Project Complexity
- it’s not Complicated

Stephen Carver
Senior Lecturer
Cranfield University
School of Management

stephen.carver@alsconsultants.co.uk
Types of Change

- Want to do:
  - Serendipity
  - Strategic Projects & Programmes

- Don’t want to do:
  - Crisis Events
  - Compliance Projects & Programmes

- Unplanned
- Planned
Adapt or Move Over

Survival of the Fittest?

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent...

but the one most responsive and adaptable to change
What’s **really** dangerous...

is not to adapt & evolve
68%

Change Project Failure Rate
Chesley B. “Sully” Sullenberger III

Calm in Crisis
Professional Culture
Qualified
Checklists
Good Communicator/Leader
Clear Objectives/Big Picture
Good Outcome
Managed Change/Complexity
PPM – Maturity Levels

1. Ad Hoc  Disorganised, accidental success
2. Minimal  Some process, inconsistent success
3. Compliant  Standardised, more predictable
4. Competitive  Controlled and measured processes, results more in line with plans
5. World Class  Continuous process improvement, success is normal
PPM – Strategic Advantage

Limit of process based approach

World-class: redefines delivery in the industry, automatically improving, very hard to imitate by competitors, drives business strategy.

Competitive: provides source of competitive advantage, focused, metrics determine areas for improvement, supports business strategy.

Compliant: follows industry-accepted norms, improvements sporadic, process-focused, cost of failure significant, little strategic contribution.

Minimal: tasked with ‘not messing up’, some use of standards, reactive, high cost of failure, negative strategic contribution.

Ad hoc: unreliable delivery, very high cost of failure, strongly negative strategic contribution.
Chaos
Complex or Complicated?
Complex adaptive systems are different from systems that are merely complicated. If a system can be described in terms of its individual constituents (even if there are a huge number of constituents), it is merely complicated.

If the interactions among the constituents of the system, and the interaction between the system and its environment, are of such a nature that the system as a whole cannot be fully understood simply by analysing its components, it is complex.

So a jumbo jet is complicated, but mayonnaise is complex,

Maylor, Turner and Murray-Webster (2013)
Complexities

• **Structural Complexity: BITS**
  - Number, size, financial scale, interdependencies, variety, pace, technology, breadth of scope, number of specialities, multiple locations/time-zones. IQ
Complexities

- Emergent Complexity: CHANGE
  - Technological and commercial maturity & change, novelty, clarity of vision / goals, clear success criteria / benefits, previous experience, availability of information, unidentified stakeholders, “missing” plan, unforeseen, unknowables.
Two Dimensions of Complexity

- **High Structural**
- **Low Structural**

- **High Complex**
  - Programme
  - Agile
- **Low Complex**
  - Project

- **High Dynamic**
- **Low Dynamic**

- **Low Emergent**
- **High Emergent**
Complexities

• Socio Political Complexity: People

Communication, Intuition, Confidence, Politics, Stakeholder Engagement, Culture, Empowerment, Leadership, Personality, Physiology, Social Systems, EQ
The 3 Complexities

We asked a group of 246 Qualified Project Leaders:

“In your work, which of the 3 complexities is the most difficult to manage?”

“In your own formal training and development, which of the 3 complexities has received the most attention?”

[Pie charts showing the distribution of responses for each complexity]
It’s landing that counts!
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