



**Minnesota Government  
Information Technology Symposium**

December 13-15, 2005  
St. Paul, RiverCentre

***Technology in Harmony: Blending of New Ideas***

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Session #30

## Driving Project success

Richard H. Branton, Co-Founder,  
Advanced Strategies, Inc

Wednesday, December 14, 2005  
3:30 - 4:30 PM

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# Driving Project Success

## Four Essential Elements

Richard H. Branton

Advanced Strategies, Inc.

12/14/2005

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# Keys to This Session



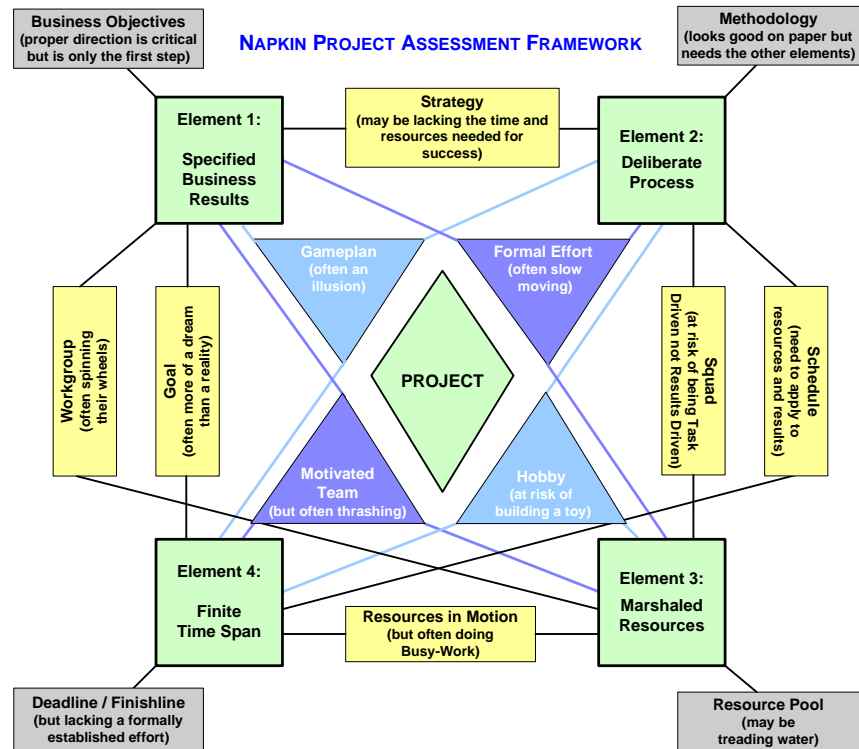
## **Biggest Complaints from Past Sessions:**

- There were no handouts
- At the end, I didn't have a sense of what the key message was
- It didn't provide me with the information I need to move forward: resources, contacts, action steps
- The presentation didn't follow the brochure description

# The Presentation

## • Agenda

- Introduction
- 4 Essential Project Elements to Drive Success
- 1 Wheelers
- 2 Wheelers
- 3 Wheelers
- Recommendations
- Closing





# The Problem



- **Success rate for major business and IT projects is less than one in three<sup>[1]</sup>.**
- A primary cause of project failure is that many undertakings, although seen as full fledged projects, actually lack the necessary foundation required of a successful project.

<sup>[1]</sup> *CHAOS: A Recipe for Success*, The Standish Group International, Inc., 1999.

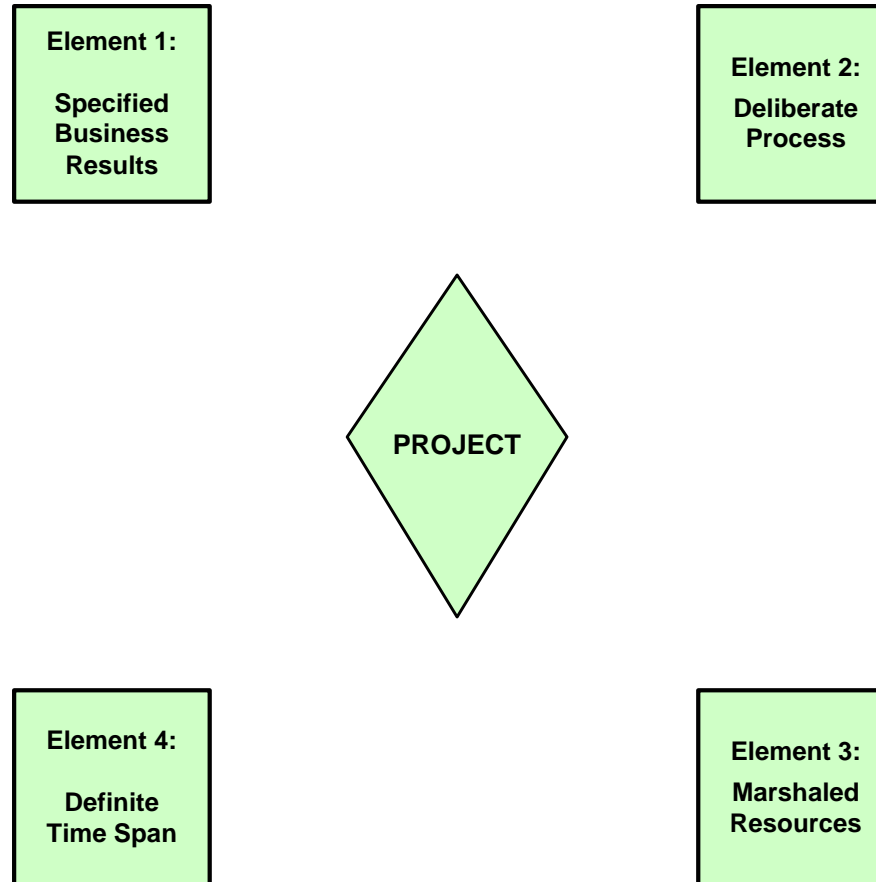
# Many Undertakings We Call Projects Are Illusions



<http://animaldreams.net/school/opticalillusions.pps>



# Four Essential Elements of a Project



**Remove any of these elements and the probability of success plummets.**



# A Stable Platform For Driving Success



- **When all four of these elements are present, the result is a stable platform for moving the project forward, even in rough terrain.**
- Like the wheels on a car, these four elements allow the project to move forward, accelerate, stop, and make turns to avoid obstacles.
- This occurs in a relatively balanced and controlled manner as the project team drives toward the goal.

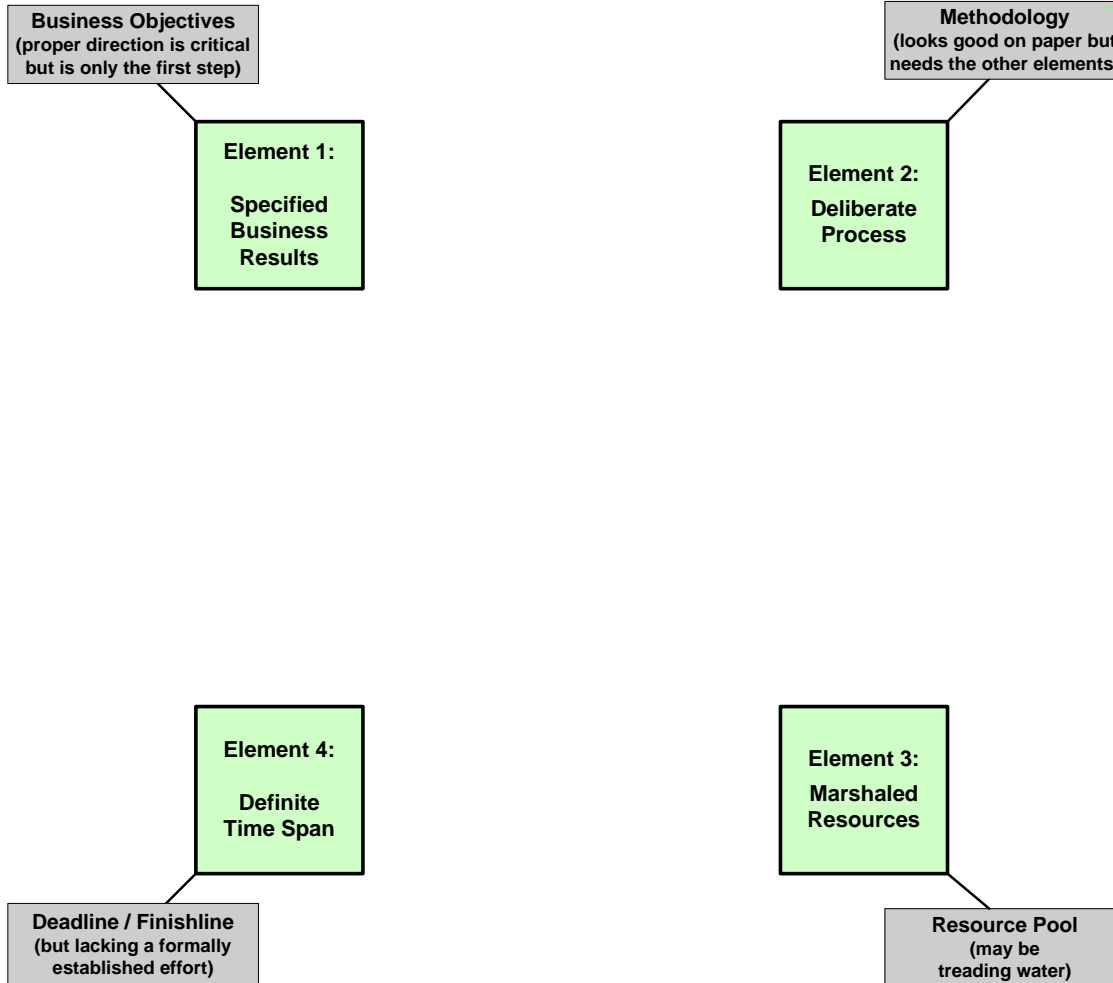


# Less Than All Four “Wheels” Adequately in Place

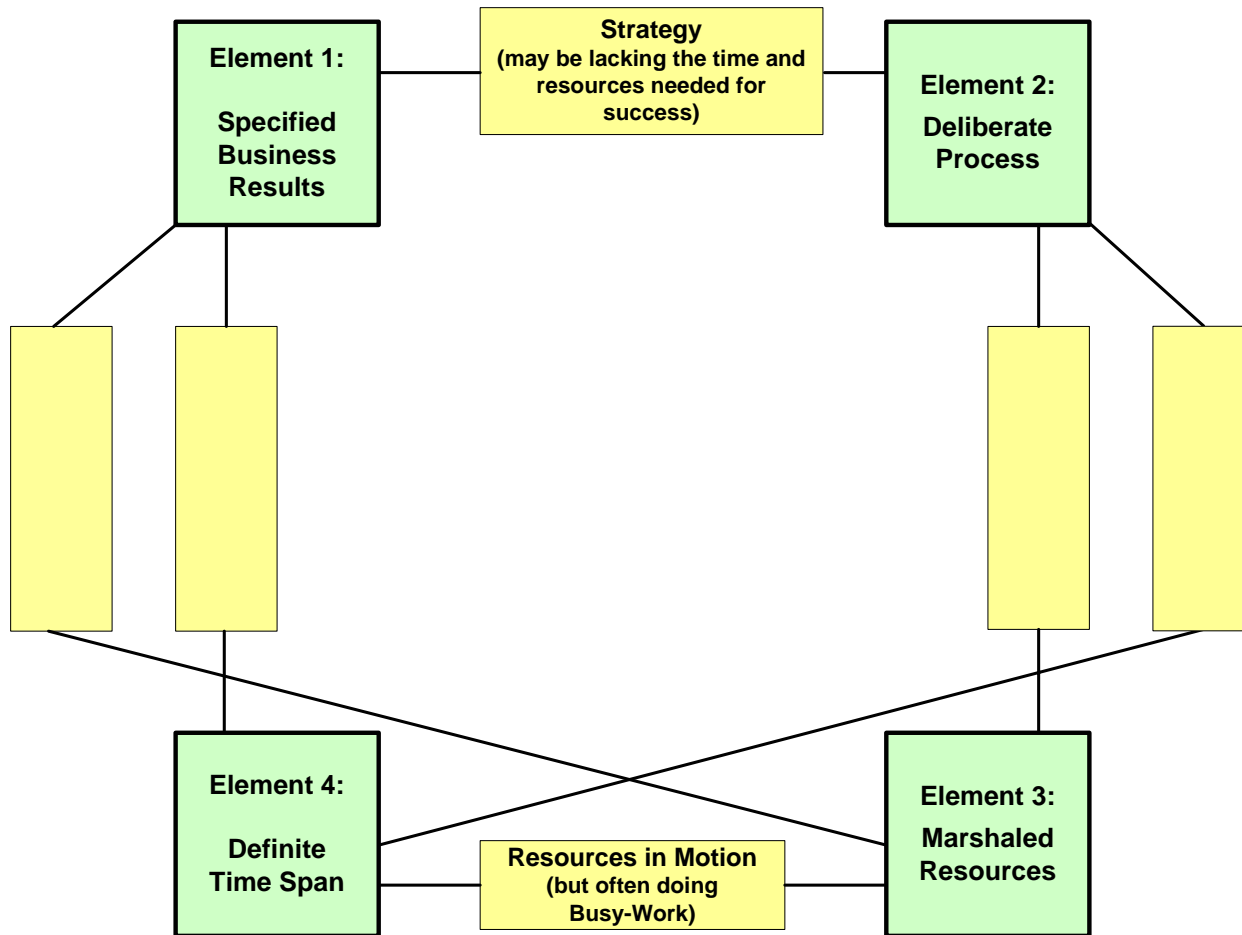


- **Some combination of stability, safety and speed is sacrificed as the effort zooms along on only three, two, or even a single wheel**
- **Lets look at some common unstable project configurations**

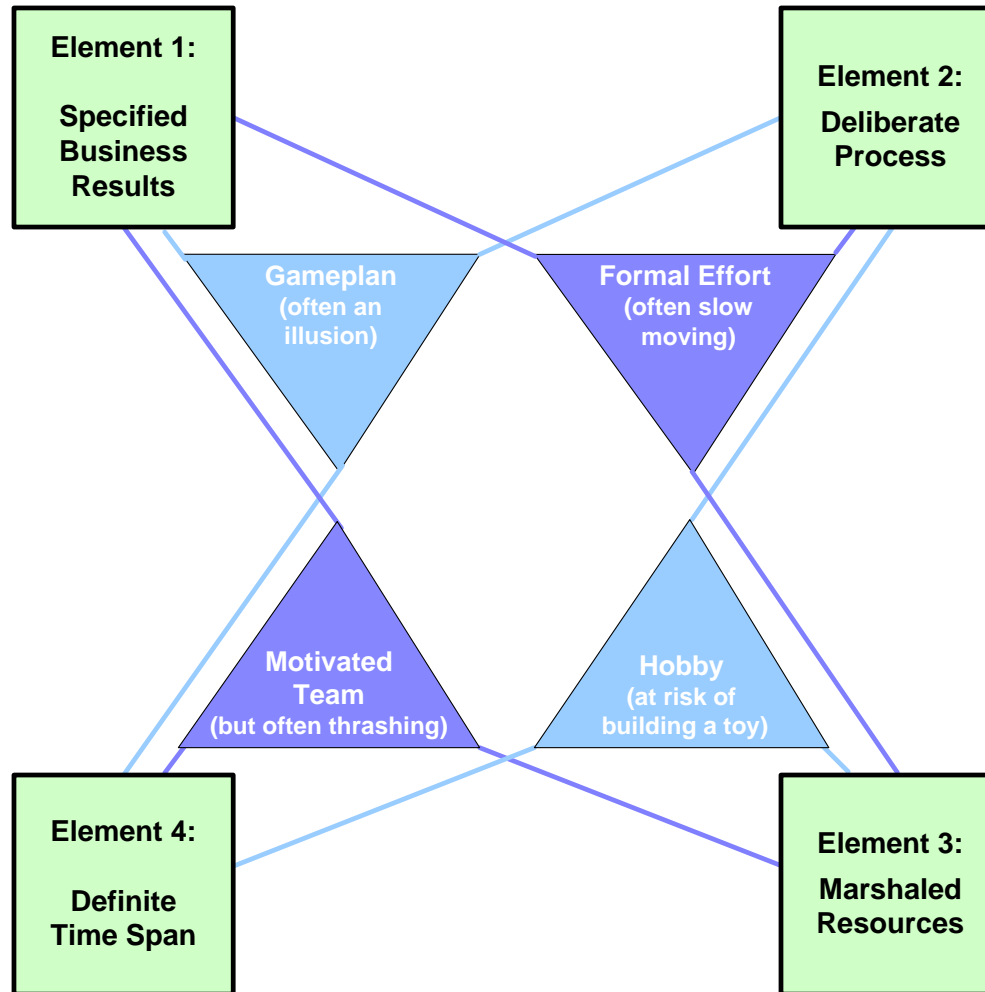
# One-Wheelers






# Two-Wheelers



# Three-Wheelers



# Things Sometimes Mistaken as Full Fledged Projects in Your Environment

	<p><b>A mandated deadline &amp; (a technology) – but little else.</b></p>
	<p><b>Orders given to produce business results in a given time span - but with no process defined or resources put in place.</b></p>
	<p><b>A time span specified and resources dedicated, A methodology in place – but no agreement among sponsors and team members on the desired business results.</b></p>



# Action Steps: So what do we do?



**we recommend the following approach  
for assessment and improvement:**

- Mentally Test Drive the Project
- **Inspect the Project: Kick the Four Essential Element Tires**
- Diagnose the Problems and Determine Service Recommendation
- Make Necessary Repairs



# Inspect the Project: Kick the Four Elemental Tires



- **You may not have adequately Specified Business Results if:**
  - There is no agreed-to and documented statement of how the project will assist the organization in reaching specific business goals.
  - The title of the project is a technology (e.g. internet) or a process (e.g. transition) rather than a desired business result (e.g. increased revenue).
  - Two stakeholders are asked to describe the project objectives and they say different things.



# Inspect the Project: Kick the Four Elemental Tires



- **You may not have adequately Marshaled Resources if:**
- The resources necessary to complete the activities documented in the project plan are not realistically available.
- Team members are responsible for multiple efforts without a statement of priority and therefore, the effort keeps getting interrupted.
- There is not a Project Manager responsible for the day-to-day success of the effort.



# Inspect the Project: Kick the Four Elemental Tires



- **You may not have a Deliberate Process if:**
  - There is not a clear, feasible series of steps defined for reaching the solution documented in a project plan.
  - The project plan is not maintained regularly and/or does not evolve as the project progresses.
  - The process tries to skip analysis of the business needs and jumps straight into implementing a solution.

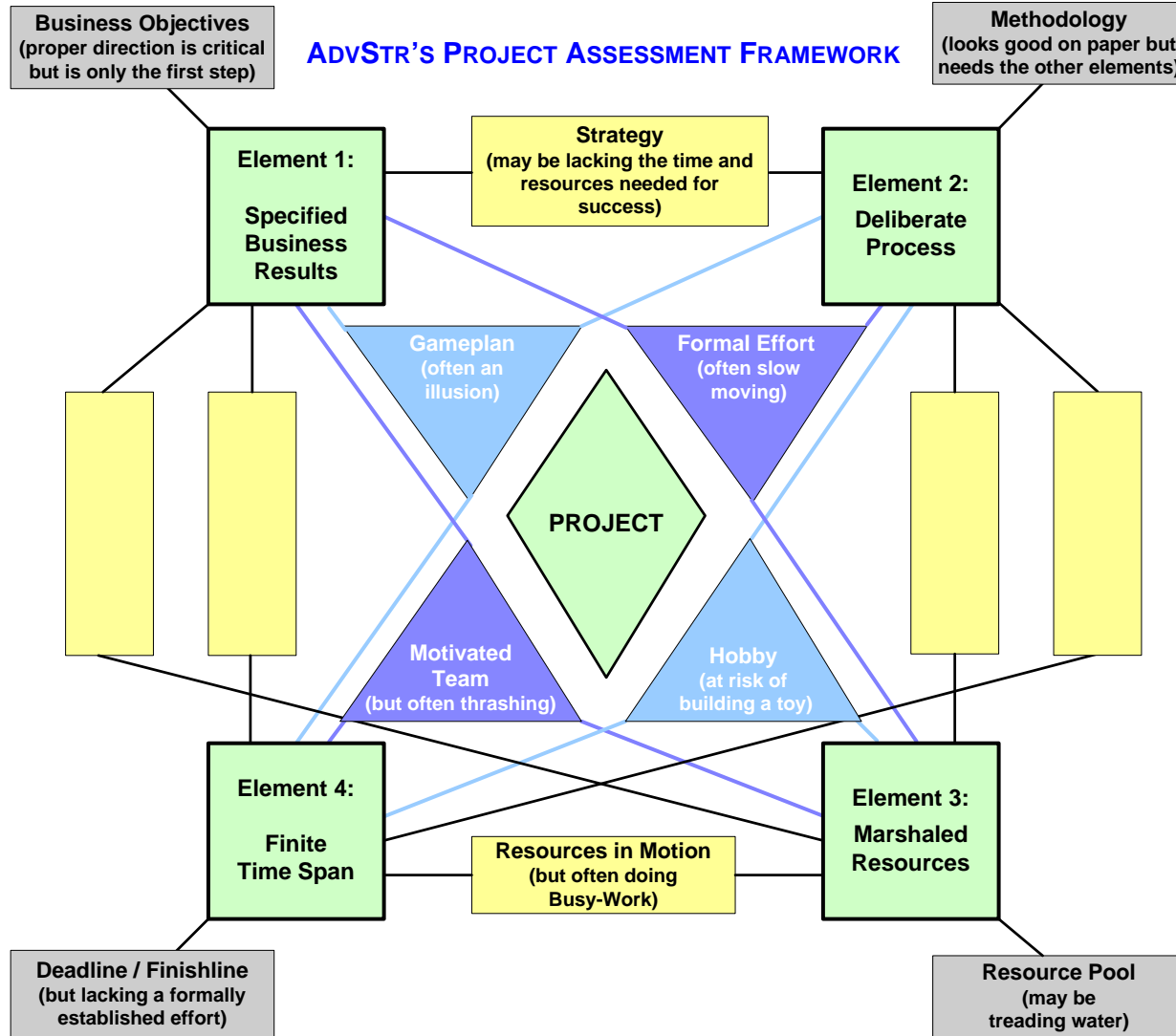


# Inspect the Project: Kick the Four Elemental Tires



- **You may not have a Definite Time Span if:**
  - It is not clear what event will trigger the beginning or end of the project.
  - Resources are promised but not available at “start time” or not left in place until “end time”
  - There is a stated deadline but no clear finish line.
  - There is no plan for transitioning the finished product to ongoing use and maintenance.

# AdvStr's Project Assessment Framework



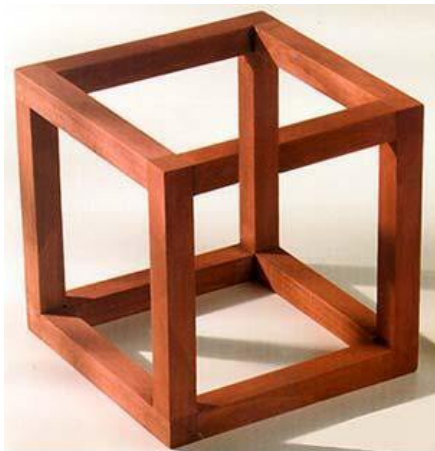
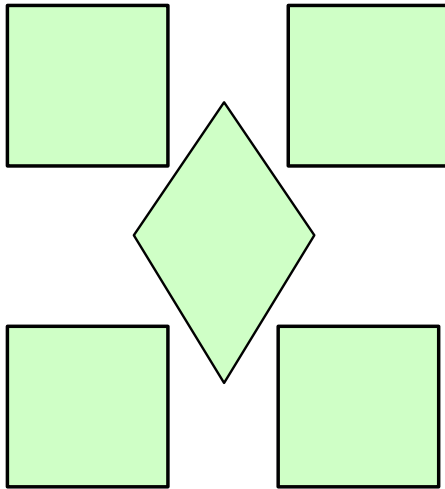
# If Your “Project?” Fails Any of the Preceding Tests

- Diagnose the Problems and Determine Service Recommendation
- Make Necessary Repairs



Before Driving Off!!!

# Closing



***May your projects  
not be illusions!***

**Element 1:**

***An old AdvStr blessing*** Element

[http://www.coolopticalillusions.com/crazy/cool\\_impossible\\_cube.htm](http://www.coolopticalillusions.com/crazy/cool_impossible_cube.htm)

12/14/2005

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# Other Resources



- See the appendix of this presentation for a full-size framework & a Cheat Sheet
- Beating The Odds  
Poker Strategies for Leading Projects and Winning at Work  
by John Schroeder; Advanced Strategies Publications  
[www.advancedstrategies.com/beattheodds](http://www.advancedstrategies.com/beattheodds)
- Several papers and articles at:  
[www.advstr.com/web/resources/resources.cfm](http://www.advstr.com/web/resources/resources.cfm)
- Several resources at the Project Management Institute  
[www.pmi.org](http://www.pmi.org)
- Software project management;  
Dave W Farthing, University of Glamorgan  
[www.comp.glam.ac.uk/pages/staff/dwfarthi/projman.htm#articles](http://www.comp.glam.ac.uk/pages/staff/dwfarthi/projman.htm#articles)



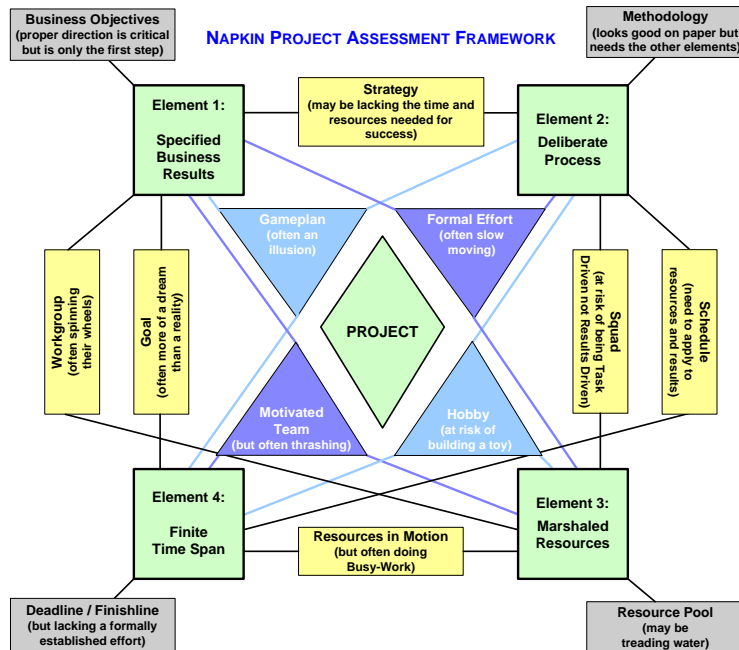
# Advanced Strategies' Training Courses



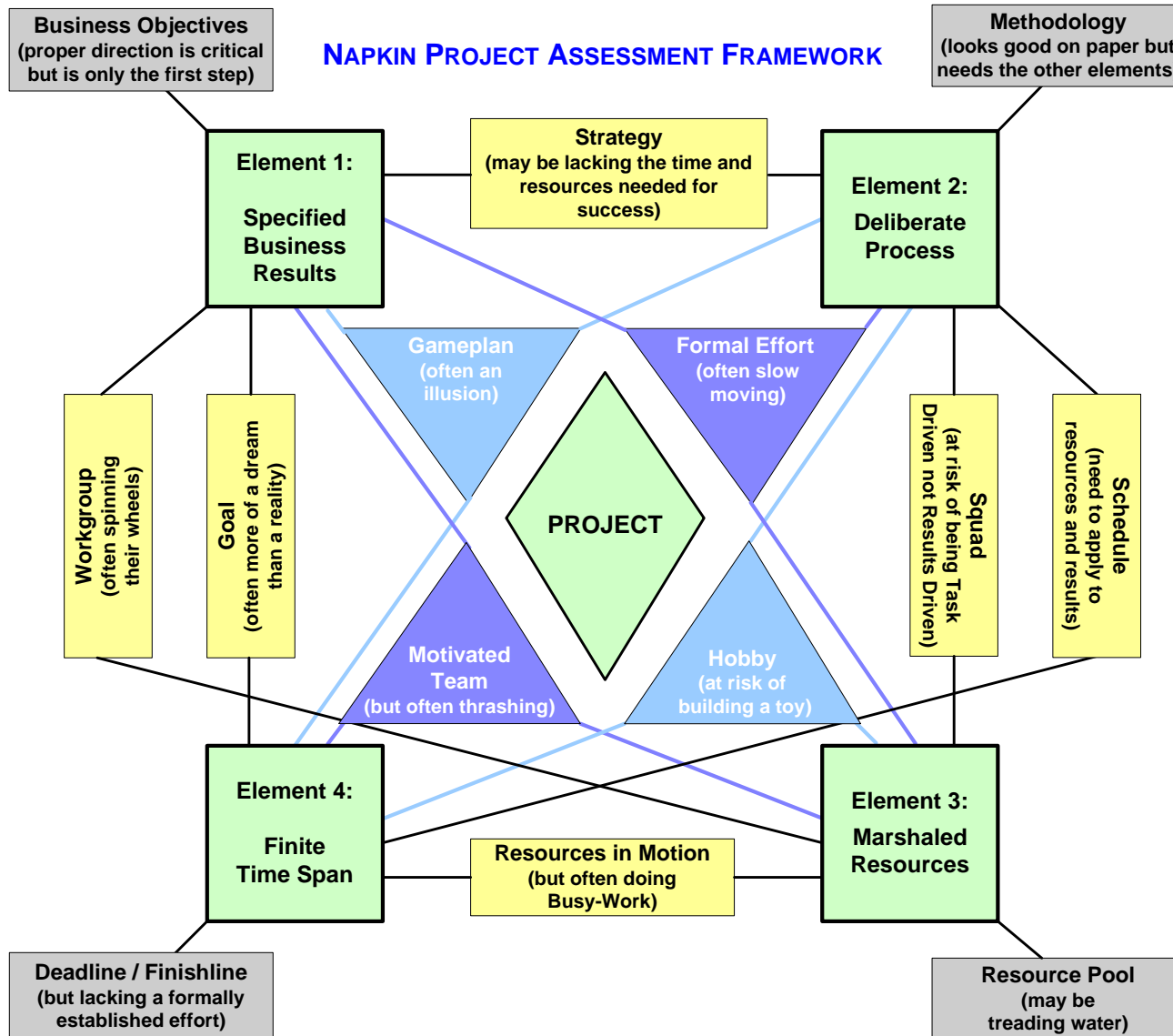
<b>Date</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Jan 17-18, 2006</b>	<b>Business Process Modeling Documenting the "As-Is"</b>	<b>St. Paul, MN</b>
<b>Jan 19-20, 2006</b>	<b>Business Process Analysis Optimizing the "To-Be"</b>	<b>St. Paul, MN</b>
<b>Feb 21-23, 2006</b>	<b>Project Management: Leadership</b>	<b>St. Paul, MN</b>
<b>Mar 14-16, 2006</b>	<b>Strategic Planning Techniques</b>	<b>St. Paul, MN</b>
<b>Mar 21-23, 2006</b>	<b>Facilitating Process Modeling Sessions</b>	<b>St. Paul, MN</b>

# Appendix

## Full-size Versions of these



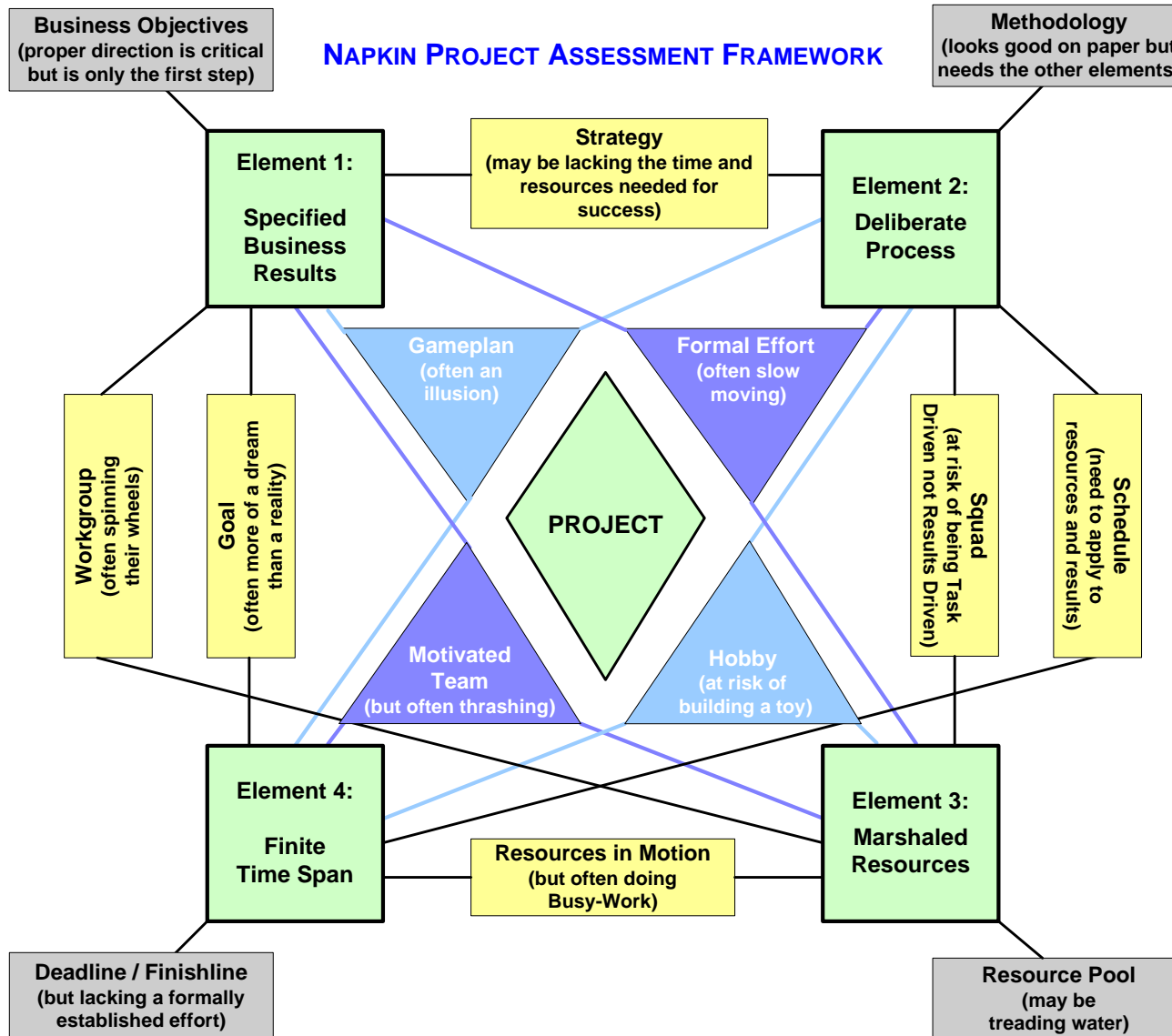
Element(s) in Place	Good News! You have a:	Bad News! Symptoms, Risks, and What to Do				
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Business as Result</td> <td>Adaptable Plan</td> <td>Dedicated Resource</td> <td>Finite Time Span</td> </tr> </table>	Business as Result	Adaptable Plan	Dedicated Resource	Finite Time Span		
Business as Result	Adaptable Plan	Dedicated Resource	Finite Time Span			
<b>One Wheelers</b> - The most unbalanced and slowest moving projects.						
	<b>Business Objective</b>	Although you have a goal, it never seems to get accomplished. Specified business results are only the first step. Get this effort off the ground with the plan, resources, and time span required.				
	<b>Methodology</b>	You think you know what the next step is but are not sure where you're going. Mobilize a team with business objectives, deadlines, and backed by resources to make the results a reality.				
	<b>Resource Pool</b>	You have dedicated resources, but lacking a game plan, the project feels like it is treading water. Drive to success by specifying business objectives, a plan and deadlines.				
	<b>Deadline</b>	You have a feeling of panic because the deadline is approaching but you have no way to get there. A deadline is just a deadline until you put a program in place to make it happen.				
<b>Two Wheelers</b> - Tend to be unstable and vulnerable to changes.						
	<b>Goal</b>	Your project team is not in place and you don't have a plan to justify acquiring one. Realize the dream by adding the capacity to make it happen.				
	<b>Capacity</b>	Your project team has fallen into being task driven, more focused on the process than the product. Get them refocused on delivering outcomes by giving them a goal of business results and due dates.				
	<b>Strategy</b>	Having specified results and a process down on paper looks great, but you are making little progress. Create momentum by applying resources and defining a time span to drive success.				
	<b>Momentum</b>	Lacking agreement on specified business results and a plan for delivering those outcomes, your project team is typically running around doing busy-work. Provide a strategy to guide success.				
	<b>Schedule</b>	Your schedule looks great on paper but there is no compelling reason to 'staf' up the project. Determine the desired business results and add a team to deliver.				
	<b>Team</b>	Your team knows what to deliver but is often spinning their wheels in the absence of a schedule. Document their plans and deadlines to get them consistently accelerating toward the goal.				
<b>Three Wheelers</b> - Likely to tip at high speeds, run off the road on challenging corners, and take longer to deliver.						
	<b>Ability to Crank Things Out</b>	Without specified business results, you are probably producing the wrong things (cool technology, shelfware that looks great but no one will ever use, etc). Verify that you have a business target.				
	<b>Team with a Deadline</b>	Your team is working very hard, but often thrashing around, guessing at processes and burning a lot of energy in the absence of a methodology. Give them an adaptable plan - They'll thank you!				
	<b>Game Plan</b>	You have a great game plan but without any players (or other dedicated resources) to take the field, nothing is getting done. Use your game plan to acquire the resources you need.				
	<b>Program</b>	The lack of urgency on your project gives everyone an excuse to work on something else and things grind to a halt. Give your team a finite time span where they can sprint toward success.				
























Business Result	Adaptable Plan	Dedicated Resource	Sufficient Time Span		

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