

Project Management in a Nutshell

By

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To Start with...

“The difference between failure and success is the difference between doing something almost right and doing something right...” Benjamin Franklin

...And in the competitive world of IT you should deliver exactly ‘that’ which will gain you customer satisfaction.

Always “need” is created by a problem. In order to achieve the “Need” or to solve the problem, you need to formulate measurable goals. Once the goal is set, project begins. A project is nothing but a strategy to meet a final goal. And that strategy is “Management”.

Let's roll the ball

You should be able to define any project in terms of constraints time, budget and Deliverables. Resource is factors on which those constrain are applied. The highest rated constrain is the driver of the project. Good Project management needs to keep the driver well under the control limit by Robust planning, Effective scheduling process, Introduce Methodology for productivity increase, Execution process to provide excellent project control, visibility & decision support.

The major activities of project management:

- Plan a clear project goal and project scope & objectives: Create a project plan with an end in mind & slice the final goal to sub-units for measuring it clearly.
Note: Every sub unit needs to have a deliverable/artifact.
- Establish checkpoints: Activities, artifacts, deliveries need to bring under milestones with time estimated. Draw a clear picture among all deliveries and their relationship/dependencies.
Note: All the activity estimation has to coincide with project schedule.
- Direct people as individual and as a team: Reinforce commitment and excitement among the team members. Keep everyone connected and updated with project information. Create togetherness through roles and responsibilities.
Note: If the project team consists of multiple sub team (QA-Dev-Process-Business Analyze), the management creates an agreement of win-win relationship among the teams and members.
- Empower and enrich the team: Empower yourself and the team members for believe of “Positiveness”.
Note: Encourage risk taking and creativity and manage/ monitor it closely.

Put On Paper

Project planning

This is the most important activity of any project. This activity needs to begin with meeting project stakeholders to gain complete clarity on intended objectives, deliverable and success criteria. This not only keeps everybody on the same page, also identify the areas where more clarity is required and should not come back with mid-project surprise and rework.

Identification of important task, resource dependencies, required skill, and process (reviews, reports, status) to follow is other major aspect of planning. Most of the time management needs a look back to the historical records to issue prevention. Creating a proper project network of resource and task will give a clear understanding of stake holdings. WBS (Work Breakdown Structure) at the lower level will create more clarity on detailed task.

Project Scheduling

Task, resource and iteration are the main constrain of a work. This also determines longest/shortest “chain of work”. By identifying the detailed task with the “chain of work” and applying the historical data of team capability, the schedule of each delivery is defined. Dependencies like skill; training is also considered and addressed on project planning. By identifying better methodology, strategies of execution for over all project duration are shortened and intern the cost of the project.

Project Control and Impact Visibility

Project control is accomplished through buffer management. This is placed in Between the final tasks of Critical chain and project completion date. This is a process of managing safe delivery and release of project. Delay alone the critical chain consumes buffer time whereas early finishes add to buffer time. Project management can also add resources as buffer to support the project in critical delivery.

Visibility to project status, visibility to current and future work-delivery and “what-if” analysis takes all the guesswork out of managing projects. Senior manager, project manager need to have a clear understanding on every decision they make and the impact of those decision on project delivery. Every current/ imposed decision, critical issues need to be closely analyzed through PMR (Project management review) and SMR (senior management review). This activity will ensure that project is not out of control and all deliveries are made as per agreement.

The buffer management and visibility provides a clear understanding of the health of project in every phase. The reviews will also sent an alert to management on whether it’s the time to be proactive, determine a recovery plan, and in tern the Budget.

Use process step by step

Step-by-step guide and integrated toolset, Effective Project Management: Tools, Templates & Best Practices, will take you through the process of developing an effective project management

system and culture. Also usage of proven process will help you -

- 1.) Gain Control: Using proven best practices, you will learn methods to gain control of projects that have gone off track, and how to steer them back in the right direction. Keep your team focused, and effectively tackle yellow flags before they turn red.
- 2.) Achieve Objectives: Following right methodology, all stakeholders will have a clear understanding of the project objectives and expectations early on. Use these tools and templates to keep all parties up-to-date on project status and potential threats.
- 3.) Save Time: Usage of right strategy and toolset will speed your project efforts, allowing you to focus on getting the work done, rather than merely recording activities.
- 4.) Manage Your Staff and Resources: This methodology will help ensure that you are efficiently allocating your department resources to meet the requirements of both your current and future projects.

Highlights of Project Management Methodology:

- Detailed tasks and action steps for each phase of an effective project management process
- Learning guides and resources to keep you up-to-speed on the latest issues concerning project management
- Comprehensive reference guide that provides all the tools and guidance your project managers will need
- Interactive tools and templates to keep you working efficiently

Below the glass

Working in IT means working on mission-critical projects. It is as simple as that. Yet nearly 50 percent of projects fail to meet business objectives. Sound project management (PM) processes and techniques are essential for succeeding in IT.

Without an effective PM system, projects are destined to run over time, go over budget, and fall short of the goals. So, go ahead and follow right process by using industry standard PM tools. Follow regular review, take right control over the critical areas and deliver right product at right time.

Wait a while...I am sure you will get a ring and cheerful voice from onsite

References

Theory of Constraints Project management by Dee Bradbury Jacob Fundamentals of project management by EnterpriseCM