sim•ple:
1. having few parts; not complex or complicated or involved; e.g., "a simple design"; "a simple process"
2. readily understood or performed
3. free from guile

With regard to Information Technology, simplicity implies an **open, understandable and honest** approach that focuses on key business issues and on solutions that have a good probability of success, as in definitions 2 and 3.

Of course, business and technology can be complex, but it is important that services rationale and information delivery are simple in terms of the benefits to the business and the means of achieving those benefits. We can all evaluate whether an automobile meets our needs, even if we do not understand how the engine, transmission and suspension work. Unfortunately, we may also be swayed by "sizzle" in a car, whether we need it or not. In a business setting, a clear understanding of the linkage between results and dependencies will assure that good decisions are made with regard to operations and technology projects.

If a new technology-driven project cannot be adequately understood by the business unit dependent upon it, there is cause for caution. *Revenue Growth*, *Profitability Improvements* and *Risk Mitigation* are clear measures of results and should have linkages directly mapped by the proposed project that offers Line of Sight[SM].

Issues that are normally surfaced when a new project is proposed include:

- Capital costs
- Change in operating costs (costs, less cost reductions)
- Resources, skill sets and staffing
- Time to complete
- Payback time
- Probability of success
- Risks associated with failure
- Risks associated with doing nothing

Questions that should be asked and will affect simplicity and the probability of success include:

- What are the specific Revenue, Profit and Risk improvements projected?
- Has the sponsoring business unit been part of the project development?
- Are requirements, definitions and success criteria quantitatively defined?
- How much operational change will be required by the staff?
- How much new business data will be required to succeed in this project?
- Where does the new data come from?
- What alternatives have been examined to accomplish strictly the most critical path?
- What is the probability that our goals/challenges will change before project completion?
- What other companies similar to us have succeeded with this project on the same scale?

Definition 1 speaks to fewer moving parts and less complexity. In general, the probability of success for a project goes down for larger and longer projects, yielding increased complexity and a larger degree of coordination. Factors most directly affecting success in a project include:

- Project management complexity
- Changes in goals during the project, resulting in "Scope Creep"
- More extensive training and operations changes, resulting in interim reductions in productivity
- Disappointment, resulting from the time required to achieve meaningful results

Careful attention to project scope and goals can improve the "simplicity" of each project and improve your chances of success.

Contact Avistas today for a free consultation to discuss critical projects in your organization. We can help you simplify your projects and increase your probability of success.