What's coming over the horizon at your project?

RADAR

RADAR lets you know

WHAT DOES A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT LOOK LIKE?

A successful project satisfies the business needs of its users, delivering the desired outcomes on time and within budget. Such outcomes however are often frustrated by sub-optimal functioning of the project team. A comprehensive understanding of team dynamics and personal interactions can be the difference between a financially successful outcome or the reverse.

While every project manager knows that human interactions within a team can be as important to the ultimate success of a project as funding or planning requirements, few are equipped to measure communication effectiveness. While technical reporting has increased significantly on projects over the last decade, the resulting documentation provides an impersonal, one-dimensional view. Between technical data and effective delivery exists a critical gap in understanding.

RADAR bridges the gap between forensic data and stakeholder perceptions, and completes the project communications feedback loop.

WHAT IS RADAR?

RADAR is a project horizon scanning service. It has been developed by ResoLex in response to its experience providing stakeholder engagement and dispute avoidance services on projects over the last 15 years.

Identifying that projects fail when communication breaks down led us to formulate a unique service to approach the problem from a different angle and actively help our clients avoid risk and dispute on their projects. RADAR is designed to fill the communication gap between the reported data and the gut feelings of the stakeholders by utilising the team's own experience and expertise through anonymous reporting.

We provide an early warning system which picks up project issues that need attention so they can be addressed before they damage the project.

HOW DOES RADAR CONTRIBUTE TO PROJECT SUCCESS?

The RADAR service provides additional project communication by deploying industry experts to generate anonymous reports based on information provided by the project team members. These highlight the project areas that require additional focus.

The RADAR system is a proprietary project evaluation tool developed by ResoLex

This is a secure system that enables confidential, anonymous reporting and analysis along with evaluation tools. It both records information and allows our panel members to efficiently interrogate the data and to produce insightful project reports. The report is then disseminated to the whole project team for discussion. This technology allows an otherwise expensive exercise of information gathering and utilisation of the experience of high level experts to be carried out professionally, cost-effectively and conveniently.

The service has many strengths, including a cost-effective method of information gathering and communication, the neutrality and expertise of the ResoLex panel and the anonymity of the final report. These enable RADAR to provide effective horizon scanning and to tackle subjects that would rarely be raised in open meetings.

The report delivers insight to the project on how identified risks are performing over time, on emerging risks and issues of importance and, importantly, whether there is a coherent understanding of these risks and issues across the project team.

"ResoLex helped us identify and deal with the risks as well as keeping the team informed. The significant but unexpected side benefit was the ability to be able to comment in confidence fed through into better and more helpful relationships across the entire team."

Nick Wilkins
Manufacturing Director, Buhler Sortex

HOW DOES RADAR ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF RISK ON A PROJECT?

For RADAR to support your project success we need to accurately determine the areas of possible risk on the project that need to be monitored. We separate risk into two distinct groups; project wide "soft risks" and technical risks.

Soft Risks
These are apparent on all projects and run throughout the lifecycle of the project. These are primarily generated by the fact that any project is delivered by human beings. The enormous impact that personalities can have on delivery strategies and project plans should never be underestimated. It is important that the project delivery team understand these areas of risk and buy into the rationale for monitoring them. This is why we hold a workshop with the delivery team and stakeholders to identify these risks and to capture them in a manner that is meaningful to the members of the specific delivery team. Typical risks that are identified revolve around:

• Communication

• Decision Making

• Team Working

• General Perception of Progress.

Technical Risks
The technical risks are a function of the project risk register – always assuming that one is being run on the project. Current best practice project management recognises that compilation of a project risk register faces two challenges:

• Effectively engaging with those involved with the project who have vital information that affects the risk identification and risk evaluation.

• Capturing the information in an environment that is safe to the person providing the information.

RADAR answers these two challenges. It facilitates the collection and validation of risk information and does this in a way that is anonymous. At the same time, RADAR gives proof of what individuals feel about technical risks that are on the risk register and soft risks that are not. This information is extremely difficult to obtain through traditional project management techniques – however good these are.

RESOLEX CASE STUDIES

Higher Education
Britain's Greenest Building

" Our project is a cutting edge exemplar project in both form and approach and, in keeping with this, we embraced an innovative approach to communication. We find that the RADAR reports provide us with real insight into our scheme, just as we hoped. We felt that we might miss this information through only using traditional methods. The reports have added value by enabling us to tackle issues early, reducing conflict and ultimately helping save time and money."

John French, Project Director, University of East Anglia

The Enterprise Centre (TEC), University of East Anglia won the Sustainable Achievement Award at the Education Estates Awards 2015 and was also commended in the Best Project (Colleges and Universities) category.

TEC was a challenging scheme, with unrivalled and extensive innovation used to achieve the demanding criteria for BREEAM Outstanding and Passivhaus accreditation.

20 best practice techniques were presented to BRE including:

• Innovative collaborative working software

• Embodied carbon assessment

• Local materials

• BIM level 2

• 100 year lifecycle model

• Collaborative Early Warning using RADAR

One key element was the use of project horizon scanning, this gave the core management team the ability to test and validate the various perceptions across the team. A fully comprehensive risk register was developed and maintained throughout the project timescale which established a robust process that enabled

risks to be prioritised, tracked and managed at project level. Subsequent reporting at Project Board maintained the focus and ensured all decisions were taken in recognition of the wider risk profile.

3PM recommends the wider roll-out of the RADAR horizon scanning as part of any proactive risk management process. It is our experience that many established risk processes do not adequately identify soft risks, such as the potential to enter into dispute resulting in increased claims. This is a cultural issue and can be managed out by adopting a clear process for the avoidance of dispute escalation.

Horizon scanning via RADAR proved very beneficial in encouraging a collaborative team based approach to risk mitigation.

The regular reporting allowed negative trends to be highlighted, facilitating the initial management review and instigation of corrective measures. The subsequent reports demonstrated the effectiveness of the actions as shown in the graph below.
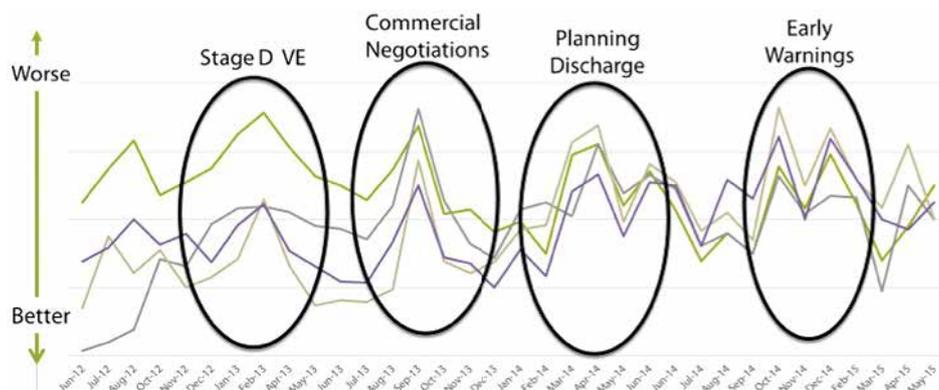
" To successfully deliver Europe's largest infrastructure project requires us to clearly and succinctly identify, rationalise and manage a very unique and complex set of challenges, risks and opportunities. ResoLex not only helped us identify those which potentially had the biggest impacts but also prioritise them and develop, implement and monitor our mitigation plans. Moreover, we found it is an excellent tool to stimulate discussion and team working to review strategic and detailed matters."

Ben Wheeldon, Project Director, Crossrail East

The Eastern section of the Crossrail route runs above ground to Shenfield in Essex and Abbey Wood in North Kent. The works include track upgrades and station improvements along the route.

Platform extensions allow longer, higher capacity trains to run and other works include infrastructure improvements, such as extra train stabling capacity and turnback facilities that will improve the reliability of passenger services.

From 2018 Crossrail will run 12 trains per hour at peak time between Shenfield, Abbey Wood and central London.

ResoLex was brought into the Leadership Team of the Crossrail East Programme by the Project Director to ensure that they had the tools to understand the risks and team dynamics on this infrastructure programme of national significance.

The first task was to establish a new baseline of potential risks on the project. This was achieved by individual risk evaluations which were conducted with each of the members of the Leadership Team. Carried out in confidence, the exercise gave each member of the team the opportunity to explore what particularly mattered to them and to raise potential risks that would be anonymous at the point of reporting.

As RADAR adds value by providing leading indicators rather than historical reporting the Leadership Team undertook root cause analysis on the identified risks and determined typical identifiable behaviour around each risk, providing tell-tale signals of increasing risk on the project.

The result of the workshop based exercises was the agreement of 20 risk areas that needed monitoring, together with their associated positive and negative behaviours against which team members could accurately report.

The RADAR system was set up for monthly review periods which started with just the Leadership Team then cascaded down into the supply chain. The evaluation periods were open the week prior to the monthly strategy meeting with the RADAR reports being delivered to the Leadership Team two days prior to the monthly meeting.

The initial important element raised by the RADAR reports was the range of the responses identifying a very varied perception of risk amongst the Leadership Team. Identifying the variance early allowed the Programme Director to focus the Leadership Team on these risks and generate a team understanding of the issues and the risk management and mitigation associated with them. As a team they were able to quickly reach alignment and an agreed cohesive approach to the risks.

The feedback received from the team highlighted the impact that the RADAR report information had on the monthly meetings, enabling them to focus on the most important issues at the right time.

THE PRACTICALITIES

How does RADAR work on your project?

INITIAL ACTIONS

Start-up meeting and panel selection

- The start-up meeting sets the parameters and scope of the project or programme on which you wish to deploy RADAR.

- We select an appropriate panel for your approval. Our experts come from a wide range of sectors with a variety of high level experiences. We recommend particular people based on their experience and skills. Panel members may change during the lifecycle of the project to make sure we offer the members with the best skillsets at the right point in the project.

Attendance at your initial project workshop

- We can run a specific RADAR workshop for you or slot into your existing project initiation workshop or meeting.

- We have found that maximum attendance at this workshop is invaluable to the speed at which RADAR can positively impact your project.

Risk and root cause analysis

- The initial step of the process is clarification of the risk register. If no risk register is present then we will facilitate a risk workshop in order to establish an initial robust risk register.

- Once the risk register has been accepted, the team goes through a root cause analysis exercise. This identifies the underlying causes associated with the risks. The team then identifies tell-tale behaviour that would indicate whether the everyday management of those issues was working well or needs additional focus.

- The result of this workshop is the agreement to monitor specific sets of behaviours which have been identified as contributing to the root causes of the risks to the project.

Gaining your trust in the confidentiality and anonymity of the system

- We will explain how the system works and how all stakeholders receive the questionnaire and the process they are expected to follow and the resulting report they will receive.

- Trust comes from your team using the system and seeing the results for themselves. In our experience the information curve shows a marked increase after the three month period once people appreciate what the system can do for them.

Disseminating the questionnaire

- The date is set for dissemination in line with your project timetable.

- An email is sent to all members of the team who have been selected to contribute and they are all give unique login and password details to access the questionnaire.

- Each month (or other agreed time) members of the team will receive an email link to a fresh questionnaire and the deadline by which they must submit their responses.

- On receipt of the questionnaire, the first page viewed by team members is an 'update' section. This is an important communication tool for the project leadership as it gives the opportunity to identify the key lessons learned from the last report and to describe what action has been taken since. This is an empowering cycle for participants as it demonstrates the effect of their involvement.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

RADAR includes a proprietary system which provides a web based questionnaire which is accessed by a link sent out in an email to the project team members.

Each login and password is unique and all answers are held securely on ResoLex servers. The identity of the respondent is only known to the expert panel members analysing the results.

The feedback from project team members is analysed by the panel members using the RADAR collation tool and then its analysis, trending and mapping tools to assist them in their report production.

THE REPORT

After the questionnaire closes:

• The selected project panel members meet and review the overview chart to identify immediate risk factors.

• They then review the comments made by team members and link these with the identified risk factors.

• The panel use the other tools within RADAR along with their experience in the field to review additional information about the risk areas. The system builds organisational models of your delivery team to allow the panel to quickly spot divergence of opinion whether relating to functions, individuals or companies within the project team.

• They then produce the overview and key messages. All responses are amalgamated and anonymised to avoid identification.

• The report is then published and disseminated to all stakeholders within two working days of the deadline for responses.

USING THE REPORT

The entire project team receives the anonymised report, making it an inclusive process that increases engagement. The report production is timed to provide current and timely information for regular project meetings. The report effectively becomes part of the meeting agenda, identifying areas the team needs to concentrate on to increase understanding of risk.

The report often includes difficult topics that would typically not be raised in meetings and just left to fester and get worse. RADAR draws out these issues for resolution and as it is an inanimate report, neutrally delivering data. It reduces the personal emotional reaction within teams, thus encouraging participants to explore solutions collaboratively.

To find out what's coming over the horizon for your project, call ResoLex on 020 7353 8000 or email radar@resolex.com for a demonstration.

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