



EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT (XM) HOW PROJECT LEADERS HELP INCREASE VALUE REALIZATION

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AGENDA

- Defining Project Success
- Introducing Experience
- What's Missing?
- Why PMs should integrate Experience Management
- SLAs vs XLAs
- The Experience Management Journey
- Business Impacts of Integration
- Exercise - Stakeholder Experience Outcomes
- Final Thoughts
- Q&A

Note: Diagrams and associated text courtesy of XLA Institute and/or ITSM Academy unless otherwise referenced

Defining Project Success

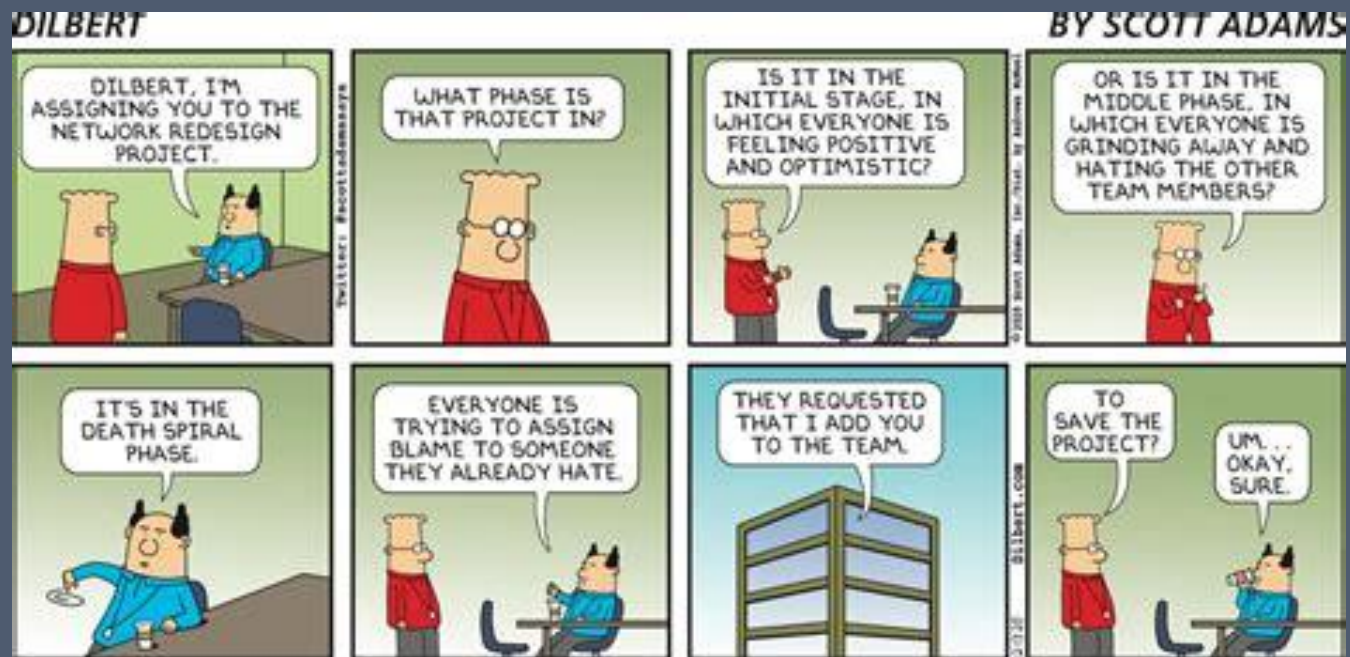


Introducing Experience

- Are any of you capturing/measuring experience today with your projects/initiatives? How?
- Primary Goal: make sure the Experience Ambition (minimally acceptable experience) is appropriate for the project, product or service

Experience is simply defined as how someone feels about a product, service or interaction

Feelings





“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

- Carl William Buehner, 1971

Introducing Experience

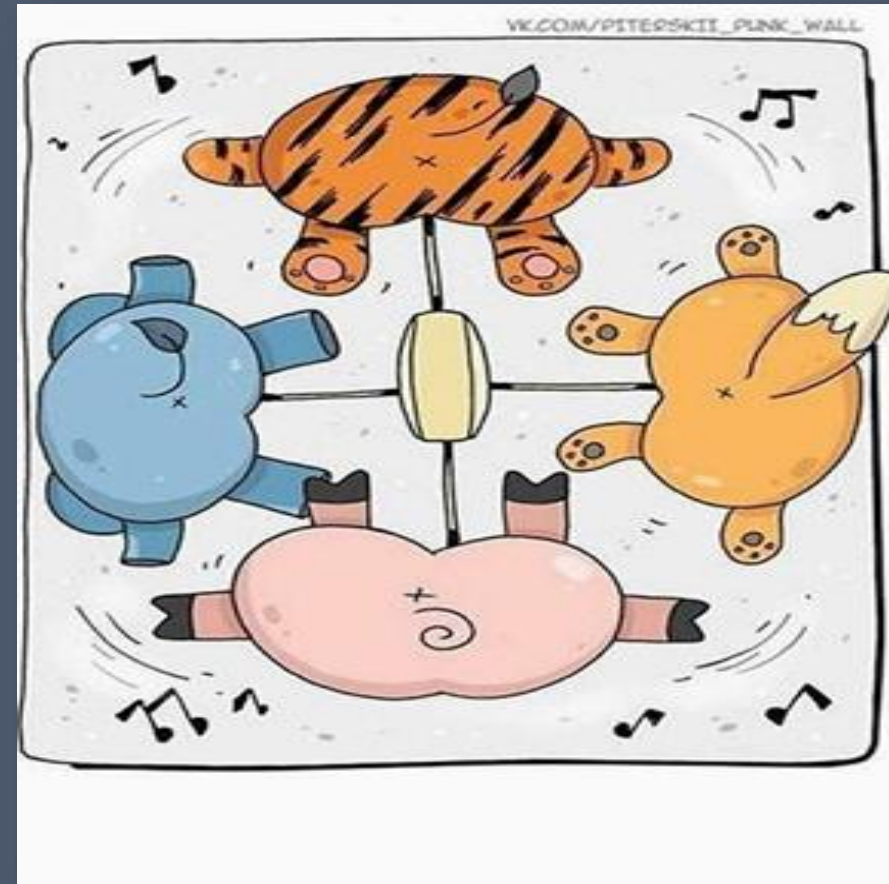
There are a range of valid experiences

- Same outcome = different experiences
- Outstanding vs. Good Enough
- Good Enough may need to be Outstanding



Good enough or outstanding?

Perspective Shapes Experience

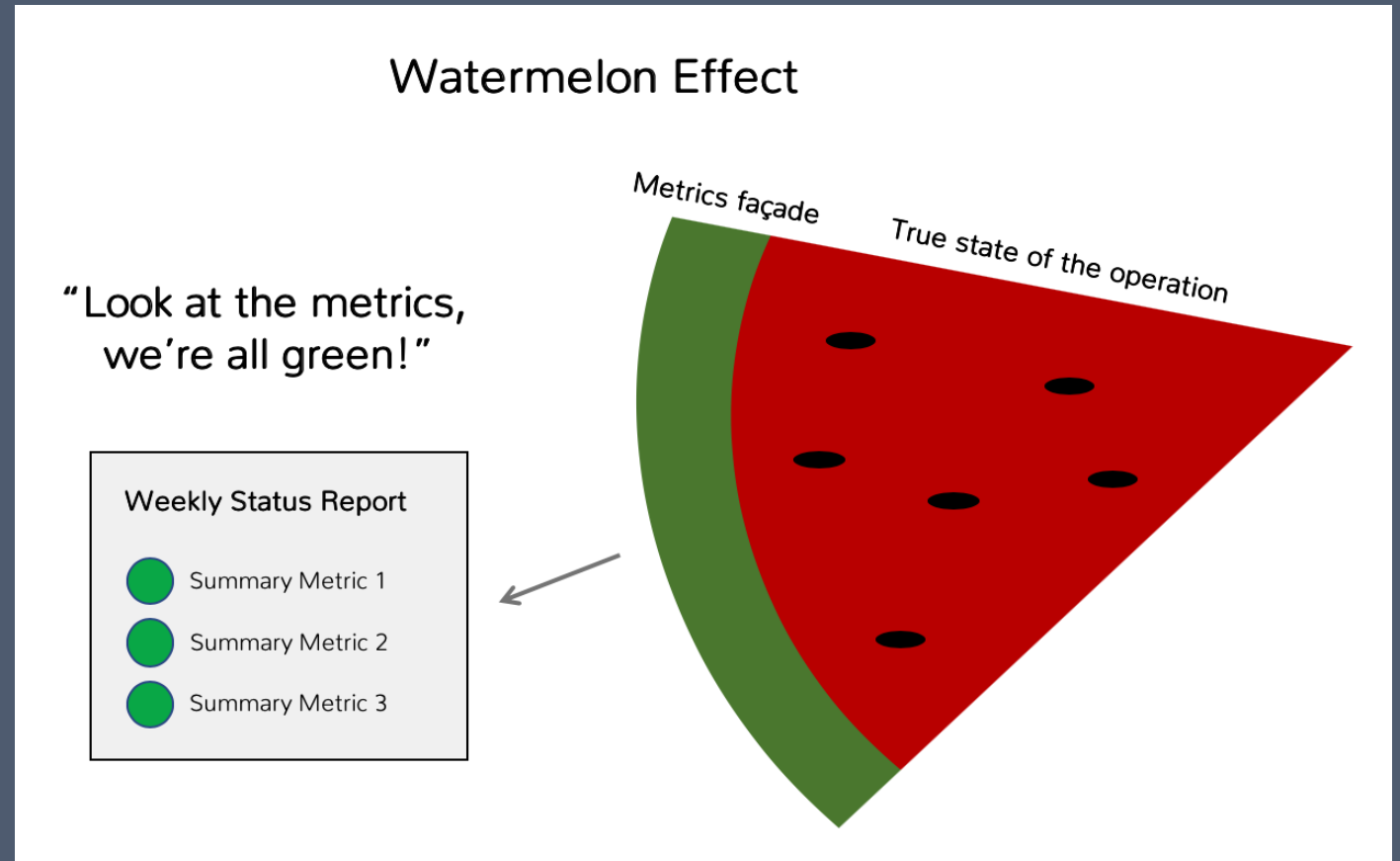


What's Missing?

- The Watermelon Effect?

How Does a Successful Project Make You **FEEL**?

- Good enough or outstanding?
- Variation by Project Type?
- Variation by Stakeholder?



What's Missing?

- From an **experience management (XM)** perspective, a successful project is not defined solely by scope, schedule, and budget adherence, nor only by business value realization
- It is defined by how consistently and predictably it delivers ***confidence, clarity, trust, and perceived value*** across the stakeholder ecosystem

Why PMs should integrate XM

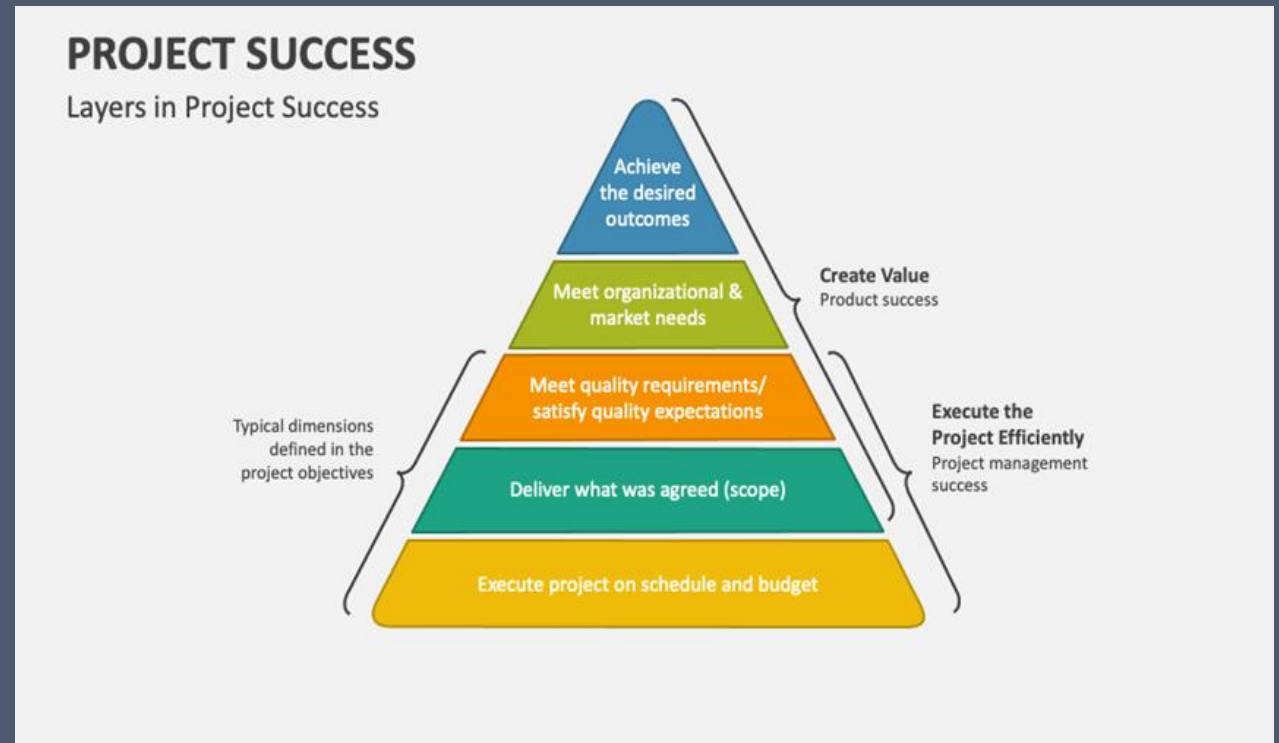
Are traditional Project Management Success Criteria sufficient?

They continue to be necessary

- Scope
- Schedule
- Budget
- Quality

What do those measure?

- Delivery Efficiency?
- What about **perceived value realization**?
- **Sustainability** of Outcomes?



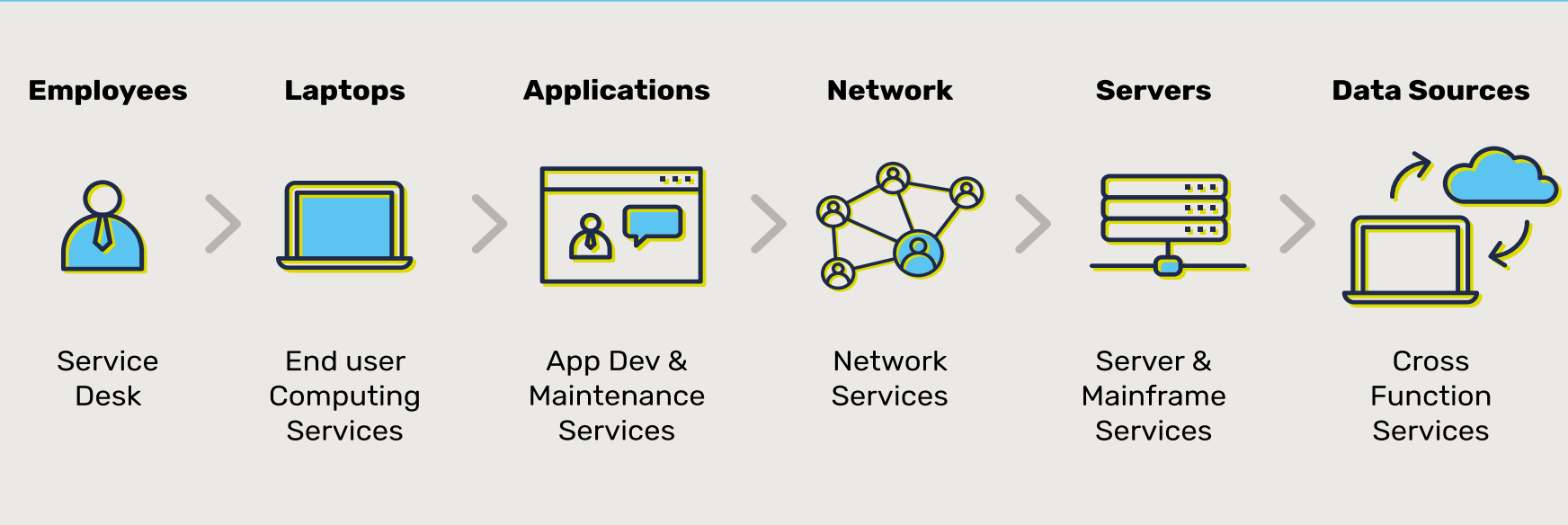
XM and modern value delivery frameworks converge on a critical insight:

Outcomes are sustained only when stakeholder experience is intentionally designed and managed.

SLAs vs XLAs

- Service Level Agreement (SLA)
- Experience Level Agreement (XLA)

XLAs measure horizontally, from end to end.



SLAs measure vertically, in silos.

Additional Detail/Perspective

- **Transaction:** an event such as an interaction or an exchange between people
 - Calling the Service Desk to report an outage
- **Moments over time:** a collection of transactions that ultimately shapes a customer's experience
 - The outage from start to finish
- **Experience:** cumulative and multiple moments over time
 - Transactions shape experience
 - Multiple moments over time are the experience



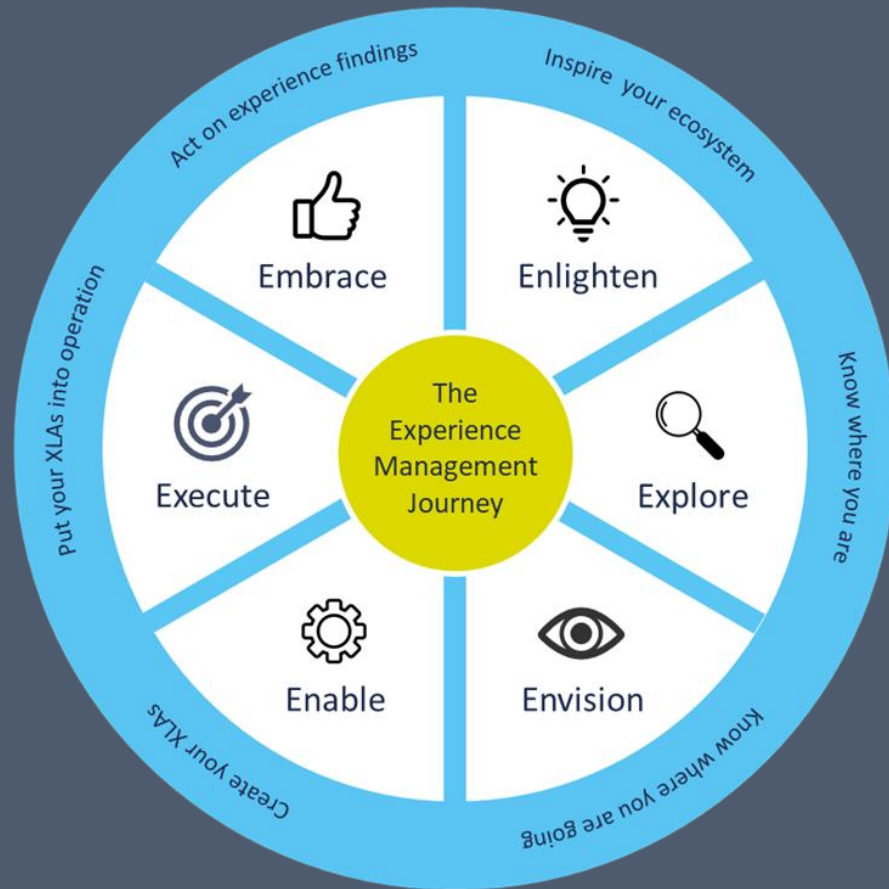
Project XLAs

Increasingly more projects are being governed by XLAs

- **Typical project measures include:**
 - Time (O-data)
 - Cost (O-data)
 - Internal View of Quality (not customer-centric)
- **The experience measures for projects include:**
 - Did we achieve the business outcome?
 - Are employees now having a better experience?
 - How was the experience when we did the project?

These XLAs begin their lives in a project, but when the project ends, the experience continues, and so does the XLA.

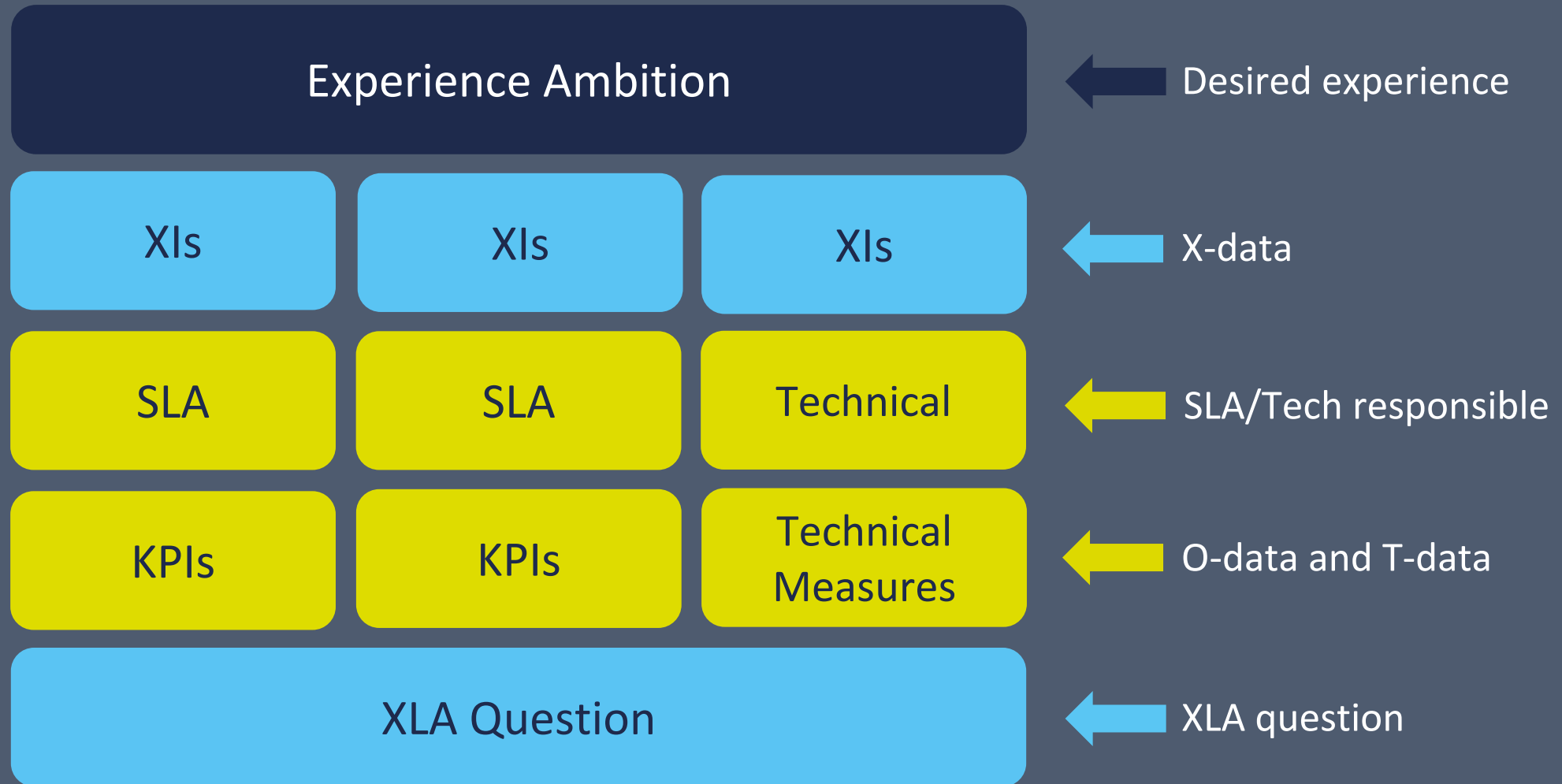
The Experience Management Journey



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- 1. Enlighten**
 - Inspire your ecosystem.
- 2. Explore**
 - Know where you are.
- 3. Envision**
 - Know where you are going.
- 4. Enable**
 - Create your XLAs.
- 5. Execute**
 - Put your XLAs into operation.
- 6. Embrace**
 - Act on experience findings.

The Experience Management Journey



XLA Stack Example – Self-Service Portal Redesign

Experience Ambition: Employees quickly find answers and resolve issues independently without frustration, confident support is available when needed.

XI #1 – Find What I Need Easily

XI Question:

How easy was it to find what you needed?

SLA: Knowledge + Portal Owner

O-Data:

- Search success rate
- Completion rate

T-Data:

- Page load time
- Broken links

XI #2 – Resolve Without Contacting Support

XI Question:

Did you resolve your issue without contacting support?

SLA: Digital Workplace

O-Data:

- Validated deflection
- Reopen rate

T-Data:

- Workflow success
- Form errors

XI #3 – Trust the Portal

XI Question:

How confident are you in portal accuracy?

SLA: Experience Owner

O-Data:

- Knowledge audit score
- Adoption rate

T-Data:

- Model training cycle
- Integration uptime

Overall XLA Question: Can you work efficiently using the self-service portal without unnecessary friction?

The Business Impact of XM-Integrated Project Management

Organizations that incorporate XM principles into project governance achieve:

- Higher adoption rates
- Faster stabilization
- Reduced rework
- Improved sponsor retention
- Stronger cross-functional trust
- Increased portfolio throughput

*Most importantly: They improve **predictability of value realization.***

How PMs Should Incorporate XM into Projects

1. Initiation: Define Experience Outcomes Alongside Deliverables

Traditional Question: What are we delivering?

XM Question: How should stakeholders *feel* at key milestones?

Actions:

- Define stakeholder experience objectives (confidence, clarity, trust)
- Identify emotional risk factors
- Establish experience success criteria (e.g., “Operations feels ready at transition”)

Deliverable Addition: Experience Charter (parallel to Project Charter)



How PMs Should Incorporate XM into Projects

2. Planning: Map Experience Journeys

Beyond work breakdown structures, map:

- Sponsor journey
- End-user change journey
- Operations onboarding journey
- Project team workload experience

Identify:

- Anxiety points
- Communication gaps
- Transition friction
- Decision latency



Tooling: Journey mapping, sentiment pulse surveys, change readiness assessments, experience-level indicators

This transforms stakeholder management from reactive to designed.

How PMs Should Incorporate XM into Projects

3. Execution: Manage Emotional Signals as Leading Indicators

Project managers traditionally track:

- Earned value
- Milestone variance
- Defect rates

XM-augmented tracking includes:

- Confidence levels (sponsor pulse)
- Change fatigue indicators
- Stakeholder clarity
- Psychological safety signals in team retrospectives



Example:

If milestone variance is green but sponsor confidence is declining, the project is experientially yellow.

How PMs Should Incorporate XM into Projects

4. Transition: Design the Go-Live Experience

Go-live success is experiential, not technical.

Key XM practices:

- Operational readiness validation (perceived readiness, not just documented readiness)
- Hypercare structured around “ease of doing business”
- Clear escalation confidence

Questions to ask:

- Does Operations feel equipped?
- Do users feel supported?
- Does leadership feel in control?

Measure:

- Frustration
- Ease
- Trust
- Confidence

These are predictive of stabilization speed and long-term performance.



How PMs Should Incorporate XM into Projects

5. Closure: Capture Experience Capital

Traditional closure:

- Lessons learned
- Financial reconciliation

XM-enhanced closure:

- Stakeholder sentiment retrospective
- Trust impact assessment
- Cultural reinforcement analysis

Questions:

- Did this project increase or decrease organizational trust?
- Would stakeholders volunteer for the next transformation?



Over time, this capability development institutionalizes experience intelligence gathering and enables higher value realization.

Exercise: Stakeholder Experience Outcomes

Break out into four groups – stakeholder focus

- Project/Delivery Team
- End Users
- Business Stakeholders
- Executive Sponsors

For your assigned stakeholder, define an example project, and for 15 minutes, discuss:

- The Experience Ambition (minimally acceptable experience)
- How they should feel in a successful project
- Key Experience Drivers
- Their Experience Management Outcome/Result

Stakeholder Experience Outcomes

Project/Delivery Team

(Team Experience Perspective — Professional Fulfillment & Sustainability)

How they feel in a successful project:

- Clear on purpose and priorities
- Supported by leadership and trusted to execute
- Safe to escalate risks
- Proud of delivery

Experience drivers:

- Clear scope boundaries and a sustainable workload
- Visible recognition
- Psychological safety
- Continuous feedback loops

XM Outcome: The team experiences *competence, autonomy, and meaning*.
Burnout is low. Pride is high

Stakeholder Experience Outcomes

End Users

(Operational Experience Perspective — Friction & Enablement)

How they feel in a successful project:

- Capable rather than confused
- Supported rather than disrupted
- Productive rather than burdened
- Respected rather than imposed upon

Experience drivers:

- Intuitive design
- Minimal friction during transition
- Responsive support
- Clear communication before, during, and after go-live

XM Outcome: End users feel *enabled*, not “subjected to change.”

Improved emotional metrics such as *ease, confidence, and frustration reduction*

Stakeholder Experience Outcomes

Business Stakeholders / Product Owners

(Outcome & Capability Perspective — Utility & Adoption)

How they feel in a successful project:

- Heard and understood
- Engaged in value co-creation
- Supported during change
- Empowered by new capabilities
- Confident in usability and performance

Experience drivers:

- Meaningful involvement in design and prioritization
- Clear expectation management
- Change enablement and adoption support
- Measurement of outcomes (not just deliverables)

XM Outcome:

- They experience *partnership*, not transaction
- Perceived success correlates with “ease of doing business” and “confidence in outcome.”

Stakeholder Experience Outcomes

Executive Sponsors

(Portfolio / Governance Perspective — Value & Risk)

How they feel in a successful project:

- Confident in strategic alignment
- Assured that risk is proactively managed
- In control of investment outcomes
- Proud of visible business impact
- Trusting of delivery leadership

Experience drivers:

- Transparent value realization (benefits tracking, not just milestone tracking)
- Predictable governance cadence
- Clear escalation pathways
- Evidence-based reporting (leading + lagging indicators)

XM Outcome: Sponsors experience *reduced anxiety, increased clarity, and increased strategic confidence.*

Final Thoughts

Project Managers have the ability to shape and drive positive experiences throughout their projects

- PMs who ignore experience management optimize for *compliance*.
- PMs who integrate experience management optimize for *confidence*.
- Confidence is the foundation of:
 - Continued funding
 - Organizational agility
 - Cultural resilience
 - Sustainable transformation

A project manager's role is not only to deliver outputs.

It is to design and manage the stakeholder experience that enables those outputs to become business outcomes that result in realized value.

Want to Learn More?

ITIL (Version 5) Foundation and Experience offered by ITSM Academy:

- <https://itsmacademy.com/itil-5-courses/>

XLA Foundation and Practitioner Courses offered by HDI:

- <https://www.thinkhdi.com/education/courses/experience-management-and-xla-foundation>
- <https://www.thinkhdi.com/education/courses/experience-management-and-xla-practitioner>

Humanizing IT (HIT Global) services and courses:

- <https://www.hitglobal.services/>

Remember...



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Q&A



Please send comments, questions, and/or feedback to jeff@itrainitleaders.com

Appendix/Additional Value Add

Detailed Benefits of Incorporating XM into Projects

From a governance and business performance standpoint, incorporating XM into project management delivers improvements in the following four areas:

1. Adoption & Value Realization

- Projects fail economically not at go-live, but at low adoption.
- Positive stakeholder experience increases:
 - Behavioral adoption
 - Willingness to change
 - Trust in leadership
 - Reduced resistance costs
- This directly improves benefit realization and ROI.

Detailed Benefits of Incorporating XM into Projects

2. Risk Mitigation

- Negative stakeholder emotions (confusion, distrust, fatigue) are leading indicators of project failure.
- XM provides early detection of:
 - Misalignment
 - Psychological resistance
 - Change saturation
 - Sponsor disengagement
- This converts emotional signals into immediate feedback for additional risk mitigation activities.

Detailed Benefits of Incorporating XM into Projects

3. Governance Credibility

- Executives fund projects based on confidence.
- Projects that generate predictable, transparent, emotionally stable experiences increase sponsor trust — strengthening portfolio governance.

4. Cultural Reinforcement

When projects are experienced as:

- Transparent
- Human-centered
- Respectful of operational realities

They reinforce organizational maturity and build trust.

Experience management can be a force multiplier for traditional project controls.

XLA Stack Example – Day 1 Ready Onboarding

Experience Ambition: New hires feel confident and productive on Day 1 because their laptop, accounts, and core applications work smoothly with valued support when needed.

XI #1 – Start Confidently

XI Question:

How confident did you feel starting Day 1?

SLA: HR + IT Onboarding

O-Data:

- % Day 1 Ready
- Provisioning cycle time
- Escalations

T-Data:

- Workflow success rate
- Imaging success

XI #2 – Access Works First Time

XI Question:

Did you receive correct access without rework?

SLA: IAM

O-Data:

- First-time-right rate
- Approval cycle time

T-Data:

- MFA success
- Authentication failures

XI #3 – Workplace Performs Reliably

XI Question:

How smoothly did your tech perform first week?

SLA: Endpoint Mgmt

O-Data:

- Incidents per 100 hires
- Device readiness

T-Data:

- Boot time
- App crash rate

Overall XLA Question: Can you work effectively in your first week because your digital workplace is ready, reliable, and supported?