

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
What is the <b>UIMPROVE</b> Projects Framework?	7.2
Projects and organisational improvement	7.2
Where can the <b>UIMPROVE</b> Projects Framework be applied?	7.3
Overview of the <b>UIMPROVE</b> Projects Framework	7.4
Element 1    Steering	7.5
Element 2    Roles and involvement	7.7
Element 3    Project methodologies	7.9
Element 4    Tools and techniques	7.11
Element 5    Data	7.12
Element 6    Project Events	7.13
Six good reasons to adopt <b>UIMPROVE</b> for your projects	7.15
<b>UIMPROVE</b> compared to other project management methodologies	7.15

## What is the UIMPROVE Projects Framework?

It is an overall approach along with a universal guiding framework for setting up and running projects that can be used by all organisations and industries. It has been continuously developed and refined since 1992 based on the experience of real people working on real projects in real organisations. The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework has a proven track record in a wide variety of organisations.

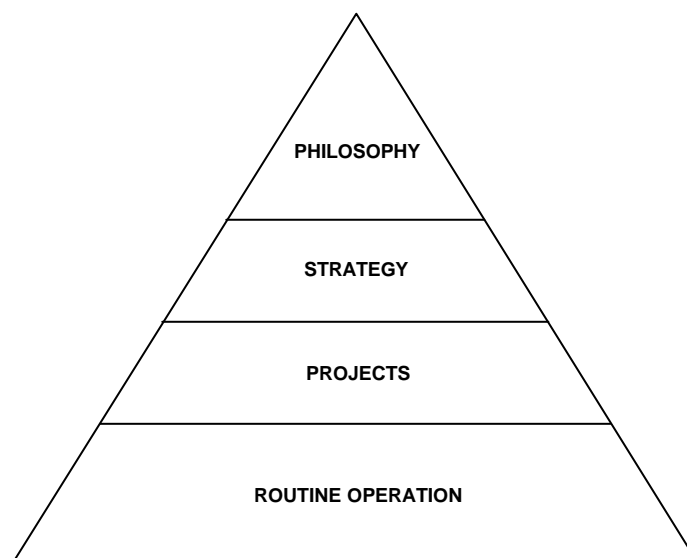
## Projects and organisational improvement

### Fancy words out, structure in!

You may hear the term 'change initiative' bandied around in organisations. Often you will hear lots of rhetoric and nice mission statements but see little change.

Senior managers go away to a country retreat for a two-day strategy planning session and come back with great intentions. What changes as a result? Nothing. Real change for front-line staff and customers only comes about as a result of alteration to the way work gets done on a day-to-day basis - routine operation. Strategy alone does not alter routine operation. A translation mechanism is needed. Projects run using **UIMPROVE** are the translator. Projects alter routine operation by changing the way in which existing processes work, introducing new services, products or processes and removing problems.

### The Organisational Activity Model



Put simply, projects are the link between strategy and change in the workplace.

## Where can the UIMPROVE Projects Framework be applied?

### At an organisational level

The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework is most powerful at an organisational level when used to run the business and implement strategy. It enables senior management teams to break down strategies and high-level objectives into component parts and set up projects to achieve each of these.

### At a team or departmental level

If you are responsible for a team or department, you can use the **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework to list, prioritise and monitor all of your project activities. This includes taking elements of the business plan for which your department is responsible and converting them into team or individual objectives. These are then managed as a series of projects through your regular management meetings and performance reviews. The project methodologies, tools and techniques will help your department to transform the effectiveness of its projects.

### At an individual level

As an individual you can use these ideas to greatly improve the effectiveness of your own projects.

### For major projects

The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework can be used to break down major projects into their component parts, set up and monitor sub-projects.

### For 'multi-agency' projects

The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework can be used to run projects set up jointly by more than one organisation. It has been successfully used to provide a common approach across different organisational structures and values.

## Overview of the UIMPROVE Projects Framework

### The elements

The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework consists of six elements:

**Steering** - Addresses the way in which projects are set up, supported and guided.

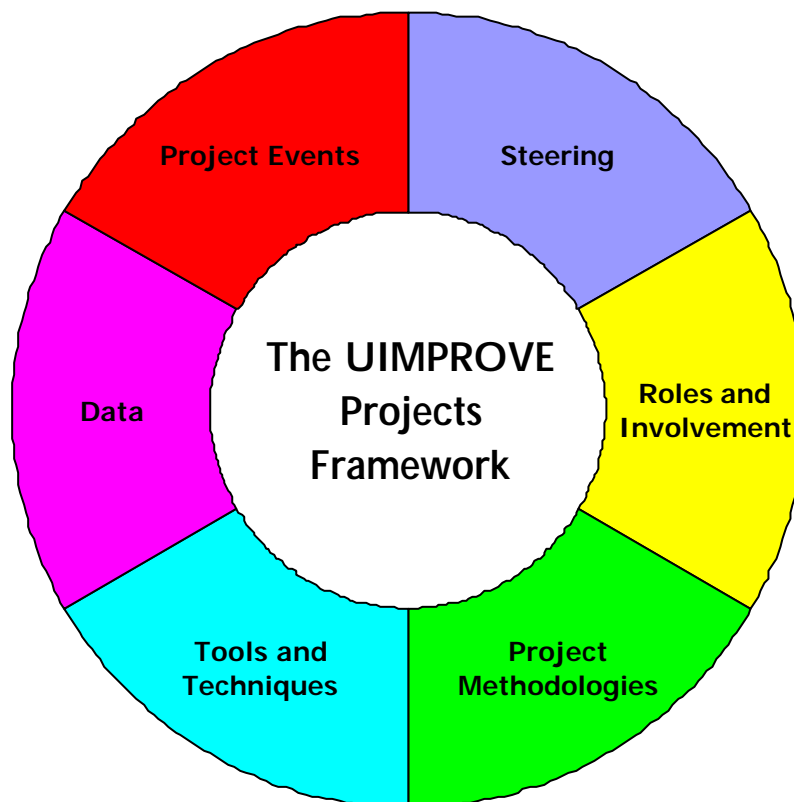
**Roles and involvement** - Who is responsible for what is clearly defined for each project. Systematic involvement is built in.

**Project methodologies** - Every project follows a well-defined methodology including a clear handover from 'project' to 'routine operation'.

**Tools and techniques** - The use of appropriate tools and techniques is built in.

**Data** - The use of data is built in.

**Project Events** - A suite of events where groups of people are brought together to do some real work on a project or a specific aspect of a project.



## Element 1 - Steering

### Why steering is important

The primary reasons why many projects fail are nothing to do with the way the project is carried out but down to the manner in which the project is set up and then supported. This is a managerial responsibility. **UIMPROVE** experience suggests 85% of problems with projects are caused by poor steering.

### Symptoms of poor steering

Many management teams are not systematic in the way they set up and support projects. Projects are set up informally with no clear remit. They are set up ad-hoc, month-by-month without ongoing monitoring. The total number of projects on the go at any one time is not known and as a result many do not get completed.

The Penny Falls	
<p>January - audit results in, set up some projects February - staff survey results in, set up some projects March - New legislation released, set up some projects April - Boss visits Japan and comes back with some good ideas, set up some projects May - Customer survey results in, set up some projects June - projects set up in January slide off the agenda</p> <p>The Penny Falls is a classic arcade game found at British seaside resorts from the early 1960s. The player slides a penny onto a moving heap of coins, the aim being to dislodge a large pile of coins from the edge to win and collect.</p> <p>Organisations often take a similar approach to steering, piling projects on top of each other until those originally set up disappear off the edge, never to be seen again.</p>	

### What steering involves

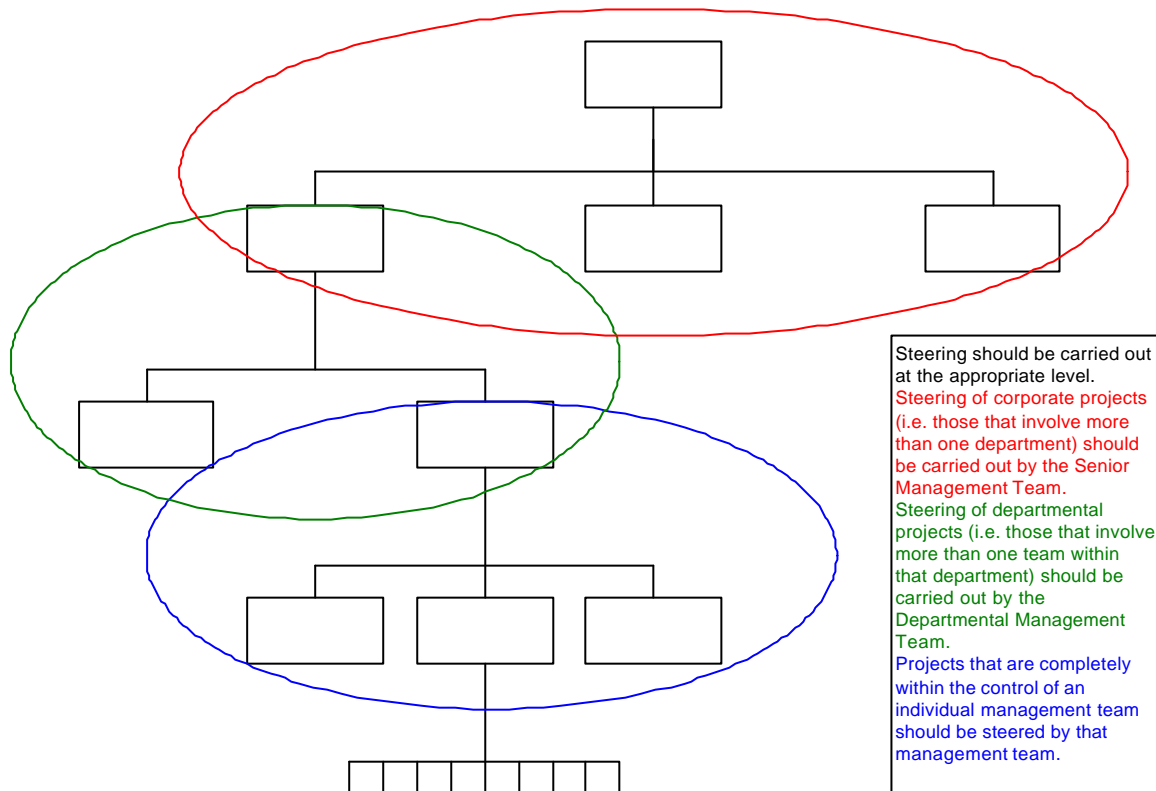
Steering simply means taking a structured approach to identifying, prioritising, setting up and supporting projects. Steering includes:

- Identification of possible projects
- Prioritisation
- Setting up to include selection of Project Leader and writing of a remit
- Monitoring to include direction and support as appropriate
- Coordination of different projects
- Evaluation of recommendations and implementation support

## Element 1 - Steering

### Where in the organisation should steering take place?

Steering can be undertaken by any management team at any level in the organisation - the senior management team, a departmental or operational team.



Getting steering right does not have to mean setting up a new meeting. It normally requires an existing management team meeting to work in a more structured manner. One member of the management team acts as a Champion to each individual project. By implication, good steering vastly improves the effectiveness of management team meetings and the projects that are set up through them.

### How to steer

Follow the *Steering Methodology* section of the manual.

### People like to be steered

"Conventional wisdom promotes hands-off management, presuming that a team under the magnifying glass will be inhibited, but we found the opposite. Within limits, close monitoring by senior management signals to team members and the rest of the company that their project is important. This is a powerful motivator, enhancing the team's creativity. It also makes organisational resources more available to the team because it's hard not to cooperate with a team that's visibly on management's radar."

Sethi, Smith and Park. Harvard Business Review, August 2002.

## Element 2 - Roles and Involvement

The second element of the **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework ensures that roles are clearly defined in each project and that appropriate involvement is built in.

### Champion

Every project should be championed by a member of the management team that set it up. This is not a wishy-washy advocacy role but a job with a number of formal responsibilities (listed in full in Steering Methodology). The role of the Champion is to direct and support the Project Leader. The Champion does not 'do' the project - that is the job of the Project Leader, nor are they actively involved in the day-to-day work of the project.

On some occasions the Champion may be the line manager of the Project Leader, on others the Project Leader may come from a different department. The Champion works cross-functionally with the support of their other colleagues and is not constrained by departmental boundaries. The Champion must be sufficiently senior to move things along and remove blockages the project might encounter. The Champion is the link between the project and the management team that set it up.

#### The benefits of good championing

Massively increases the chances of the project delivering.

Saves senior management time - championing is less time consuming than doing.

Increases organisational capacity by pushing work down the organisation  
- we estimate it is possible to champion ten times as many projects as it is to lead them.

Involves more people in improving the organisation and therefore improves  
their job satisfaction

### Project Leader

The Project Leader is usually a manager or supervisor in the work area under study. The Project Leader may work alone or lead a project team. For major projects the Project Leader may be a professional project manager. The Project Leader is selected by the management team setting up the project and is responsible for the 'doing' of the project.

The Project Leader will initially be briefed by the Champion for that project. The Champion will then maintain regular contact throughout the life of the project.

## Element 2 - Roles and Involvement

### Direct involvement

There are various means by which people can be directly involved in projects. Seniority and position play no part in determining who should be involved. People may come from several different departments.

#### **(1) Team members**

Team members are people who have a major contribution to make through their knowledge of, or close association with the subject under study. This option is appropriate for people who need regular involvement throughout the life of the project. Team members attend all meetings

#### **(2) Key players**

Attend Kick-Starts and are involved as required. Key players are involved at irregular intervals throughout the life of the project, usually at key stages.

#### **(3) Specialists**

Involved on a one-off basis for a small part of the project. Involvement usually takes place some way into the life of the project. Typically these are technical specialists, finance or personnel people.

### Indirect involvement

A wider range of people can be involved in the project through:

- Questionnaires
- Briefings/question & answer sessions
- 1-1 interviews
- Meetings

## Element 3 - Project Methodologies

### What is a methodology?

A methodology is a step-by-step approach to a project. It follows a sequential structure from start up to finish. Many project management methodologies suggest a 'one approach fits all' structure to projects. **UIMPROVE** is very different in that it advocates adopting a specific methodology determined by the type of project. There are four project methodologies each appropriate to a different situation.

### What are the project methodologies?

#### (1) **Planning Methodology**

*Appropriate for 'something new'.*

- The 'blank sheet of paper' methodology
- Used to plan and implement new services, products and processes
- Applicable to projects of all sizes, small or large
- May be undertaken by an individual or team

#### (2) **Improvement Methodology**

*Appropriate for 'something existing'.*

- Improves existing processes and areas of work
- Typically involves a number of sections or departments
- Appropriate when you first need to understand how things are working at the moment and then improve them
- Useful for cracking 'old chestnuts'
- Usually requires a team to look at the topic

#### (3) **Problem Solving Methodology**

*Appropriate for 'something broken'.*

- Appropriate when investigation needs to be carried out to determine and eliminate the causes of a problem or failure
- Doesn't actually improve things, just gets them back to how they should be
- Typically applicable to 'technical' issues
- Usually requires a group of experts to crack the problem
- May be undertaken by an individual or team

#### (4) **Major Project Methodology**

*Appropriate for 'something big'.*

- Appropriate for large scale, complex projects with a number of different workstreams
- Used to identify each sub-project, set them up separately and then coordinate
- A Major Project Steering Group must, by definition, have sub-projects otherwise there is nothing to steer

## Element 3 - Project Methodologies

### Key principles

- Produce a clear remit
- Involve the right people
- Common sense
- Checklist structure
- Different approach depending on the nature of the project
- Use of appropriate tools and techniques built in
- Use of data built in
- Systematic, logical, meticulous and exhaustive
- Ensures nothing is overlooked
- Removes anxiety - no more worrying about where to start or what to do next
- Not extra work but doing what has to be done in a structured fashion

### Track record

The methodologies have a proven track record and projects that have been set up and run using them have a near 100% survival and success rate. Compare this to other projects you may have been involved in or seen. These too have followed a methodology - the difference is that this particular methodology will probably have been a one-off, not stated, planned or well understood.

## Element 4 - Tools and Techniques

Sitting around a boardroom style table and talking about things is not an efficient way to do project work. Although most managers will probably be familiar with many tools and techniques, they will probably have learned them at different times and in isolation. The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework puts these tools and techniques into an overall context and each methodology suggests which tools should be used at each stage. The tools and techniques fall into a number of categories:

- Tools for Planning and Organising
- Tools for Analysis
- Tools for Evaluation and Decision-Making
- Techniques for Productive Meetings

### Why bother?

Using tools and techniques is not just a gimmick, they:

- (1) Aid systematic working
- (2) Ensure participation
- (3) Increase productivity

### Other benefits

- Not only useful in projects but also in day-to-day work and meetings
- Many can be used by either groups or individuals working alone
- Use of tools increases good behaviours in meetings
- More interesting than 'talking about things'

## Element 5 - Data

The **UIMPROVE** Projects Framework creates a radical change in the way data is collected and used in projects. Firstly each of the project methodologies requires that data is collected in a rigorous and systematic manner about customers and process performance. This data is then used as the basis for identifying improvements and making decisions. The spin off benefit at an organisational level is that, as people become more adept at collecting, understanding and using data, the inadequacy of existing data in the organisation becomes apparent. It is not long before serious questions are being asked about what is being measured, what if anything the results mean and how the information is used.

### Collect data about what?

- Customers (who they are, what they want, how satisfied they are)
- Process performance (how many, how quickly, etc.)
- 'Causation' or 'error' (e.g. reasons for things going wrong, complaints, etc.)

### Why?

- To aid decisions
- Before and after comparisons
- To spot trends
- Investigation
- Prediction

## Element 6 - Project Events

### What is a Project Event?

A Project Event brings together a group of people to carry out some work on a project or some aspect of it. The typical duration is ½-a-day to a full day but may be shorter or longer depending on the nature of the work to be undertaken and the size of the group. The typical size of group is 10-20 but may be as small as four people for very small projects and as many as 60 or even more for very large projects.

### The different Project Events

Each of these has a different purpose.

- (1) *Annual Planning* (produces a list of prioritised list of projects for the next 12 months)
- (2) *Project Kick-Start* (gets a project off to the best possible start)
- (3) *Project Refocus* (unsticks a project that has got stuck)
- (4) *Project Review* (reviews a completed project)
- (5) *Process Analysis Event* (analyses an existing process)
- (6) *Customer Involvement Event* (does what the name suggests)

### Project Kick-Start

This is the most important of the six Project Events and the principles of how this is carried out apply to the others.

Projects can take weeks and even months to get off the ground. This time is generally wasted in set up and scoping activities, in particular gathering views from different people. This observation led to the development of the idea of kick-starting projects. The success of many hundreds, if not thousands of Kick-Starts then led to the development of the other five Project Events.

A Kick-Start involves getting everyone involved in a room together for half-a-day, a whole day or maybe even two days depending on the size and complexity of the project. For a large project, the number involved could be anywhere from 15 to 50 or even more. A Kick-Start for a small project might involve a handful of people. This accomplishes a lot of work, saves time and has many spin-off benefits.

### *The principles of kick-starting*

- Obtain a wide range of involvement
- Use a structured approach and tools and techniques to ensure balanced participation
- Carry out scoping and initial planning
- Save time
- Get 'buy in' and alignment from all involved

## Element 6 - Project Events

### *Typical contents of a Project Kick-Start*

- Introductions, what people want from the Kick-Start and their contribution to the project
- Briefing about and clarification of the remit
- Briefing sessions by key individuals
- Project scoping
- Identification of actions, by who, by when
- Identification of possible problems and obstacles
- Real work as required
- Planning communications
- Input on project methodologies and tools as required

### **Using Facilitators in Project Events**

**UIMPROVE** Facilitators are specifically trained to run the six different types of Project Event. Project Leaders have enough to do with just running the project, never mind worrying about how to involve a potentially large group of people with an intensive agenda. The job of a Facilitator is to make sure the event runs seamlessly working closely with the Project Leader.

The Facilitator works to a 'before, during and after' structure, meeting with the Project Leader to plan the structure and tools, facilitates on the day and then reviews. The Facilitator is interested in the effectiveness of the approach being taken and not the content of the project and therefore does not need any knowledge of the subject being addressed. Some organisations have full time Facilitators. Most however, are part-time, taking on this role in addition to their ordinary job. Facilitators usually work in pairs when running Project Events.

### ***Other assignments***

Facilitators can also assist in:

- (1) Project set up (assisting with the project remit)
- (2) Facilitation of regular meetings for mission-critical, complex, team-based projects
- (3) Advising Project Leaders on how to take their projects forward using the appropriate Project Methodology

### ***Is it worth it?***

Organisations can view Facilitators as a luxury. It is true that projects can get by without a Facilitator but using one can dramatically increase efficiency. Training people up in the role is also an excellent development opportunity for the stars of the future.

## Six good reasons to adopt UIMPROVE for your projects

- (1) It is an excellent way to structure all project activity at an organisational, departmental, team and individual level.
- (2) It is the link between strategy and change in the workplace.
- (3) It increases organisational capacity - senior managers do more championing and directing and less 'doing'. Work is pushed down the organisation involving a wide range of people and not just the 'usual suspects'.
- (4) It cuts out wasted time and effort - no more projects that go nowhere.
- (5) It is good for Corporate Governance. Every department, team and individual should be able to produce their up-to-date list of projects and say where each is up to.
- (6) Because it has been in use and constantly refined since 1992, it works.

## UIMPROVE compared to other project management methodologies

Many other project management methodologies do not provide details of how to 'do' projects but are much more about control and administration. They have also been developed and are therefore geared up for very large-scale projects. This can make them overly complicated for day-to-day use.

This makes **UIMPROVE** ideal for running alongside project control systems. You can use these to control and administer major projects while **UIMPROVE** provides the 'how' each project gets carried out.

Key features provided by **UIMPROVE** include:

- How to build in participation both in terms of structuring it into the project right down to how to get people to participate at every stage of the project through the use of appropriate group working tools and techniques.
- Step-by-step methodologies for carrying out each stage of the project.

We know this as people who have attended training in these other approaches and implemented what they have learned back in the workplace tell us it is so.