

1. Why don't organizations learn effectively from past projects?

- Turnover in project management staff - people that managed projects and acquired experience move up so project managers that replaced them do similar mistakes in similar projects.
- People have their own ideas about why these problems happened in the past "we can do better - won't make the same mistakes"
- "Hero worship" - organizations tend to give credits to heroic efforts and project managers that managed to limit schedule and cost overruns although this situation could eventually have been prevented altogether.
- Sometimes people don't understand the true root causes - correct lessons are hard to extract.
- Difficulty in establishing a productive dialogue when it's somebody else's fault - personal issues get in the way.
- Sometimes it's all too easy to point fingers and get distracted by personal issues. There's also a tendency to point to external factors as the roots of the problems.
- Usually there is little or no time for reflection.
- Difficult for project managers to do an honest self assessment.
- Usually there is little tracking data to pinpoint the real causes and tasks that went wrong - or people don't know what data to collect -
- If not recorded, project data is quickly forgotten even for simple projects.
- Companies may Symptoms but not to real causes.
- Even if lessons are learnt, every project and its context is different - some people therefore understate the importance of postmortems based on the premise that "lessons of the past are irrelevant because everything is different".

Summary: There is a lack of a framework (model) for understanding and learning from past projects.

2. Conflicting practices (good for the project - bad for the company or vice versa)

- Hiring more people, (+Project, -Company)
- Expediting resources (+Project, - Company, because of operational issues of irregularities in the flow of work and material)
- Driving risk to zero (Vs only to an acceptable level) (+ Company,

- Project)
- Introducing new processes: (+ Company, - Project)
- In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities but in the expert's mind there are few alternatives. Expertise narrows the space for new ideas, although it probably is beneficial to get the project done on schedule. (+ Project, - Company)