Practical "real-world" reasons Why IT Projects fail and suggested "best practices" solutions. Hope you find it useful and give these ideas some serious considerations:

1. LACK OF GOVERNANCE: Project success criteria, roles, processes and outcomes must be established and actively monitored to aid in project success. Governance and accountability must be accepted and supported by all levels of management. IT is accountable for the costs, technical risks, technical design and delivery solution. Business is accountable for the business case, business risk, business requirements, business value and deployment (training, process improvement, organizational change and testing) of the business solution.

2. INTERNAL POLITICAL: Politics, ego and status road blocks can quickly destroy a project. Open communications and a focus on the project's overall value to the business are essential. Focus more on outcomes and results with "just-enough" formality rather than processes with "rigid and robust" approvals.

3. POOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BUSINESS AND IT: Save the "techie" speech for your tech buddies and use terms the business can understand and appreciate. Instead of dwelling on the technological capabilities of XML, for instance, emphasize the improved integration with clients and partners and other benefits that should result from using it. IT folks need to try to hear and really understand what business users tell them while supporting and enabling innovative solutions through open and influential communications.

4. UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS: If project expectations are ambiguous in any way, what was initially seen as a small piece of work could become huge and overly complex, taking up valuable time and resources. As a result, it is necessary to outline the fundamental business requirements using a simple model-based approach of Business (User Interface), Data, Process and Technology requirements at the start of the project, represented visually by a conceptual business solution. Whether the requirements were to install a new IT system, or implement new processes, your project needs to produce solutions that meet these requirements using iterative or agile developments (prototyping methods). Do not expect that the Business Requirements will be 100%-the dynamic and changing nature of IT innovative solutions.

5. LACK OF FACT-BASED PROJECT ANALYSIS: In most cases, project plans are not based on sound facts but on assumptions and opinions of existing and planned states without any planned change management. These assumptions and opinions often don't hold up as the project progresses, environment changes, and the potential benefits become lost in the shuffle." Project analysis should include basic metrics such as "cost efficiency, productivity, cycle time, error rates, etc. It is critical to incorporate scenario modeling or project value justification into the initial pre-project analysis, to evaluate different options and extrapolate the implications of different courses of action, and then select the option that's most realistic and yields optimal benefit. You need to not only manage the project efficiently and make sure it delivers value, you need to make sure the project you've chosen in the first place is the right one for the business. Finally, the metrics need to be tied back to the business objectives so that, as the project is implemented, you're tracking and quantifying the benefits as they're delivered."

6. LACK OF RELEVANT INPUT FROM USERS: Gaining insight from heretofore-untapped internal resources is essential for creating a project plan that encompasses all aspects of the business. Without these relevant input from users, tools and processes can be developed, which can be incomplete or even unnecessary.

7. CHANGES IN PROJECT SCOPE, SIZE and BUDGET: Maintaining a firm grasp on all the ins and outs of a complex project can be a daunting task for even the seasoned project manager if they don't have the right tracking tool at hand. ITB Project Dashboard, Integrated IT Project Management processes and WBS structures, and SharePoint documentation can help project managers keep track of major project items (milestones, change requests, costs, risks etc.) by organizing them into clearly defined categories.

8. CHANGES IN KEY PERSONNEL: Key changes in project personnel can be hugely disruptive to project progress. It is essential that all aspects of the project are well documented and up-to-date A tool that can help is the workflow components of MicroSoft Sharepoint Knowledge Network. The cross-functional workflow provides a simple visual representation of how key stakeholders, the project manager, project teams and subcontractors collaborate.

9. SCHEDULE OVERRUNS: Project managers eat, sleep and breathe schedules, but must be on the lookout from the very beginning for preventable situations in which the project managers have been saddled with an unrealistic schedule because their management already committed the schedule to their own management. To compensate, more workers are usually added to the project, but adding more people to satisfy an unrealistic schedule will not solve the problem. Optimize the utilization of IT resources by reducing excessive management overhead, co-ordination and administrative efforts.

10. HIGHER THAN EXPECTED MAINTENANCE COSTS: Even when an IT project is "done," it's not over, and neither are the associated costs. Regularly assess projects to ensure that they still satisfy business needs and are on their way to success. As part of these assessments, business should find a business owner who can substantiate the business value: "If you can't find that, you should cancel it, even if it's 60 percent done."

11. INADEQUATE SKILLS FOR PROJECT EXECUTION: It's imperative for project managers to know exactly what skills and expertise each member of the project team possesses from the outset. The business, IT and project management commitment, competency and credibility must be continually assessed objectively using the SharePoint knowledge based repository of deliverables and success criteria to help project managers capture these details in order to "quickly identify any knowledge gaps or single points of failure." Model-based NOT complex rigid documentation; Integrated development NOT IT-Centric development; Iterative deployment NOT "big-bang" deployment.

Thanks to IT Business Edge for these simple, clear , concise and insightful ideas. I hope you find them very practical for everyday reminders and continuous improvements in managing IT projects. You may be aware of the other reference source (IPM-IT).