LUCID 68 THOUGHT { The Missing Product of Product-Based Planning

"Hmm, performance against these new KPIs isn't as positive as we'd like, I suppose there's no option but to start talking to each other now!"

**One of the main and most important features of the PRINCE2®
method is a technique called Product-Based Planning, which is
defined in the 2009 PRINCE2® Manual as "A technique leading to a
comprehensive plan based on the creation and delivery of required
outputs. The technique considers prerequisite products, quality
requirements and the dependency between products."** The manual

goes on to define a product as **"An input or output, whether tangible
or intangible, that can be described in advance, created and tested.
PRINCE2® has two types of products - management products and
specialist products."**

Management Products are those products necessary to plan
and manage a project and Specialist Products are the unique products
produced for a specific (type of) project. Typical examples of
Management Products would be the Business Case, Risk Management
Strategy (Plan) or Issue Register (Log). Specialist Products are bespoke
to the type of project for example in an IT project the User Requirements
Document, in a construction project a General Arrangement Document
or in an insurance project a Pricing Strategy.

We consider that the focus on products (deliverables in the
language of some project management methods) has significantly
improved the project planning process. However we consider that
there is an important type of product missing in PRINCE2®, without
which we suggest the totality of the work scope of a project cannot be
completely defined. Provoked by our continuing collaboration with
consultants from EngagementWorks, we have named this third type of
deliverable **'Engagement Products'.** Engagement Products are those that
are fundamental to enabling collaboration within both the project team
and project players from the business context into which the project is
being delivered. The key here is collaboration without which successful
delivery can surely not be achieved.

As stated above the production of Engagement Products will
contribute to the collaboration necessary for the management of a
project, thus increasing the chances of success. But how can we assess
when Engagement Products have been achieved? This is where, in the

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same way as for Management Products and Specialist Products, a clear product description must be written. But can a product description for an Engagement Product be defined? We believe that the answer is yes. The key is to describe what is observed when the product has been produced.

Below are some examples of Engagement Products that need to be produced at different stages of the project life cycle.

Note: it is not suggested that once these products have been achieved then no further attention is required. They need to be maintained as necessary in the same way as other products, for example the business case, user requirements document or risk register.

Once defined, all Products need to have measures or indicators identified against which the quality of delivery can be judged. So the next question is to ask whether it is possible to define and

Life cycle phase/ stage	Example Engagement Product	High Level Product Description
Concept	Stakeholder interests accommodated	Communication has taken place ensuring that all stakeholders' interests have been appreciated, and accommodated/reconciled.
Concept	Sponsoring group committed	There is confidence in the project's purpose and approach plus a commitment to deliver the business case from within the group of senior sponsors.
Definition	Core team has rapport	Rapport has been established between all members of the core project team. There is evidence of openness, sincerity, respect and a desire to build understanding and relationships within the team.
Definition	Users bought-in	Users know what success for the project and business looks like and the part they must play to achieve it. They know how they will work together with the core project team to enable innovation and improvement.
Implementation	Team participating	The pace of the project is sustained across the core and wider team and there is evidence of individual and team drive and a 'can-do' mentality in achieving plans and revising plans as necessary to accommodate risks and issues.
Handover	Users ready	Users are ready to accept the outcomes of the project and are committed to using them to achieve the project's benefits. Their issues have been understood and addressed.
Closeout	Business learning captured	Lessons from the project have been explored and captured and there is evidence that the learning has been embraced by the professional community.

then measure indicators that relate to the successful interaction, communication and collaboration of people. Again we say - yes it is. We recognise that it may not be easy to do so, but the imperative is clear and we will develop this theme further in a later Lucid Thought.

We are suggesting in this Lucid Thought that Management and Specialist Products are not enough and that a group of Products is missing without which the scope and plans of the project are incomplete and where successful delivery is potentially compromised.

Putting the **'missing'** Product into Product-Based Planning may be a way of bringing some essential human and organisational elements into the core planning arena, with a chance of a keener focus on what it takes for collaboration and complete project management.

This Lucid Thought has been written in conjunction with Martin Price and Lisa Talifero of EngagementWorks.

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