

Schedule Recovery

Rapid Response to Change: External Delays and Scope Increases

A complex systems manufacturer serves the global agricultural and construction industries. New products are developed, tested, and marketed by cross-functional product teams made up of commercial, engineering, purchasing, manufacturing, and other functions.

"In the past, meetings with senior management to discuss program delays left me feeling like a punching bag, and they certainly didn't elevate my standing within the company. After demonstrating the steps that I'd taken and showing quantitatively the schedule compression that resulted, the response was refreshingly positive."

"Project management is often a battle with overwhelming detail that doesn't in the end help us make better decisions. What I like about Project Design is its focus on the information that matters—and it's the kind of information I tend to know."

Problem

The product development teams found themselves struggling with chronic schedule delays threatening market introduction. The company missed promised customer delivery dates and faced risk of penalties for noncompliance with new regulations. The delays resulted from three primary causes: imposed schedules misaligned with testing realities, insensitivity to project risk, and a shortage of information and options needed to influence executive decision-making.

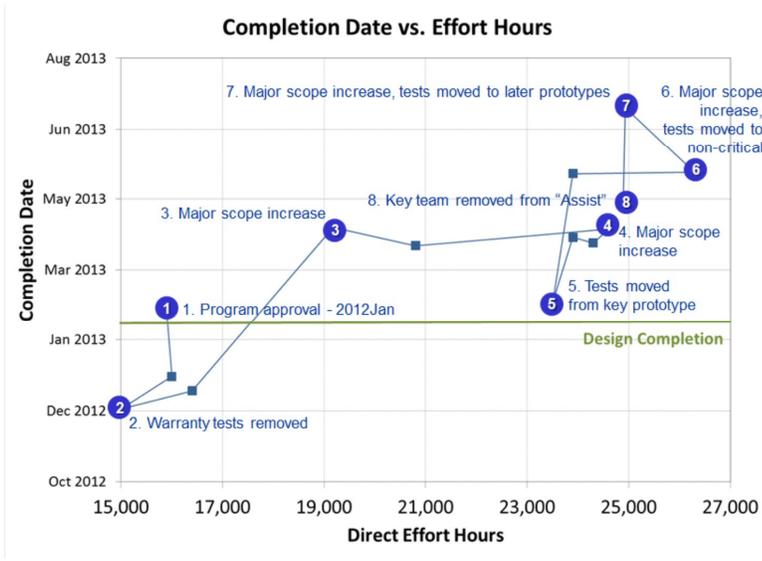
Solution

GPD responded with its Project Design methodology and TeamPort platform, which allows teams to account for both work and coordination efforts as they rapidly and repeatedly simulate a project. As changes in supplier timing and scope occurred, the teams were able to rapidly re-design the project, generating multiple options for executive consideration.

Results

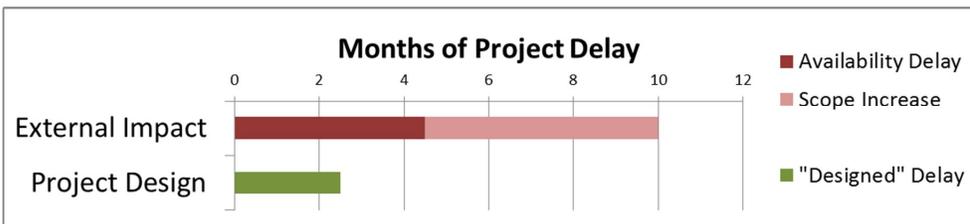
As a result of applying Project Design, the project manager demonstrated to his senior management an active response to external delays in prototype availability and increases in scope. In the past, the practice had been to absorb such negative changes without a "designed" plan for making the best of the situation. The project manager generate actionable options to lead the project forward, rather than simply pointing out the state of progress. More broadly, the Project Design approach was adopted for new programs going forward.

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The Project Design Walk shows the evolution of the designed plan and its forecasts during an early stage of the project. Steps along the way show changes as the teams folded in new knowledge of the project and responded to change. With Project Design, the teams can evaluate a wide range of architectural improvements to the project, including scope, teaming, complex dependencies, meetings, and the balancing of their own abilities and attention.

"No more building Gantt charts by hand based on what feel like arbitrary business targets. Now, I'm able to bring schedules based on production realities to the conversation. As a result, my voice gets heard."



Externally driven delays in prototype availability added an average of 4-5 months of schedule delay for each product model. Scope increases, also externally driven, added another 3-8 months of delay per model. By balancing tests and reconsidering the scope and criticality of various tests, the client was able to reduce the delay from 10 to 2 1/2 months.

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