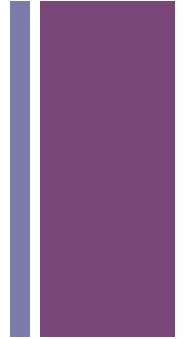# Project Manager as a Value Role in IT
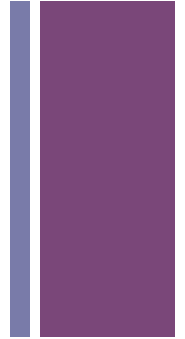
Cathleen Bonner, Manager of IT Projects and Portfolio
The Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard
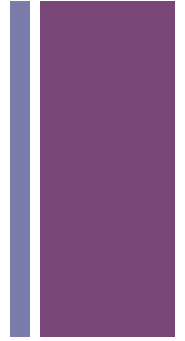
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Agenda

- Cathleen's work experiences and biases

- The case for project management in IT

- Basic elements of good project management

- What does project management look like in IT?

- Challenges for implementing project management in IT

- Implementing project management into your IT group

- Resources

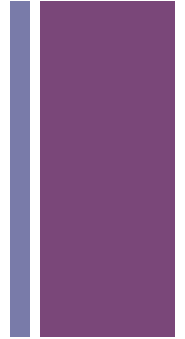- Q & A

+ Cathleen's work experiences and biases

- 5 years in higher education administration

- 14 years at what is now the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard
  - 5 years in desktop support
  - 2 years in general IT project management
  - 6 years in research computing as engagement and project management
  - 1 year managing the project and portfolio group

- Teamwork is great for solving problems

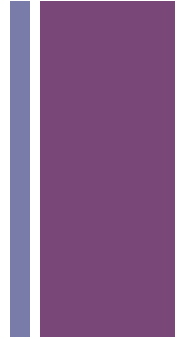- "Us vs. Them" mentality isn't helpful

+ The tricky triad

- Helping the workplace community

- Supporting IT peers

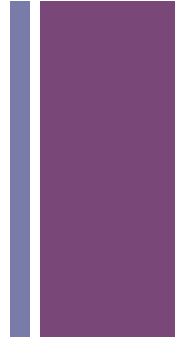- Aligning our work with what's Most Important

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The case for project management in IT

- Workplace community members don't "see" the wins of IT projects

- It's hard to get a community excited about preventative projects

- Emergencies will ALWAYS happen to distract us from our work

- It is hard for IT staff to "pull up" out of the detail of their work

- IT folks get very excited about initiatives, but too many are started without appropriate resources

+

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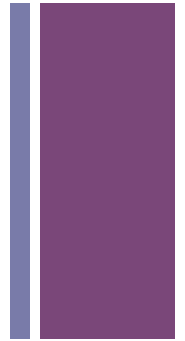- Q & A

+ Dictionary definition of project/plan

proj·ect (prjkt, -kt) *n.*

1. A plan or proposal; a scheme. See Synonyms at [plan.](#)

2. An undertaking requiring concerted effort
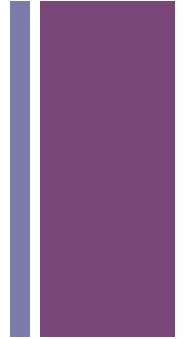
plan (pln) *n.*

1. A scheme, program, or method worked out beforehand for the accomplishment of an objective

2. A proposed or tentative project or course of action.

3. A systematic arrangement of elements or important parts; a configuration or outline

4. A drawing or diagram made to scale showing the structure or arrangement of something.

5. In perspective rendering, one of several imaginary planes perpendicular to the line of vision between the viewer and the object being depicted.

6. A program or policy stipulating a service or benefit
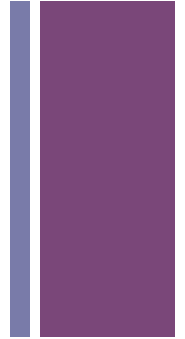
+ Elements of good project management

- Talking to the **people** who are most invested in or affected by the project or outcome

- Identifying the **risks** that are mitigated by doing or not doing a project

- Understanding the **cost** (people, software, time)

- Knowing the **criteria for success**

- A clear list **tasks** for people to do and assigned people

- Following up with and clearing the way for the people who are **completing the tasks**

- Making transparent the **progress of the project** to sponsors and clients

- **Completing** the project

IT definition of qualification for project/ plan Status

- Is there a clear and active sponsor and/or client?

- Is there a definite beginning and definite end of this endeavor?

- Is this project linked to a team, department or workplace objective or goal?

- Are there risks associated with this endeavor that require oversight or organization?

- Is this endeavor sufficiently complicated enough (or have sensitivity points) where oversight will be necessary to see it through to the end or benefit relationships?
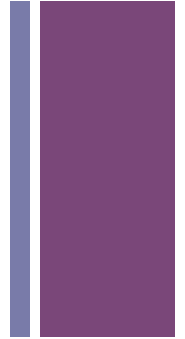
Traditional/waterfall methodology

- Initiate
  - Engage all stakeholders
  - Draft scope statement
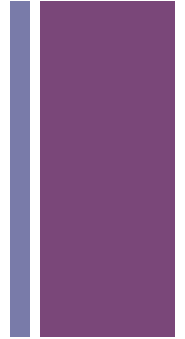 - Check scope statement and adjust

- Plan
  - Identify major pieces and tasks
  - Assign people responsible
  - Identify dependencies and sequences
  - Estimating costs (people, duration, hardware/software, other resources)
  - Formalize work breakdown structure

+ Traditional/waterfall methodology

- Execute and Control
  - Track issues and actions
  - Clear obstacles
  - Communicate progress to stakeholders

- Close
  - Administrative Closure
  - Develop list of lessons learned
  - Acknowledgement/Celebration
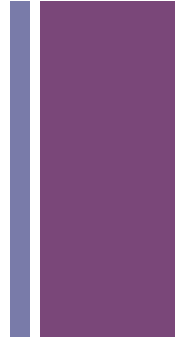
Traditional/waterfall methodology

- Pros
  - Most accessible methodology for people
  - Friendly to non-dedicated staff resources
  - Fairly non-controversial
  - Project manager shoulders more of the planning burden
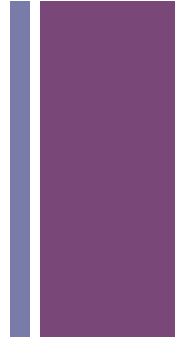
- Cons
  - Risks that end product might be different than what customers expect
  - Not ideal for iterative-dependent projects
  - Project manager shoulders more of the planning burden

+ Agile scrum

- Iterative management of development

- User Stories

- Backlog

- Frequent meetings with customers

- Frequent check-ins with development teams

- Development teams are cross-functional and fully dedicated
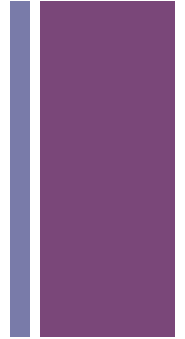
- Methodology is fairly strict

+ Agile scrum

- Pros
  - Good structure for iterative-dependent goals
  - Risk of straying from results is limited by design
  - Both sponsors and customers are highly integrated into phase development
  - Design emphasizes use cases vs. solutions
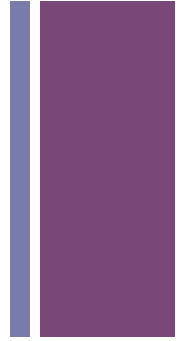
- Cons
  - Methodology concepts aren't immediately accessible for most people
  - Team training on Scrum or other methods is necessary
  - Teams work best when fully dedicated
  - Method faces opposition in workplaces that don't understand methodology
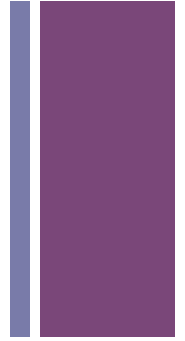
+ Agenda

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+ Personality traits for project management
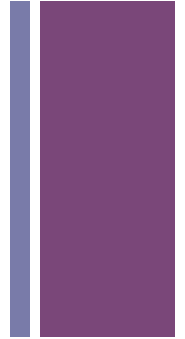
- Professional

- Organized

- Customer-focused but clear on boundaries

- Process <u>and</u> goal oriented

- Excellent oral and written communicator

- Teamwork mentality

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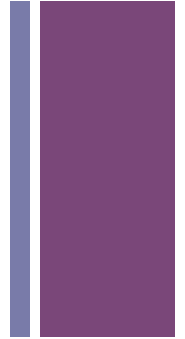# Sometimes…things "other" than formal P.M. roles are what it looks like in IT

- Leading brainstorms and mind-mapping exercises

- Facilitating meetings

- Leading as a neutral party

- Scope planning

- Communicating outreach

- Coordinating a Customer Relations Model

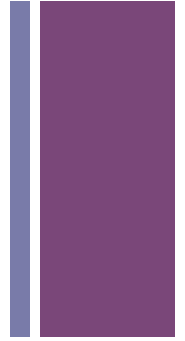- Translating analytics to action items

Formal Project Management

- Leading traditional/waterfall projects

- ScrumMaster

- Full time

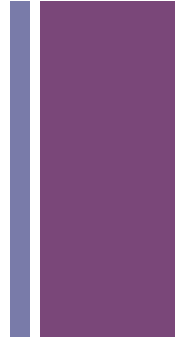- Part-time, distributed amongst teams and skill

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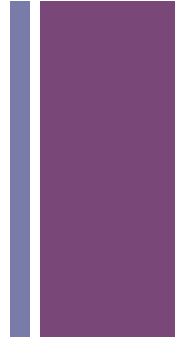# Challenges for implementing project management in IT

- Lack of senior support

- Lack to metrics to assess risk

- Lack of departmental goals and objectives

- Resistance of IT group culture
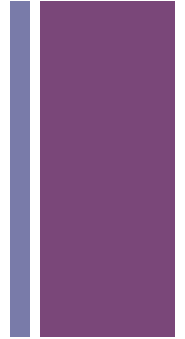
- Constrained resources

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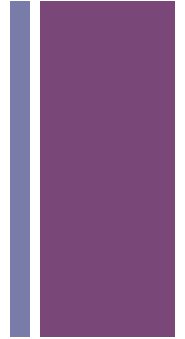# Implementing project management within your group

- Who do you have in-house that is a good candidate?

- Socialize the concept

- Send 3-5 people to local PM training

- Ease into some quick win opportunities

- Gather metrics from last two years of projects

- Identify which projects failed to meet goals
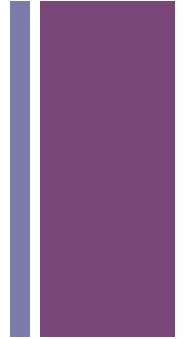
Examples of IT projects with a P.M.

- Research IT Strategy development

- Lab Computing Support POC

- IRB Portal development

- CLIA certification

- Reorganization process (6)

- ELN POC

- Data Center move (communication outreach)

- Online educational tutorial vendor POC
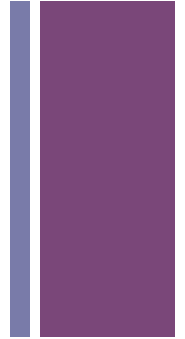
- Storage retirement/data migration

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- Q & A

+

Resources

- Corporate Education Group

- Interaction Associates/MIT

- Agile University

- Scrum books

- CAMP IT conferences

- Create affinity groups – maybe within BBLISA?
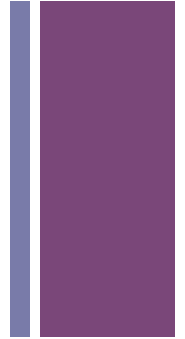
Join us in IT at the Broad Institute!

- Senior Business Systems Analyst (Business Systems)

- Systems Administrator 2 – Storage Specialist (HPC Ops)

- Senior [Linux] Systems Administrator (HPC Ops)

- Information Security Engineer (Network and Security)*

- Network Engineer I (Network and Security)

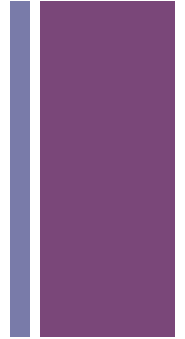- Desktop Support Specialist I (Service Desk)

Apply at: https://www.broadinstitute.org/careers/careers

*not yet posted, but will be soon

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- **Q & A**

+ Talk.

- Personal Vignettes?

- How has a project-management-like role worked well for you or your group?

- How has project management gotten in the way and what was/were the cause/causes of that?