

# Using the DICE Model

## *DICE Model Overview*

The DICE Model is a simple spreadsheet tool that can be used to predict the likelihood of success for an ITIL implementation or improvement effort. This model was originally developed by Harold L. Sirkin, Perry Keenan and Alan Jackson of the Boston Consulting Group who conducted a correlation study of 225 companies to determine the common denominators for successful organizational behavior change.

The DICE acronym represents the common denominators that were found. These are:

- **Duration** - length of time between project reviews
- **Integrity** - Extent to which the organization can rely upon the project team to execute the project successfully
- **Commitment** - Ensuring that appropriate levels of Senior Management and Stakeholder commitment are in place
- **Effort** - The estimated amount of time those making the change will have to spend over and above their day-to-day jobs

These four elements are then combined into a Project Success Prediction Score. In their study, regression analysis

revealed that the combination of the above listed factors that correlated the most closely with actual project outcomes doubled the weight that was given to the performance of the team and the commitment of Senior Management. In the Model, the DICE Score Total is calculated from these factors using their formula.

For more specific information, readers are encouraged to read the white paper published by the authors. It can be found at:

Harvard Business Review: [www.hbr.org](http://www.hbr.org)  
The Hard Side of Change Management  
Harold L. Sirkin, Perry Keenan, Alan Jackson  
Reprint: R0510G

## *Installing the Model*

The model is built as a Microsoft EXCEL Spreadsheet and included with the CD that accompanies this book. Simply download or copy this file to a desired folder on your PC. The PC itself should be running WINDOWS XP or other platform compatible with Microsoft Office 2003.

It is recommended that you install the original version of the file and make changes only to copies of it. This will allow you to continually reuse the original to create baselines or future state models of your project environment. For example:

1. Download and copy the original file to your PC as **DICE Model.xls**
2. Create a baseline of your project current state environment by making a copy of this file, applying your metrics results and storing it as **MyProject Baseline.xls** (for example)
3. Create state models of future project improvement decisions (such as modeling the impact of getting increased Target Stakeholder buy-in or a more capable Project Manager) by creating copies of your baseline model and storing it with some relevant name (i.e. **MyProjectImprovements.xls** for example) and then apply changes to that baseline. In this way, you can create multiple versions of models based on different project improvement scenarios and compare their impact to the overall DICE score results.

### *How to Use the DICE Model*

The model is simple to use. It consists of a single EXCEL Worksheet where you can input your project parameters. These are in the blue colored boxes. The remainder of the model, including the DICE prediction score and interpretation is automatically calculated for you.

### *Interpreting the Model Results*

The model will calculate a DICE Project Prediction score and then interpret this into the likelihood of success for your project into one of four areas. These are:

#### *Win Zone*

The project has a high likelihood that it will succeed.

#### *Worry Zone*

The project has a reasonable likelihood that it will succeed however there are some risk areas that should be watched closely. The risk areas are shown underneath the individual DICE Scores and color coded as Green, Yellow or Red. Any item coded as Red or Yellow with a score of 3 is a candidate area to watch closely.

#### *Woe Zone*

The project may not succeed unless certain risk areas are addressed. These are highlighted in Yellow or Red colors in the individual DICE Scores section of the model.

#### *Disaster Zone*

The project has a strong likelihood of NOT succeeding. The risk areas are highlighted in the individual DICE Scores section as described earlier.

### *Projects with Low Likelihood of Success*

The purpose of using the model is to highlight project risk areas that need to be addressed. If the calculated DICE score puts the project in the Woe or Disaster Zone, all is not lost. The project team simply needs to address the risks that are indicated in Red. An approach for doing this could be done as follows:

- 1) Identify which risk areas have the highest scores
- 2) Model changes to those risks. For example: If the capabilities of the project team were initially scored as LOW, change this to HIGH and see the overall impact to the project. Did it the resulting Zone change for the better?
- 3) Determine which changes had the greatest positive impact to your project effort
- 4) Develop an action plan to achieve the changes that you modeled. For example: add more highly skilled staff to your project team (from the previous example).
- 5) Obtain approval for your recommended changes and implement them

It is highly recommended that you re-model your project at each formal project review. This will allow you to identify risks early and mitigate them before they endanger your efforts. It may not be unusual to find that you may have started the effort with high stakeholder support initially, but that this has waned somewhat as the project proceeds over time. It is important to understand the impacts this could be having on your overall success.