

How to present architecture issues to higher management

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Abstract

Architects struggle with their visibility at higher management echelons. The introvert nature of architects is a severe handicap. Participation of architects in management teams is important for balanced technical sound decisions and strategy. Improved managerial communication skills of architects are required.

This article describes how to give a more effective presentation to higher management teams. Subjects discussed are the preparation, content and form, do and don't advise.

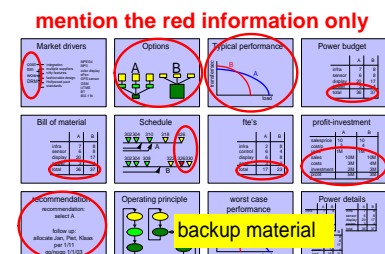
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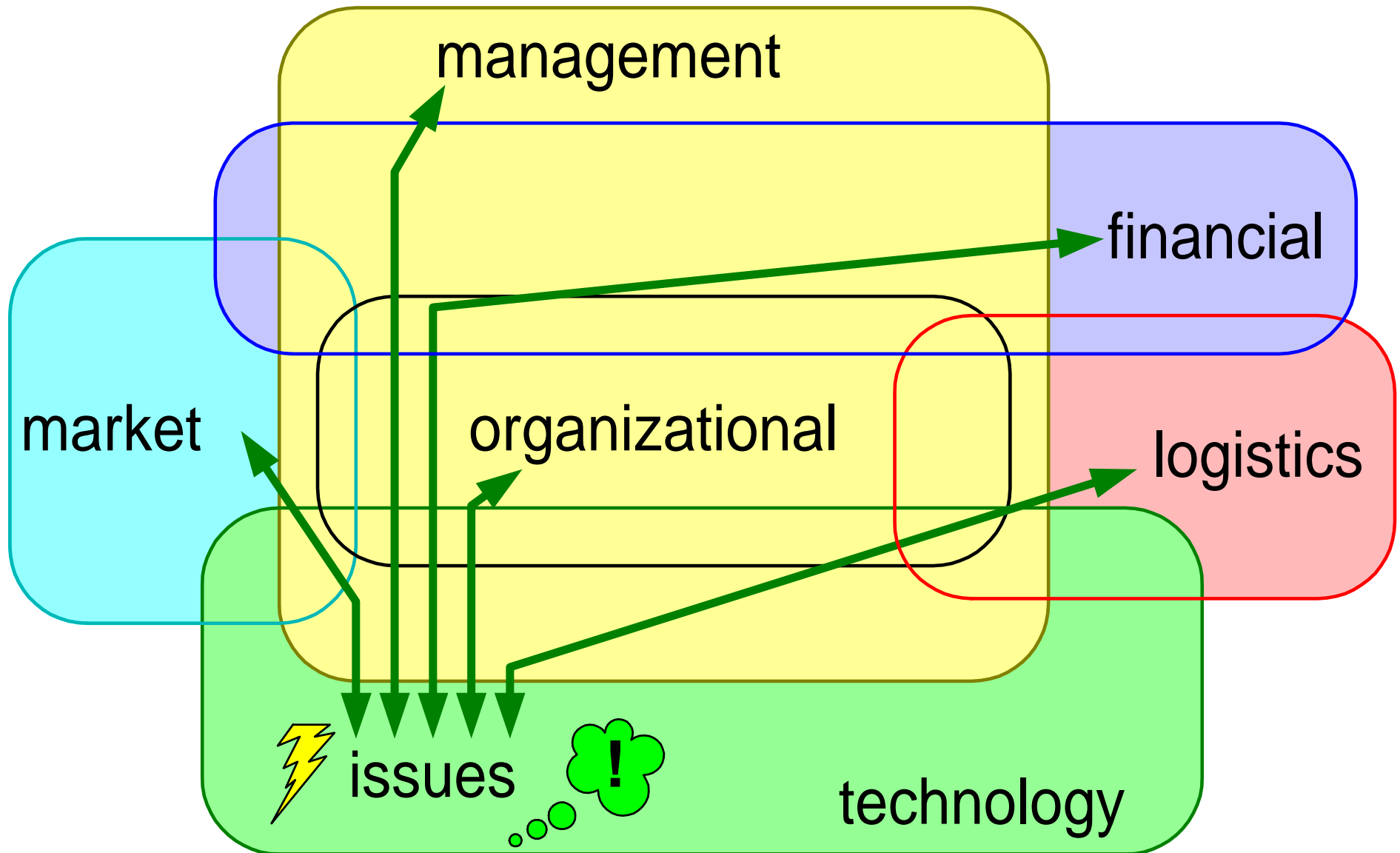
February 17, 2010

status: draft

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Architectural issues related to managerial viewpoints



Characteristics of managers in higher management teams

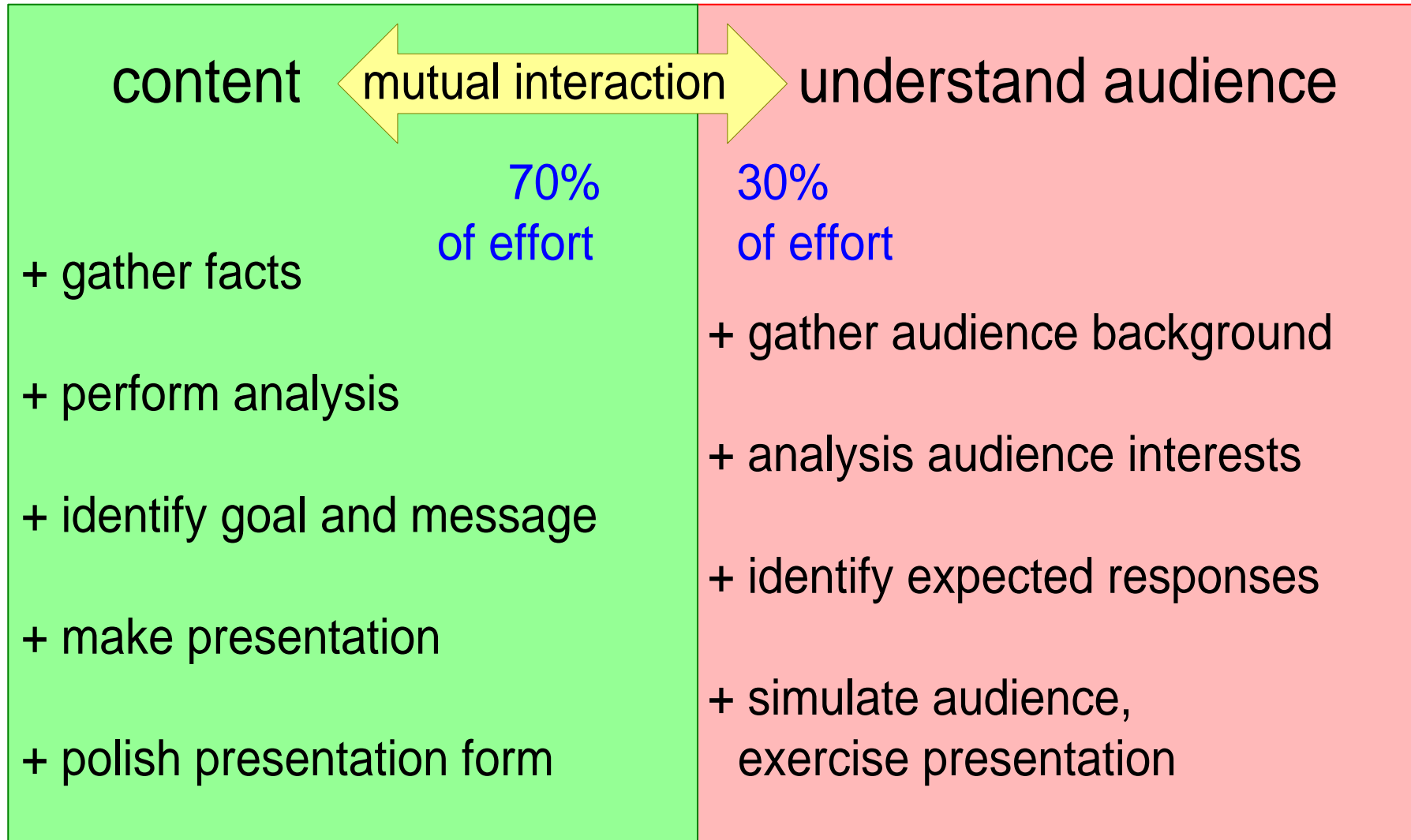
common characteristics

- + action oriented
- + solution rather than problem
- + impatient, busy
- + want facts not believes
- + operate in a political context
- + bottomline oriented:
profit, return on investment,
market share, etc.

highly variable characteristics

- ? technology know-how
from extensive to shallow
- ? style from power play to
inspirational leadership

Always prepare with small team!



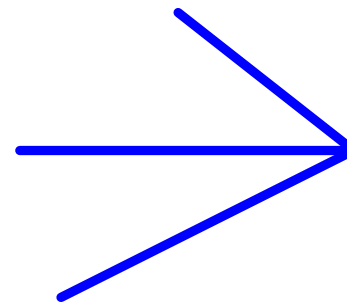
Recommended content

+ clear problem statement (what, why)

+ solution exploration (how)

+ options, recommendations

+ expected actions or decisions



supported by
facts and figures

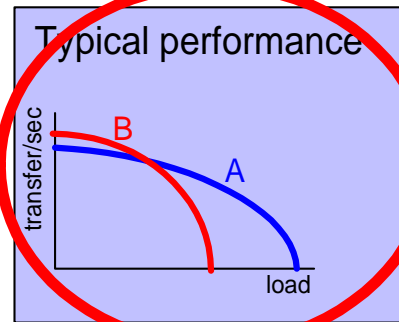
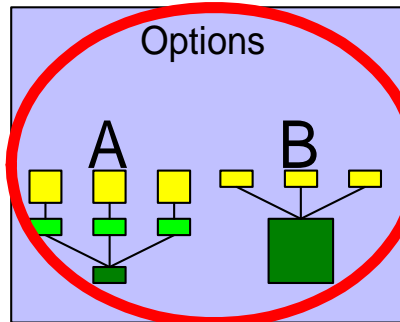
mention the red information only

Market drivers

- cost
- ttm
- wow
- DRM

- integration
- multiple suppliers
- nifty features
- fashionable design
- Hollywood pact
- standards

- MPEG4
- MP3
- color display
- ePen
- GPS sensor
- GSM
- UTMS
- BT
- 802.11b

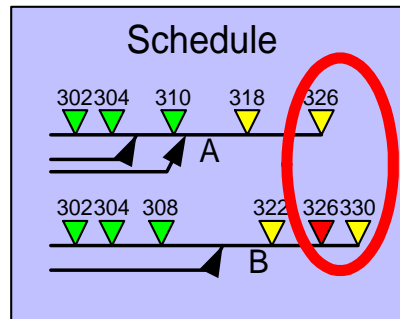


Power budget

	A	B
infra	7	8
sensor	6	8
display	20	17
power	3	4
total	36	37

Bill of material

	A	B
infra	7	8
sensor	6	8
display	20	17
power	3	4
total	36	37



fte's

	A	B
infra	2	8
control	6	4
display	6	8
anal	3	3
total	17	23

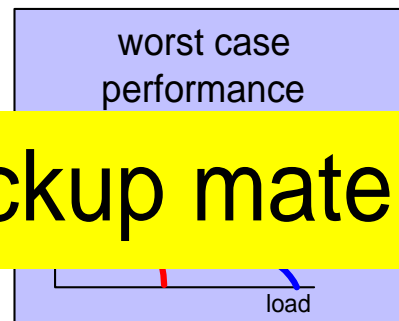
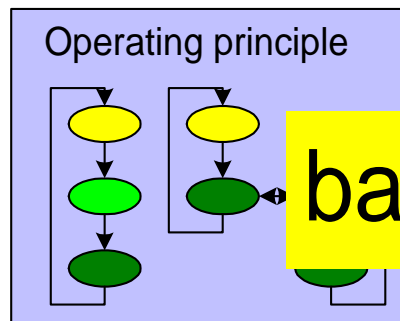
profit-investment

	A	B
salesprice	10	10
cost/p	3	4
units	1M	1M
sales	10M	10M
costs	3M	4M
investment	2M	3M
profit	5M	3M

recommendation

recommendation:
select A

follow up:
allocate Jan, Piet, Klaas
per 1/11
go/nogo 1/1/03



Power details

	A	B
infra	7	8
sensor	6	8
display	20	17
power	3	4
total	36	37

backup material

Form is important

poor form can easily distract from purpose and content

presentation material

- + professional
- + moderate use of color and animations
- + readable
- + use demo's and show artefacts

presenters appearance

- + well dressed
- + self confident but open

but stay yourself,
stay authentic

Don't force your opinion, understand the audience

don't

- preach believes
- underestimate technology know-how of managers
- tell them what they did wrong
- oversell

do

- + quantify, show figures and facts
- + create faith in your know-how
- + focus on objectives
- + manage expectations

How to cope with managerial dominance

don't

- let one of the managers hijack the meeting
- build up tensions by withholding facts or solutions
- be lost or panic at unexpected inputs or alternatives

do

- + maintain the lead
- + be to the point and direct
- + acknowledge input, indicate consequences (facts based)

Exercise presentation to higher management

- + Bring a clear **architecture message** to
- + **Management team** at least 2 hierarchical levels higher
- + **10 minutes** for **presentation including discussion**
(no limitation on number of sheets)
- * architecture message =
technology options in relation with **market/product**
- * address the **concerns** of the **management stakeholders** :
translation required from **technology** issues into
business consequences (months, fte's, turnover, profit, investments)

Exercise schedule

