



About Helmsman

Helmsman are the experts in complex asset performance. For 15 years we have been delivering successful outcomes for some of Australia’s biggest organisations. Across a wide range of industries, including finance, utilities, mining, oil, gas, aviation and defence, we’ve been making a measurable difference to the economy by improving the performance of complex assets and mega-projects. Applying our unique ‘right-to-left’ approach, we get to the heart of project problems and resolve the central issues with minimal wasted effort.

Enhancing project controls through the Helmsman Complexity Research and Project Performance Diagnostic - Presentation Précis

- Complex projects face a ‘challenge of uniqueness’, in that they face unique and dynamic operating environments, context, intended outcomes, delivery requirements, risks and constraints. As a result, much of the traditional project controls framework intended to assure project success are often experience based and subjective or reliant on a generic framework as there are limited project comparison points.
- The Helmsman complexity research aimed to provide an objective understanding of the impact of complexity, and an equally objective understanding of what project controls are actually needed to ensure project success. Helmsman completed multi-year, \$1.2M research project undertaken in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney and with broad industry participation to create an objective, data driven view.
- By reviewing more than 1,000 projects, Helmsman were able to analyse more than 300,000 data points, and determine the critical factors that impact project success. The research found that major, complex projects needed new ways of understanding and managing the project, beyond traditional approaches.
- The research found that major, complex projects needed to understand the complexity of the project at an objective, deeper level, and the project controls went beyond traditional time, scope, budget and outcome measures.
- Understanding complexity objectively required establishing an objective measure - the *Helmsman Complexity Scale*. The research defined a set of factors that objectively measure project complexity, and each project has a unique complexity profile. Just like the Richter scale measures earthquake intensity, this provides project managers with an objective means to measure project complexity. This offers guidance on what drivers may be refined to reduce complexity.

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- A range of 172 Project Controls were identified, based on those statistically most effective at ensuring project success. Based on each projects complexity profile, the required Project Controls also vary, both in actual requirement for each control and level of sophistication needed.
- Combined with actual or proposed project controls, Controls gaps can be identified where project blind spots and risk may occur, enabling informed monitoring and response.
- The research findings have been embedded into the Helmsman Project Performance Diagnostic, providing:
 - A complexity assessment, based on the unique profile of the project, and offers guidance on what factors may be refined to reduce complexity.
 - Recommended Project Controls, by assessing against comparable projects, from the range of 172 identified controls.
 - Quantified Controls Gaps, comparing the controls benchmarks with comparison to existing project controls.
- With the insights from the Helmsman Project Performance Diagnostic, project complexity can now be actively managed, appropriate controls established, and project team competencies clearly defined.