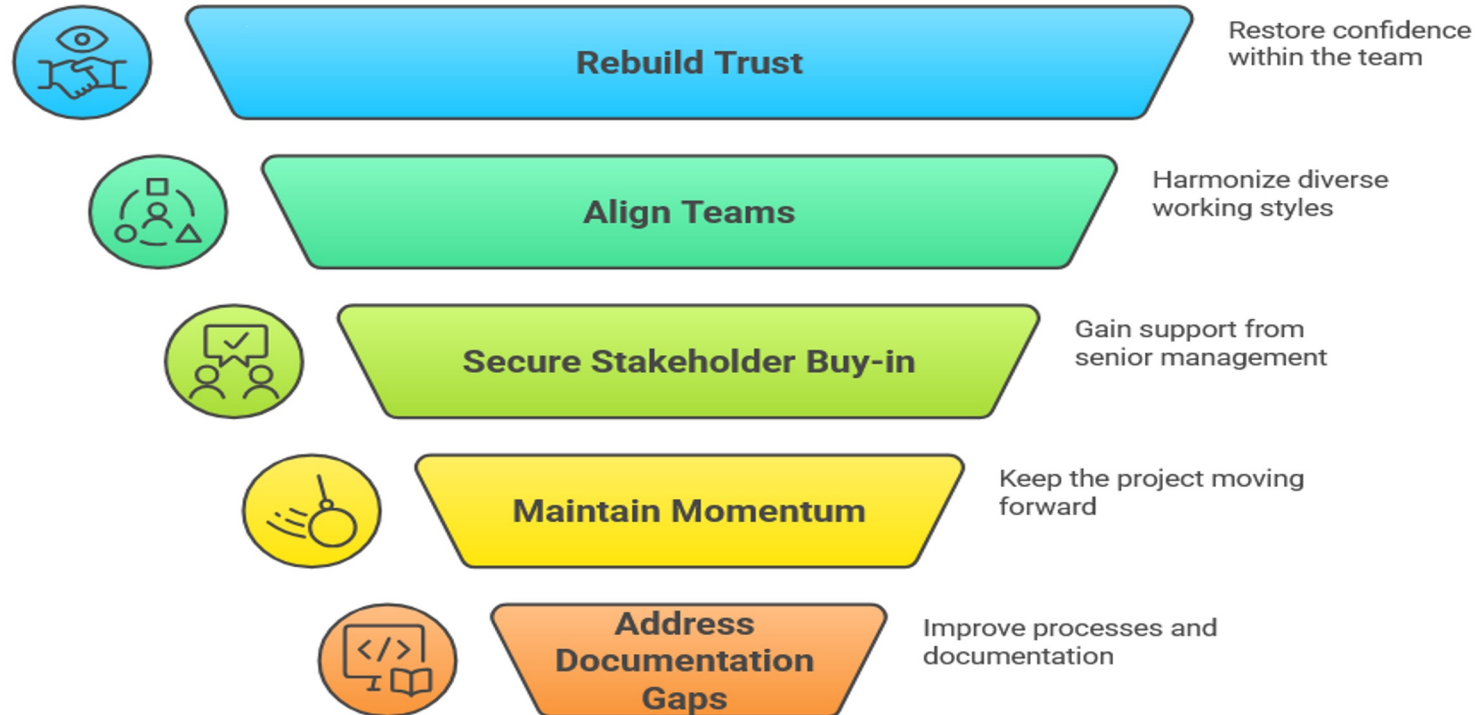


Building Momentum from the Bottom Up



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Overcoming Project Challenges



What did NOT WORK



- Sending only email updates that may get lost in inboxes and be unread
- Relying on polished PowerPoint presentations
- Tagging stakeholders directly from the RAID log expecting action
- Pushing out detailed status reports

Where is the Solution(s)?



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- Solution owners:
 - the team
 - the leads
 - the users
 - the stakeholders
 - the sponsors
- Facilitator: PMO



SKOPE Framework



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S



Seek to listen first
Pause · question · hear

K



Know pain points
Find root causes

O



Own the uncertainty
Honesty builds trust

P



Present & accountable
Show up · follow through

E



Expectations set early
Align on success

Turning Plans into Action



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- Senior leadership re-engaged and re-committed, set the tone to teams
- Everyone together for a fresh re-kickoff
- Gave project breathing room (timeline)
- Rebuilt both consultant team and internal team
- Overhauled governance to create clarity and accountability

Trust First, Engagement follows



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Building Trust and Engagement



Initial Interaction

First conversation,
no trust established



Consistent Presence

Showing up regularly
builds reliability



Alignment Verification

Confirming
understanding and
agreement



Fix Verification

Ensuring solutions
are effective



Celebrate Wins

Recognizing
achievements while
staying focused



Ongoing Relationship

Trust and
engagement
established

Everyone to the Dining Table



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- Does your team have a winning recipe for project success AND what is it?
- Has your project recipe ever gone completely wrong AND what was missing from the mix?



Key Takeaways



- Build teams with intent
- Engage stakeholders early and often
- Offer customized training
- Follow disciplined governance structure
- Resolve issues thru established pathways
- Solve problems before they escalate



Purpose + Process



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**“If you can’t describe what you are doing as a process, you don’t know what you’re doing”.
-W. Edwards Deming**



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Questions & Evaluation

Evaluate Session:



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