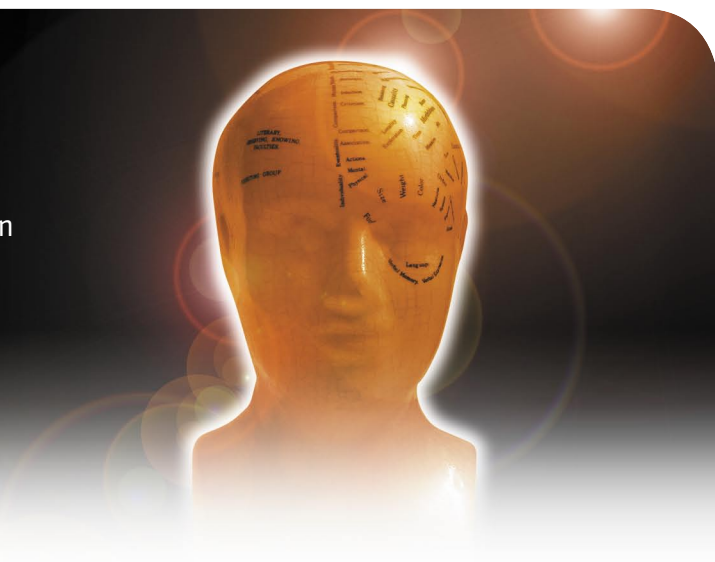


## Lucid Thought

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THOUGHT

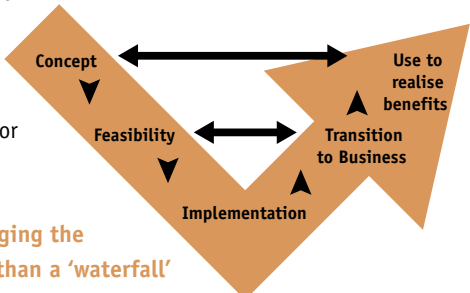
### Make the life cycle work - think across the 'V'

Most of us envisage a project or product life cycle as a series of sequentially linked or overlapping phases, often pictured as a 'waterfall'. We believe that this representation of the life cycle directly influences the way a project is undertaken: **only looking one phase ahead, 'falling' from one phase into another, only worrying about the end when you nearly get there and a strict focus on gates to move between phases.**

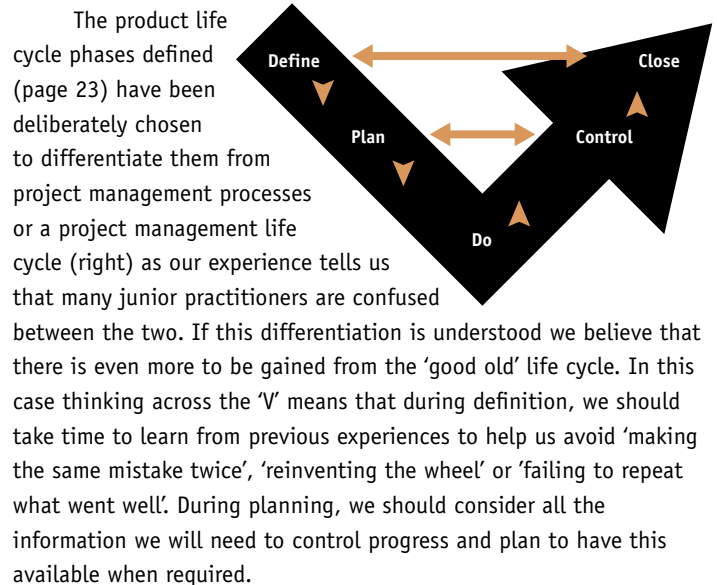


For many years the software industry has used a different 'V' shaped life cycle to emphasise the importance of, for example, 'thinking about' Acceptance Testing when carrying out the Requirements Analysis. However this representation and thought process has not been actively promoted as applying to the more generic project or product life cycle.

**We promote changing the picture to a 'V', rather than a 'waterfall' with the phases still sequentially linked but with the first phase and last phase at the top of each side of the 'V'.** 'Thinking across the V' will then directly affect the way a project is undertaken by facilitating 'joined-up thinking' or to quote **Stephen Covey 'starting with the end in mind'**. So when we conceive a new product (or service) we should immediately consider the



business benefits and how they will be realised, when we check the feasibility of the project we should consider how the product will be 'safely' transitioned back to the business. If the fundamental questions that we ask ourselves in the Concept phase are 'how are we going to realise the benefits' or more to the point 'who's going to buy this' or 'will it actually work' then perhaps more projects will be successful or terminated earlier. In reality what we are doing here is making the life cycle work for the benefit of the project and business together.



The product life cycle phases defined (page 23) have been deliberately chosen to differentiate them from project management processes or a project management life cycle (right) as our experience tells us that many junior practitioners are confused between the two. If this differentiation is understood we believe that there is even more to be gained from the 'good old' life cycle. In this case thinking across the 'V' means that during definition, we should take time to learn from previous experiences to help us avoid 'making the same mistake twice', 'reinventing the wheel' or 'failing to repeat what went well'. During planning, we should consider all the information we will need to control progress and plan to have this available when required.