

The Alpha Project Managers

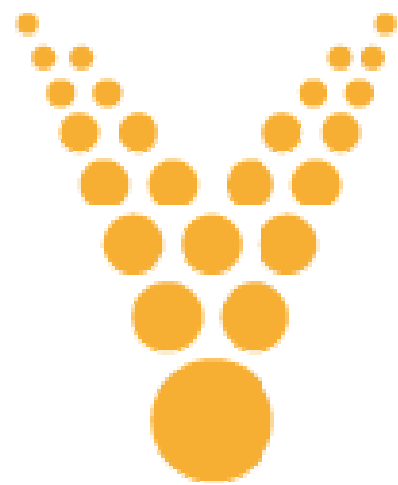


What the Top 2% Know That
Everyone Else Does Not

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Andy Crowe





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Project Management

*"It ain't what you don't know
that gets you into trouble.
It's what you know for sure
that just ain't so."*

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Mark Twain



Baggage Transport System

- 4,000 sections comprising 26 miles of track
- Laser and photo cells to track movement
- 300 individual computers
- \$193,000,000
- Recruited "top project manager"

Baggage cars crashed

Suitcases were ruined and lost

Clothing strewn for miles

Completely unusable

And the impact on the new
airport???

DELAYED OVER ONE YEAR!

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Costing the Taxpayers

\$1,100,000 daily

The world's "most advanced"
baggage system was terminated
in September, 2005

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in September, 2005

Replaced with...

The world's "most advanced"
baggage system was terminated
in September, 2005

Replaced with people!

Big Dig

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Most expensive public works
project in United States history

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Most expensive public works
project in United States history

- Leaks from the Charles River
eroding the tunnel

Big Dig

Most expensive public works
project in United States history

- Leaks from the Charles River
eroding the tunnel
- Falling tiles causing death

Big Dig

Most expensive public works
project in United States history

- Leaks from the Charles River
eroding the tunnel
- Falling tiles causing death
- 6 years late

Big Dig

Most expensive public works
project in United States history

- Leaks from the Charles River
eroding the tunnel
- Falling tiles causing death
- 7+ years late
- \$9,000,000,000+ (and counting)
over budget

Pop Quiz

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"Considering the dire circumstances that we have in New Orleans, virtually a city that has been destroyed, things are going relatively well."

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(Former) FEMA Director Brown

FEMA receives an annual budget
of over \$6,600,000,000 (pre-
September 11, 2001)

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Every FEMA project manager is
required to be PMP certified.

Planning

Planning Funding

Planning

Funding

Support

Planning

Funding

Support

Project Management

Planning
Funding
Support
Project Management

ALL FAILED

But what about
"everyday projects?"

Price Waterhouse Coopers

2004 Study of 200 global
companies large and small

Study represented 10,640
projects worth \$5.6 billion

Price Waterhouse Coopers - September, 2004

Price Waterhouse Coopers

2004 Study of 200 global
companies large and small

OVER 50% OF THESE
PROJECTS FAILED TOO!

Price Waterhouse Coopers - September, 2004

Our tendency has been to focus
on what is wrong.

The Alpha Study asked...

The Alpha Study asked...

Who is doing it right?

WHO GETS IT?

Practice.

Practice makes perfect.

Practice does not make perfect.

Bad practice only
reinforces bad habits.

Perfect practice makes perfect.

The Alpha Study

- Identified through survey and interviews of 860 project managers
- Only top 2% of the field as ranked by team, customer, senior management, and qualifying interviews were grouped as Alphas
- Non-Alphas comprised remaining 98%

What the stakeholders told us

8 Dimensions

- Attitude and belief
- Communication
- Alignment
- Approach and organization
- Focus and prioritization
- Issue management
- Relationships and conflict
- Leadership

Let's look at 3 of these

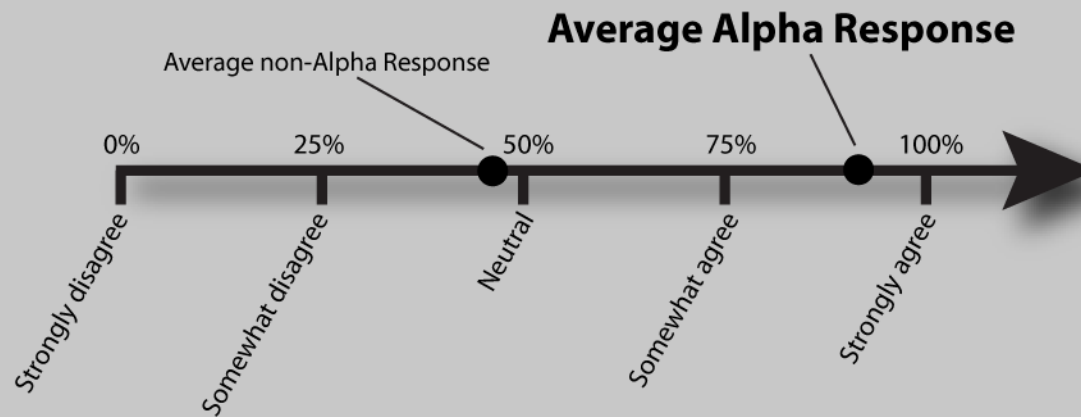
Attitude and Belief

Alphas generally believe they
have the "enough authority to
manage a project"

Alphas generally believe they have the "enough authority to manage a project"

Who was Surveyed

- Project Managers
- Customers
- Senior Management
- Team Members



Mark the degree with which you agree with the following statement:
"I have adequate authority to manage the projects for which I am responsible."

By the Numbers

Alpha average 89%
Non-Alphas average 47%

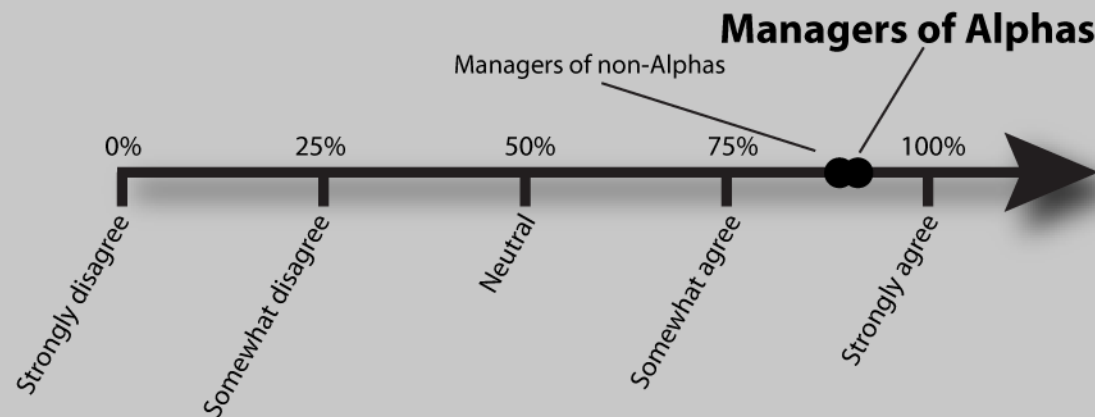
860 Responses
(18 Alphas)
(842 non-Alphas)

But what about senior management?

Senior managers *definitely* believe their project managers have enough authority

Who was Surveyed

- Project Managers
- Customers
- Senior Management
- Team Members



By the Numbers

Managers of Alphas 88%
Managers of Non-Alphas 86%

78 Responses

(15 Managers of Alphas)
(63 Managers of non-Alphas)

Mark the degree with which you agree with the following statement:

"This project manager has the necessary organizational authority to manage the project successfully."

“Responsibility without
authority!”

“No one is given
authority. You just have
to take it!”

–Tom Peters

Communication

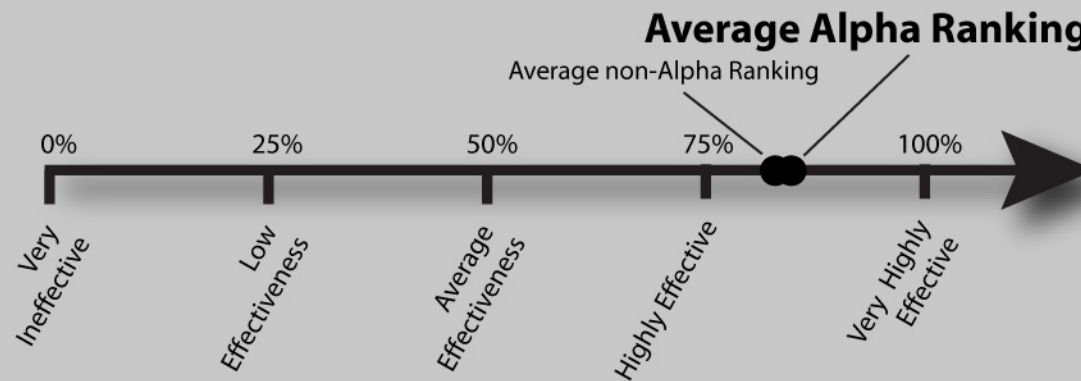
Alpha project managers do not
assume when it comes to
communication

We asked 860 project managers
"How effective are you at
communication?"

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"How effective are you at
communication?"

Who was Surveyed

- Project Managers
- Customers
- Senior Management
- Team Members



By the Numbers

Alphas	84%
Non-Alphas	82%

860 Responses

18 Alphas
842 Non-Alphas

*"How would you rank your
overall communication effectiveness?"*

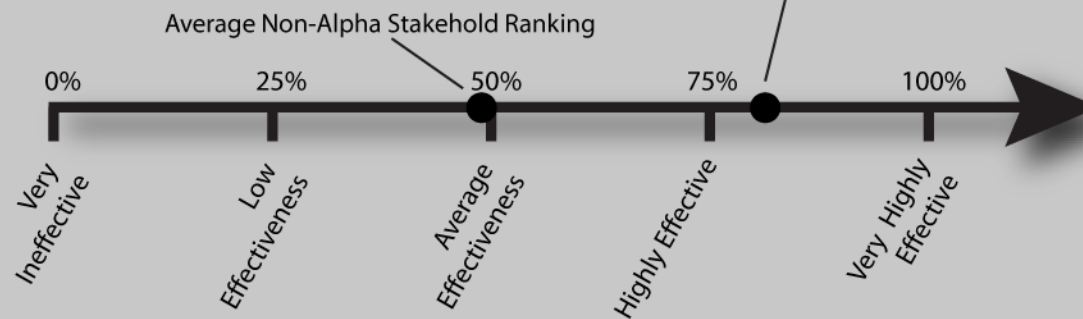
Then we asked their stakeholders...

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Who was Surveyed

- Project Managers
- Customers
- Senior Management
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Average Alpha Stakeholder Ranking



By the Numbers

Stakeholders of Alphas 80%

Stakeholders of Non-Alphas 49%

1103 Responses

30 Alpha Stakeholders

1073 Non-Alpha Stakeholders

“How would you rank this project manager’s overall communication effectiveness?”

How do they do this?

Alphas get to know their
audiences and communicate
appropriately.

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“Until the product is in the customer’s hands, communication *is* my deliverable.”

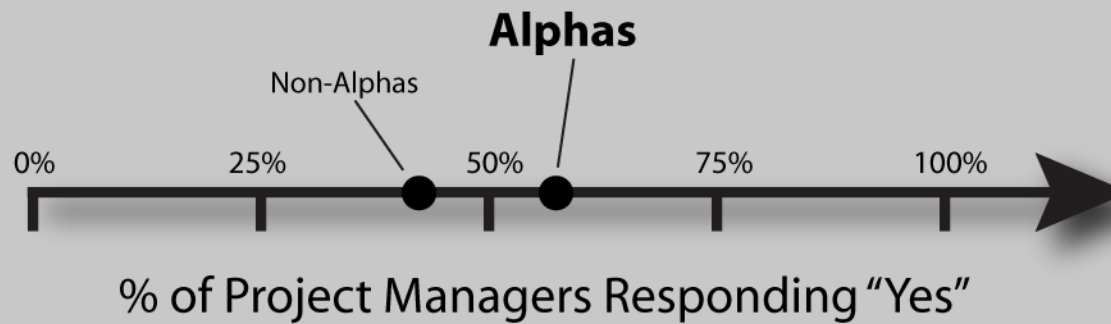
Victor (Alpha)

Alignment

Alphas know how their project
aligns to their company's
strategy

Who was Surveyed

- Project Managers
- Customers
- Senior Management
- Team Members



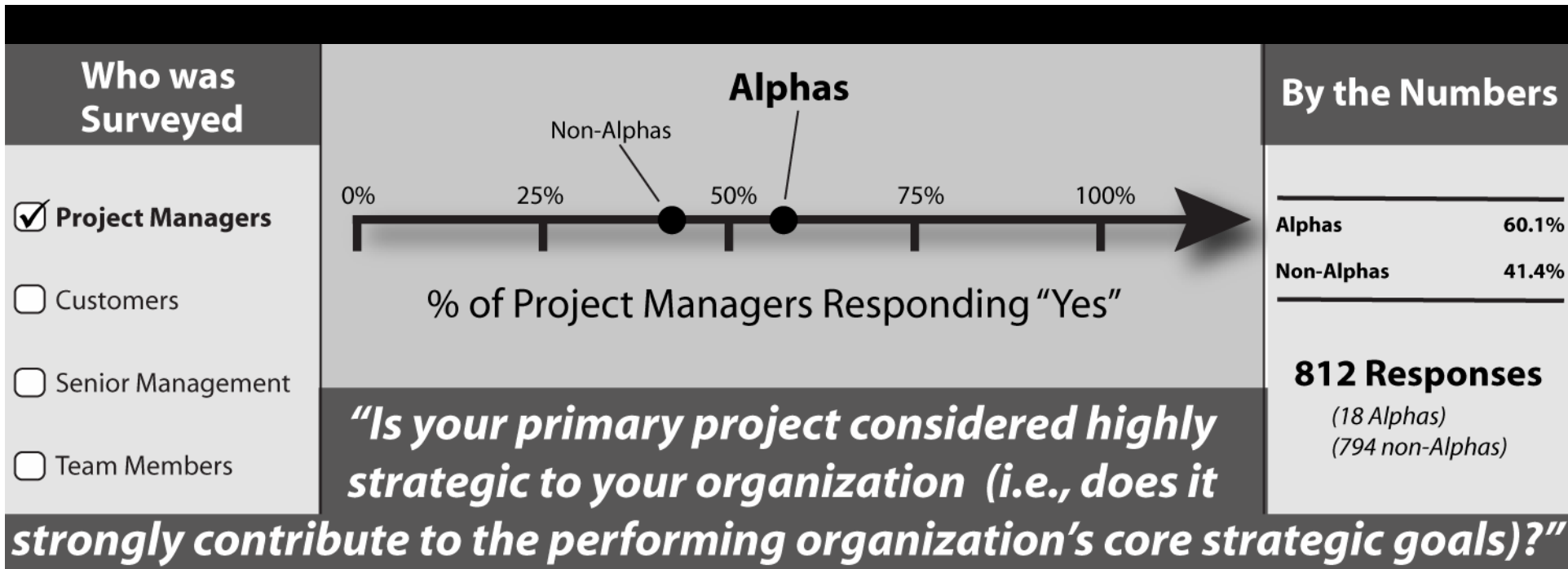
By the Numbers

Alphas	60.1%
Non-Alphas	41.4%

812 Responses

(18 Alphas)
(794 non-Alphas)

"Is your primary project considered highly strategic to your organization (i.e., does it strongly contribute to the performing organization's core strategic goals)?"



70% of Alphas can articulate
their organization's stated
strategic goals when asked

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Only 20% of non-Alphas can do
the same

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Only 20% of non-Alphas can do
the same

Alphas know how their project
aligns and contributes to those
strategic goals

What does it take to be
an Alpha Project
Manager?

Desire

Desire

Awareness of your gaps

Desire

Awareness of your gaps

Knowledge of the right way

Desire

Awareness of your gaps

Knowledge of the right way

Deliberate, perfect practice

Full details published in
Alpha Project Managers:
What the Top 2% Know That
Everyone Else Does Not.

Let's Dialogue

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