

NASA Fast Track Studies

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During the Advanced Project Management 23 course at the Wallops Island Management Education Center from April 28 to May 8, 1996, a core group provided input for the revised NPD 7120.4 that replaces NMI 7120.4, and the NASA Program/Project Management Guide, concerning Fast Track Projects. (These are defined as small projects under \$150 million and completed within three years.)

Eleven members of PPMI APM-23 interviewed 14 experts and conducted four data gathering efforts. Sixteen other interviews were conducted and a final report, NASA APM-23 Special Study Group *Fast Track Study*, dated November 1996, has been published by the NASA Program/Project Management Initiative.

Greg Stover of LARC noted that the project life cycle template (guidelines) for large projects is currently too big to apply to small projects. Furthermore, current project guidelines do not fit with the “faster, better, cheaper” Agency direction. A more flexible structure that allows for innovative approaches in project management is needed for Fast Track projects.

Key points from the interviews clustered around three issues: Planning, Teamwork and Management. These were the common threads in the execution of Fast Track Projects.

“Planning is the key to successful management of a Fast Track Project, which is constrained by cost and

What Business Are We In?

- Products?
- Services?
- Customers?

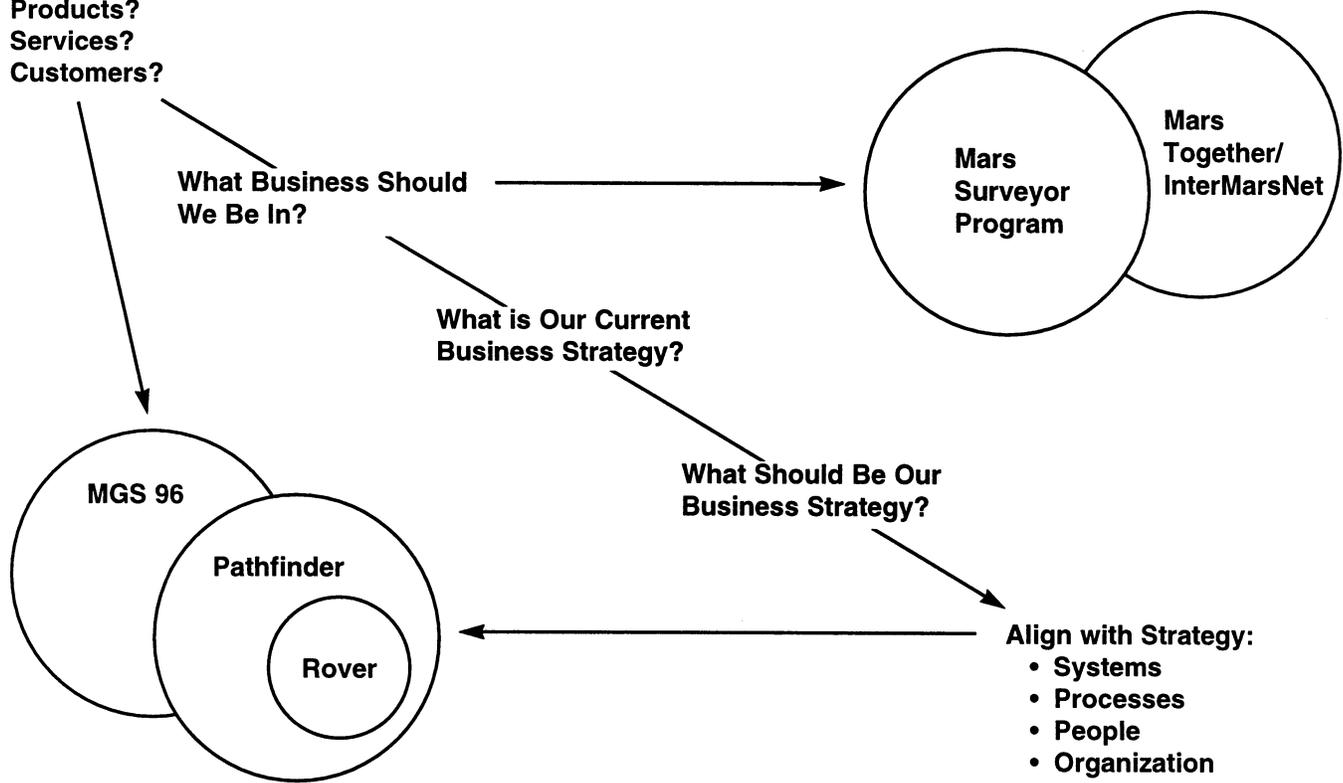


Figure 9. Mars Exploration Program Strategic “Business” Planning Process

contact as well as a compilation of lessons learned on previous Fast Track projects. The NASA APM-23 *Fast Track Study* is a start in that direction.

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