



# Service-Oriented Project Management: Delivering Lasting Value

A White Paper by Jerry Manas

*“Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.”*

— Albert Einstein

## Executive Summary:

Managers and organizations continue to face frustratingly high project failure rates—often due to an inward focus on delivering projects on time, on budget, and within scope, without fully considering the true value delivered to clients and the organization.

Service-Oriented Project Management (SOPM) shifts this paradigm by centering projects on active client partnerships, holistic value creation, and practical adaptability. SOPM guides teams through the four iterative phases of **Understand**, **Prepare**, **Iterate**, and **Transform**, ensuring deep client insight, team alignment, agile execution, and long-term benefit realization.

## Key Benefits of SOPM:

- Expands success metrics to include client satisfaction and Total Value of Ownership.
- Embeds a consulting mindset to diagnose, advise, and adapt through project delivery.
- Simplifies adoption with practical tools and flexible processes.
- Enhances organizational agility and project outcomes through iterative learning cycles.

By adopting SOPM, organizations foster trusted advisor relationships with clients and consistently achieve meaningful, measurable, and sustainable project success.

## Introduction

Project management remains a critical challenge for many organizations, even as project complexity grows with global teams, multiple vendors, and evolving stakeholder needs. Despite decades of standards, certification, and training, approximately 70-75% of projects continue to fail in delivering their intended outcomes.

A fundamental reason is an overly narrow focus on traditional success metrics—delivering on time, within budget, and to specified requirements. These internal measures overlook whether the project actually creates lasting value for clients and organizations.

## The Problem with Traditional Project Management

Traditional approaches measure project success as:

- On-time delivery
- On-budget execution
- Meeting predefined requirements

While important, this inward focus often:

- Misses true client value and organizational impact
- Fails to guarantee optimal performance even if requirements are met
- Treats client satisfaction and business opportunity as lagging indicators, assessed only after delivery
- Directs project effort towards internal deliverables rather than client needs

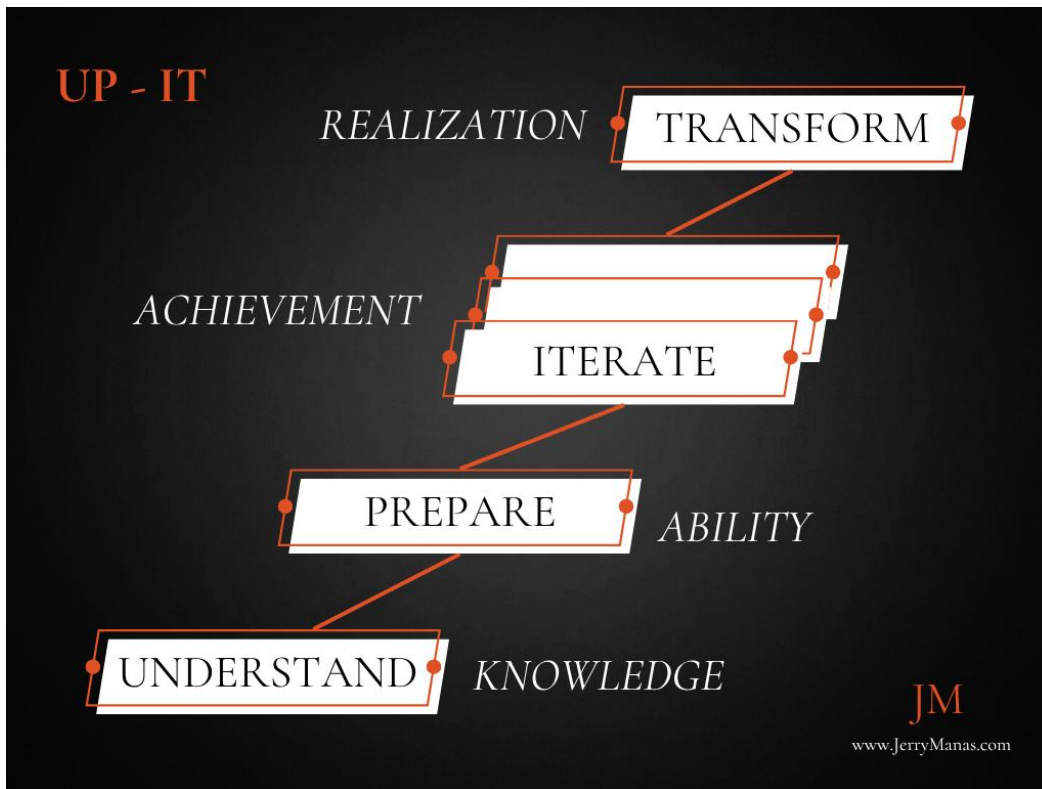
Furthermore, the emphasis on tools, certifications, and processes can alienate both experienced teams and new project managers, leaving them disconnected from the customer perspective.

## The SOPM Framework: UP-IT

The SOPM framework organizes project delivery around four flexible, iterative phases designed to embed a relentless focus on client value and outcome realization. The acronym UP-IT (pronounced ‘uppit’) encapsulates this approach, symbolizing the goal of ‘upping the level of client focus’ throughout the project lifecycle:

- **Understand:** Partner closely with your client to develop deep, shared knowledge of their needs, environment, and what success means. This phase goes beyond surface requirements to observe and analyze the real-world context, stakeholder priorities, constraints, and risks.
- **Prepare:** Use insights gained to build the team’s ability to deliver. Prepare by setting clear expectations, selecting skilled team members, providing needed training and tools, and aligning everyone on vision, goals, and strategy.
- **Iterate:** Employ lean, agile cycles to deliver incremental benefits safely and quickly. Use pilots, prototypes, and frequent feedback to discover and adapt—maximizing early wins while minimizing risks.
- **Transform:** Plan for successful project closure by anticipating long-term support needs and engaging in follow-up care. Transform the client, stakeholders, and project team by ensuring knowledge transfer, growth opportunities, and benefit realization extend beyond delivery.

SOPM’s flexibility allows multiple iterations through these phases as a project evolves, emphasizing practical simplicity over rigid hierarchy. This iterative partnership mindset elevates project success rates by consistently keeping client value front and center.



## Key Themes of Service-Oriented Project Management

Service-Oriented Project Management embodies several essential themes that distinguish it from traditional approaches, ensuring that projects deliver sustained value through client-centered practices:

- **Relentless Client Focus:** SOPM shifts the emphasis from internal project metrics to continuous engagement with the client. Managing projects as active partnerships fosters genuine collaboration and alignment on desired outcomes.
- **Holistic View of Value:** Success is measured not just by time, budget, and scope, but by the Total Value of Ownership—including direct business benefits, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement tied to lasting organizational performance.
- **Consulting Mindset:** SOPM encourages project managers and teams to operate with a consultative approach—diagnosing problems, advising on solutions, and adapting to emerging insights, rather than simply executing predefined plans.
- **Practical Simplicity:** The framework is designed to be straightforward and adaptable, integrating with existing processes. Clear policies, templates, and flexible practices enable organizations of all sizes to readily adopt SOPM.
- **Iterative Adaptation:** Continuous learning and iterative delivery cycles promote early benefits, course correction, and risk mitigation, helping teams stay responsive in dynamic environments.

Together, these themes create a project management culture built on value creation, strong client connections, and sustainable success.

## Measuring Success in SOPM

Traditional project success metrics like on-time, on-budget delivery and meeting requirements are necessary but insufficient. SOPM broadens success measurement by including:

- **Client Satisfaction:** Ongoing measurement of client feedback and engagement throughout the project, not just at the end, ensures the project remains aligned with evolving needs.
- **Total Value of Ownership (TVO):** Beyond direct costs and benefits, TVO captures qualitative and quantitative value—such as improved customer retention, employee engagement, and enhanced brand reputation—that projects generate long-term.
- **Return on Investment (ROI):** Regularly assessing how project costs compare to net business benefits ensures continuous justification of value.
- **Agile Metrics:** Tracking iterative progress, early wins, scope adjustments, and risk mitigation enhances timely course correction.
- **Team Wellbeing:** Monitoring team engagement, recognition, and growth helps maintain a sustainable and motivated project culture.

These expanded metrics empower teams and leadership to make informed decisions, adapt proactively, and maximize sustainable project impact.

## The Future of SOPM

As organizations face increasing complexity, the need for project frameworks centered on real client value and adaptive delivery is greater than ever. SOPM is uniquely positioned to:

- Align project execution with strategic business goals and client-centric outcomes.
- Foster deeper client partnerships that drive collaboration and innovation.
- Enable continuous learning and improvement through iterative cycles.
- Help organizations deliver projects that realize lasting, measurable benefits.

The SOPM framework can evolve into industry-specific variants with tailored templates, tools, and processes to meet sector needs. By embracing this mindset and approach, organizations transition from mere project delivery to true value creation.

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## Next Steps

If the principles and framework of Service-Oriented Project Management (SOPM) resonate with your challenges and aspirations, we invite you to explore tailored SOPM service offerings designed to help your organization adopt this transformative approach effectively.

Our solutions include:

- **SOPM Training and Workshops:** Equip your project leaders and teams with practical skills and tools to embed client-centric, value-driven project management.

- **Consulting and Coaching:** Receive expert guidance to customize SOPM principles to your unique organizational context, culture, and strategic goals.
- **Culture Change Programs:** Foster the relational, inquiry-driven, and empathetic mindset necessary for sustained SOPM success.

Together, these services provide actionable pathways to enhance project outcomes, increase client satisfaction, and build organizational agility. Contact us via our website to schedule a discovery call and learn how we can support your journey toward transformative project management.

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## About the Author



Jerry Manas is an internationally bestselling author, speaker, and consultant specializing in workforce planning and resource management. He helps organizations maximize the potential of their people to achieve breakthrough results. His books include *The Resource Management and Capacity Planning Handbook* (McGraw-Hill), which Judith E. Glaser, noted author of *Conversational Intelligence*, touted as “the first book dedicated to what is essentially the drivetrain of organizations—the effective use of its people toward its most important activities.”

Jerry is frequently cited by leading voices in the world of business, including Tom Peters (*In Search of Excellence*), who often references Jerry’s bestselling work, *Napoleon on Project Management*, for its insights on simplicity and character, and Pat Williams, Senior VP of the Orlando Magic, who called Jerry’s book, *Managing the Gray Areas*, “a new path for leaders.”

Jerry played a pivotal role on the leadership team for the first editions of the Project Management Institute’s international standards for portfolio and program management. He later served as a U.S. Registered Expert with ANSI/ISO, representing the United States in the creation of global standards for Workforce Allocation, Employee Engagement, and Knowledge Management, and as a voting member of the ISO Global Standards ANSI Technical Advisory Committee on HR Management (TC 260).

Jerry’s work has been highlighted in a variety of publications, including the *Houston Chronicle*, *Chicago Sun Times*, *National Post*, *Globe and Mail*, *Huffington Post*, and others. He has appeared on TV and radio internationally, including a notable appearance on Icelandic National TV, where he applied lessons from his books to the country’s economic recovery.

Visit his website at [jerrymanas.com](http://jerrymanas.com).

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