Exercise

# Circles of Project Management

Consider the scenario below in the context of the four circles of project management focus:

* High-level project plan
* Detailed project plan
* Risk management plan
* Project control

Which circle(s) should Jon spend the majority of his effort on and which should he spend little time on?

At a recent audit, the organization was assessed a major finding in its operations. If this finding is not resolved in 90 days, they will need to stop the operations and stop all shipments of products to the customers. The TT45 project has been chartered to resolve the issues uncovered in the audit finding. Jon had just been appointed as the project leader for the TT45 project. This project is intended to follow the stage/gate methodology of the organization. This means that Jon will need to present a high level plan to the Review Committee at the first stage. Once through that gate, he will need to develop a detailed project plan for the rest of the project and he will need to develop a complete risk analysis of the project. According to the methodology, both of those will need to be reviewed and approved by the project management office. In addition, he will need to conduct twice a week project pulse meetings and weekly updates to a project dashboard for senior management.

That is what Jon would need to do to follow the full stage/gate methodology. However, the TT45 project is a crisis project. Jon has been told by the executive vice president that this is the most important project in the business and it will be the number one priority. Also, he can take some shortcuts on the project management methodology documentation in order to be certain that he is done on time. This would include combining some of the gates and bypassing some of the required project management steps in the methodology. However, the head of the project management office has encouraged him to follow all aspects of the project management methodology since that is the approach that will most likely solve the problems and correct the audit finding issue.

Jon has several concerns. First, the actual root causes of the problems uncovered in the audit are not yet identified – so Jon doesn’t know for certain what he must do as part of the project. Second, there are five gates in the organization’s stage/gate process. Each gate requires at least one week just to prepare all the gate review documentation. That means that Jon will only have eight weeks for actual project work if he follows the full stage/gate approach. Also, Jon will need to provide frequent status updates on the project, probably at least three times a week to senior management.