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The #1 Reason Why Most Technology Projects Fail

You've got a great idea, you get with your team to plan it out, you hire a consultant or outside company to execute, and when it all comes together, the project fails. Believe it or not, this happens a lot. With all that time and money invested and plenty of planning, what causes a technology project to fail? Here's the simple answer: a lack of communication between the business and the developers.

The communication breakdown can happen in multiple ways. But overall, **the #1 reason why most technology projects fail can be traced to poor communication.**

The language barrier

One party is speaking business. The other party is speaking tech. And no one is taking time to really talk about the goal of the project or to understand each other's perspectives. The future of the project then becomes a game of assumptions. The team in charge of the project assumes that the developers know how to get to the final outcome, and the developers assume that once the project is built, the team will know what to do with it.

When your team doesn't really understand the technical side of a project, it's difficult for them to make decisions along the way that support the big picture. When your developers don't understand the big picture, it's difficult for them to build software that will solve your problem.

It's important to find a person or a team of people who can act as liaisons or translators between the groups. That way, both sides can get their points across, get critical information that will guide their work, and spot important elements in the gaps of what's not being said.

Not knowing the problem that needs to be solved

The key to a successful technology project starts with the first conversation. Rather than taking the original idea and running with it (a practice that will likely lead to failure), your team and your developer need to talk through what your business actually needs. Together, you need to discuss the problem you are trying to solve before you start developing anything.

The problem with "here's the idea now run with it" is that there is no exploration into how software will solve the problem, how it will fit into the way the business is currently run, or whether the new process the technology will create is realistic.

Not doing the research first

When your business team and technical team communicate openly and go beyond tech to include sales funnels, business intelligence, and market research in the conversation, you end up with a project that has been built to fit the needs of the business, its processes, and its customers.

When you are looking to create a new technology solution for any business problem, you do so to transform your business. But you could wind up doing more harm than good if your technical team doesn't doesn't do the research about how the new technology will impact your people, your customers, and your business. Your business needs won't be met - and neither will your goals.

Not working as a team

Another way communication breaks down is when your project team and your developers are working in silos and not as an integrated team. Is the business holding back information from the developers in fear of revealing too much about their processes? Is the technical team stuck and not speaking up for fear of losing respect (or their jobs)? It's crucial to lay all the cards on the table and work as a team, so your resources and money are spent wisely and you end up with a valuable, viable product.

Working as a team means staying in constant communication and solving problems together. It also means not being afraid to fail. Better to call out a problem early than to head too far down the wrong path.

Create the kind of team atmosphere where if something isn't working, if even one team member has a concern, individuals feel empowered to at least ask the question. Don't penalize people for speaking up. Make everyone feel comfortable in their roles. They were brought on to the project for a reason. Don't squash their talent or their confidence.

No one communicates with the users

Who's going to use this shiny new tool? Another department? Clients? Customers? It's important to communicate with whoever the end users are to make sure you are designing for them and not making assumptions about usability and features.

If the new tool is for employees, think about the training and the culture shift that will be required for the intended audience to adapt to the technology. When it all comes down to it, if the product isn't being used, the project is a fail and you end up killing your ROI.

Hold people accountable

Here's the bottom line. When a project fails, both parties need to be held accountable. There was likely a communication breakdown somewhere. A good developer takes the time to research the problem, the business, and the business processes before building anything. On the other hand, when a business hires a developer with what they think is the solution or the answer already in mind, the project may be more likely to fail, because they're not taking the time to work through solving the problem with their developers. If you've hired the right developer, that person should be able to spot things you may have missed and also guide you on best practices throughout the process.

When starting a new technology project, be sure your lines of communication are open, that everyone is empowered to do their best work, and that your business and the developers are working as a team.

Start your next technology project off on the right foot, **drop RTS Labs a line.** Your initial scoping consultation is free, and there's no obligation. Just a great way to get to know us and even pick our brains a bit.

About RTS Labs

RTS Labs is a progressive software development firm trusted by leaders of high-growth companies to build their products and automate their processes, enabling them to achieve unprecedented efficiency.

We are VERSATILE
We can support every aspect of the software and product development life cycle — from feasibility analysis, user experience design, and prototyping, to development of scalable, winning solutions. Our data team goes beyond everyday reporting to mine, segment, and deliver game-changing insights for our clients.

We are PRACTICAL
Our approach is to "keep it simple and do what makes sense for our clients." Even though we enjoy building complex software and web applications, we don't recommend reinventing the wheel. We are all about helping our clients find, customize, and integrate best-in-class solutions that are readily available and affordable.

We are ITERATIVE
When it's time to innovate, we like to achieve short-term milestones with your greater vision in mind. This way you can manage your technology investment as we flex to meet your changing needs along the way.

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