



The unarticulated reasons FOR multi-tasking

During my whole business career at multi-national companies, I have watched the attempts to decrease the number of projects in order to let people focus on as few as possible – just as was addressed in an earlier Food for Thought (Multi-tasking is a myth). It is de facto doable, but it has always been a constant hard fight against... yes, against what? Let us differentiate between perceived advantages in multitasking as perceived – but not articulated – by the project members and the ones perceived by project orderers. Here are some out of rather many opinions... and their answers.

Possible opinions from the project MEMBERS and answer to that

Perceived advantage of multi-tasking

↳ Reasons why these advantages may not be valid

1. For the sake of variety, it is more fun participating in several projects at a time.
 - ↳ You vary more by performing different tasks within the same project instead of doing the same in 2-3.
2. If I temporarily cannot come further in one project or if unexpected lead-times occur, it is easy to jump into another project.

- ↳ Have your main task in one (1) project. If you get stuck, have a back-up activity to do something totally different to link-off, but only then, not because you have to do it...e.g participating in another project with a sharp dead line and with the same priority level is not a backup activity.

3. My special competence is needed only in parts of projects, therefore I need to participate in several projects at a time.

- ↳ You may only be needed part-time – but it is more likely that you could finalize your part in project A fully (although the project is not finished as such) before you join project B. The projects run in parallel, but they are serial tasks to you.

Possible opinions from the project ORDERERS and answer to that

Perceived advantage of multi-tasking

↳ Reasons why these advantages may not be valid

1. If I order a bundle of projects I do not have to prioritize to the same extent as if I would order one project only. And prioritization is difficult because of uncertainties in the market.
 - ↳ Prioritization IS key otherwise we would delay all projects according to facts in earlier Food for Thought “Multi-tasking is a myth” and to other externally dependent lead time factors too!





The market uncertainty is a fact – but by experimenting, learning and adapting the project plan according to external factors in a better way this may be coped with.

2. **If we would prioritize projects to High, Middle and Low prioritized projects, people would not feel encouraged to participate in the latter two types. Therefore, it is better to call all projects highly prioritized and run them in parallel.**
 - ➔ If each person would get the clear task to work as much as possible for 1 (one) highly prioritized project, he/she would not mind filling gaps in time (due to unexpected lead times) with tasks from other less prioritized projects. BUT for these low prioritized projects to have a time deadline is an oxymoron. You simply cannot know when it is going to be ready as it is dependent on how well the other high priority projects run.
3. **The more projects I run (and launch), statistically I have a better chance to succeed with one.**
 - ➔ There are other better and more efficient ways to come up with The Fantastic Offer on the market. One is for instance to have fewer projects but better ones based on insights. Depending on your strategy (fast follower or lead innovator) it may be better to have 1 large project to succeed than to have 10 smaller projects.

Take Away:

If we would like to change our project culture and deliver projects faster to market, we need to address the unarticulated reasons existing for not focusing. If we bring them out in the open, we can address them in a sensible and logical way

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