

Project Management

E-Course

Module 4

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This document introduces participants to the various aspects and methodologies of Project Management.

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Make or Buy your Project Methodology?

If you're involved with managing projects and you want to improve your success rate, then you'll need to implement some form of project methodology. A methodology gives you a "roadmap" for delivering projects, providing your team with an element of structure, in a frequently chaotic and stressful work environment.

So you need to implement some form of project methodology for delivering successful projects, but should you...

Make or buy Your Project Methodology?

Before we help you find an answer to this question, let's define what a "methodology" is. A methodology is a pre-defined set of steps that describe how a project should be managed, from end-to-end. It sets out what needs to be done, by whom, when and how. It also describes how time, cost, quality, change, risks and issues should be managed to ensure that the project delivers on time and under budget.

It gives you a complete delivery roadmap so that you can manage projects in the same way every time, delivering projects faster and more efficiently than before.

So should you *create* this roadmap (or "methodology") from scratch, or should you *buy* it off the shelf? Here are the steps you need to take to make that decision:

Step 1: Analyze your Environment

How successful are projects in your Company? Which projects fail and which succeed? Why are projects late? Which problems commonly occur? Do all teams use the same project processes? Which processes work efficiently and which need improvement?

By answering these questions, you can identify the common problems in your project environment and list the areas that need to be improved.

Step 2: Define your Requirements

After you've identified the problem areas and the processes that need to be improved, you're ready to define your requirements for a project methodology.

Define exactly what it is that you want from your methodology. Which processes do you require, and at which level of depth. For instance, do you need detailed processes to help you plan projects, or do you want procedures for contracting and managing suppliers.



Document your requirements in as much depth as possible and mark them as either mandatory or optional.

Step 3: List the solutions

Great, so you know exactly what it is that you want from a methodology. You now have 3 options ahead of you:

a) Create a new methodology from scratch.

If you have in-house project experts with the time available to create a new detailed methodology, then this is a good option for you. They will need to run workshops to define your project life cycle, identify relevant best practices and standards, document your project processes and implement training courses to roll out your new methodology to your organization.

It's a huge amount of work and will take considerable time, but it may be worth it.

b) Buy a new methodology off the shelf.

These days you can buy, download and implement a project methodology in minutes. The advantage is that it saves you months of work and energy rather than having to create one from scratch. The disadvantage is that it may not perfectly fit your project environment and you will need to train all of your staff in the new processes and procedures included.

This option is best for smaller companies running smaller projects, as they usually don't have the time to create a methodology from scratch and they need to improve their project delivery rate quickly, as their project success directly affects their company profitability.

c) Buy and customize a methodology.

If you already have some project processes that work for you, but you simply want to improve certain areas of your project environment, then the best option is to buy a customizable methodology, upload your existing processes and quickly create a new customized project roadmap that perfectly fits your environment.

You will be able to immediately adopt new processes that are based on worldwide project management standards, while still using your existing processes. It usually takes 1-2 weeks to merge your existing processes with the methodology your purchase, saving you months of hard effort and giving you a customized methodology which is a perfect fit for your environment.

Step 4: Rank the options



Once you've identified each of the potential options available, you will want to rank them in terms of their:

- Total *cost* and *effort* required
- Ability to meet your *requirements* set
- Handling of different project *sizes*.

Step 5: Make your decision

Based on the amount of time, expertise and budget you have available, you should now be able to make a clear decision as to whether you should *make from scratch*, *buy & implement* or *buy & customize* a project management methodology for your project environment.

And just one further tip: If you decide to "buy" a methodology, then make sure that it:

- Is completely customizable.
- Is based on worldwide standards
- Handles all types and sizes of projects
- Can quickly and easily be implemented
- Is simple to follow and adds real value to your projects.

So that's it. You can follow these 5 steps to make your decision on whether to make or buy a project methodology, to improve your success in delivering projects.

How to Create your Own Project Methodology

When you manage projects, you should repeat the same processes to initiate, plan, execute and close your projects. Only by repeating the same successful processes, can you gain a level of efficiency and achieve a high project success rate.

Of course you can often buy project management processes as part of an "off the shelf" methodology, or you can create a new methodology yourself from scratch.

If you choose to develop a methodology from scratch, then we'll help you do it by describing here...

How to Create your Project Methodology



If you need to build a project methodology from the ground level up, then take these 3 steps to do it:

Step 1: Identify your Needs

The first step is to define your requirements for a new project management methodology, by answering the following types of questions:

- ✓ Which project methodologies are currently in use?
- ✓ Which types and sizes of projects are undertaken?
- ✓ How many projects are usually run in parallel?
- ✓ Which projects were successful and why?
- ✓ Which methodologies were used for these projects?
- ✓ Are any project management standards followed?
- ✓ What types of project documentation exist?
- ✓ What are the common problem areas?

How would a new methodology fix these problems?

Now that you know what the common problems are and how your new methodology will address them, you're ready to list your requirements. Here are some examples of requirements:

1. **Specific.** It must provide us with these processes...
2. **Flexible.** It must help us manage these types of projects...
3. **Consistent.** It must help us to achieve these results...
4. **Comprehensive.** It must cover these lifecycle activities...
5. **Toolset.** It must include these templates and forms...

Step 2: Design the Solution

Then design your methodology to meet these requirements. Your design will list each of the components that the new methodology will include. Here are some examples:

- **Phases.** List each of the phases to be included.
- **Activities.** Identify the activities included per phase.
- **Tasks.** Specify the tasks included per activity.
- **Processes.** List the project processes to be added.



- **Templates.** Create a list of the templates to be included.

Step 3: Create Your Methodology

Now that you know which components need to be created, the next step is to physically construct them.

Create the Methodology Framework

First, create your methodology framework by documenting the "Project Management Life Cycle". To create your life cycle, list each of the repeatable phases, activities and tasks (identified in Step 2) and sequence them accordingly. If using MPMM to do this, then simply create a new "methodology" and create a new page for each phase, activity and task in your new project life cycle.

Populate your Methodology

The next step is to populate your methodology by describing how each phase, activity and task will be carried out and in which order. You will also need to describe the roles and responsibilities for carrying out each task, as well as the processes needed to monitor and control the project.

Only by fully documenting every stage in your project life cycle, can you build a complete new methodology for projects. If using MPMM, you can either; use the Editor to create your content from scratch, copy the content from the existing MPMM methodology itself, or upload the content from any existing project management materials you own.

Add Methodology Tools

Now that you have created and documented a comprehensive project methodology that describes in depth how to complete every stage in the life cycle, the final step is to add a suite of templates to it. If using MPMM, you can either; create the templates from scratch from within the Methodology Manager, copy the templates from the MPMM methodology itself, or upload any existing templates in your possession.

And that's it. By defining your requirements, designing your solution and using MPMM to build



a complete a methodology from scratch, you can use repeatable processes to deliver your projects successfully, every time.

Why use a Methodology for Managing Projects

Want to boost your success in managing projects?

Many Project Managers believe that to gain total project management success, you need to manage projects using a formal *project management methodology*. They say it helps give you direction, it saves you time and it improves the quality of your deliverables. But does it? By reading this newsletter, you will find out...

Why use a Methodology for Managing Projects

Of course most managers use a methodology of sorts, whether it be written on post-it notes stuck to their screen, documented in a stack of procedures on their desk, or included in software that they have bought.

Regardless of the type of methodology used, there is one common theme - that it typically helps them to manage projects and therefore improve their project success. Read this newsletter to find out why...

What is a Methodology?

A methodology is "a set of methods, processes and practices that are *repeatedly* carried out to deliver projects". The key concept is that you repeat the same steps for every project you undertake, and by doing that, you will gain efficiencies in your approach.

What is a Standard?

So what is the difference between a methodology and a standard? A *standard* is "a collection of knowledge areas that are generally accepted as best practice in the industry".

Standards give you industry guidance, whereas methodologies give you practical processes for managing projects. Standards are not methodologies, and vice versa.

What should be included?

When you buy a project methodology, it should give you:

1. A core set of *processes* to follow for delivering projects.
2. A set of *templates* to help you build deliverables quickly.



3. A suite of *case studies* to help you learn from past projects.
4. An option for *customizing* the methodology provided.
5. The ability to *import* your existing processes into it.

What will it not do?

A Methodology is not a *silver bullet*. It will not fix projects by itself or guarantee success. It is fair to say that no methodology "out-of-the-box" will be 100% applicable to every type of project. So you will need to customize any methodology you purchase to ensure that it perfectly fits your project management environment.

Why use a Methodology?

While a methodology is not a silver bullet for projects, it should help you by giving you a clear process for managing projects.

After you have customized it to perfectly fit your environment, your methodology should tell your team *what* has to be completed to deliver your project, *how* it should be done, in which *order* and by *when*.

Using a methodology you can:

- ✓ Create a project roadmap
- ✓ Monitor time, cost and quality
- ✓ Control change and scope
- ✓ Minimize risks and issues
- ✓ Manage staff and suppliers

Of course, you will need to use the elements of the methodology that are most suitable to each project you undertake. For instance, when managing smaller projects, you will only want to apply *lightweight* processes to your project. And when managing large projects, you should apply the *heavyweight* processes to monitor and control every element of your project in depth.

But if you can manage every project you undertake in the same way, then you will gain efficiencies with your approach, work smarter and reduce your stress. You will also give your team a clear understanding of what you expect from them and boost your chances of success.



Stress Management

All projects involve an element of stress. But how you manage stress will influence your performance in your role. In this newsletter, we will offer you tips and techniques for improving performance on the job by:

Helping your team to manage project stress...

We all know what stress is. It is the thing that makes your hair turn grey and your *frowns* appear more often than *smiles*. It is natural that projects attract a lot of stress, as you have a fixed set of deliverables to produce in a fixed timeframe and with fixed resources - and all with your project sponsor breathing down your neck!

Positive stress can be generated in an environment which boosts productivity and focuses your team on the end goal. But *negative* stress is another side-effect, which can demoralize staff, reduce efficiency and de-focus your team. In this type of environment, you need to turn negative stress into positive stress, and to do that, we have listed here some tips and hints to help:

Step 1. Time-Out

Positive stress can only be generated when people within teams have positive relationships. And to create these relationships, the best way is through socializing. Whether it is taking the team out for regular lunches, drinks after work or a sporting activity, getting the team together so they can get to know one-another outside of the project environment is critical to dumping negative stress.

Step 2. Rallying

Your team members have built positive relationships through taking time out to socialize together. Excellent. The next step is now to rally your team around a cause - your project goal!

Schedule monthly "get-togethers" at which you reiterate the project goals, congratulate them on their successes to date and boost their confidence in doing what it takes to complete the project successfully. Make sure that each person leaves the meeting energized and passionate about finishing the remainder of the project.

Step 3. Boosting

Of course, rallying works fine for teams, but it is not enough for individuals. You need to "boost" every team member by making them feel good about themselves and allowing them to gain confidence in completing the tasks assigned. You can do this by:



- ✓ Recognizing great performance when you see it
- ✓ Conducting staff reviews and providing positive feedback
- ✓ Offering bonuses for outstanding performance
- ✓ Reviewing salaries when applicable
- ✓ Introducing team awards and prizes

Step 4. Pin-Pointing

Often stressed teams have an "*instigator*". This is a person (or people) who generate a lot of negativity and who influence the performance of others around them. You need to address these people directly.

When you conduct your staff performance reviews, make sure that the negativity of an *instigator* is identified in these meetings and agree with them on an action plan to help them to improve. Pin-pointing "stress points" or "weak points" in a team is one key element to ensuring project success.

Step 5: Self-Administering

Of course, to resolve team stress effectively, you need to be in the right "frame-of-mind" yourself. If you are negatively stressed, then those around you are likely to be also.

So to "practice what you preach" you need to feel up-beat and positive about the team. You need to feel fit and healthy, focused, yet inspirational! If you can achieve this frame of mind, then you can turn negative stress into positive stress and give your team a real chance at succeeding.

Communication Plan

"Send the right message - to the right people - at the right time."

If you manage projects, then you will know that to succeed, you need to communicate clearly with all of your project stakeholders. Otherwise your staff will lack clear direction, team morale will be low and your project may deliver over schedule and exceed its budget.



To make sure that your projects communicate effectively, we have described here...

How to Create a Communications Plan

Using the latest Communications Plan template released today, we have described how to create a bullet-proof Communications Plan for projects. We have provided a snapshot of this template here by listing the 10 steps you need to take to create a Communications Plan for your project.

Step 1: Situation Analysis

The first step to take when creating a Communications Plan is to perform a *Situation Analysis*. This is a fancy term for researching your existing communications environment.

Review the performance of all communications within your project and identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Then identify any lessons learned from past communications exercises, so that the same mistakes made in the past are not repeated here.

Step 2: Communications Objectives

Great. So you know what your communications strengths are and where you need to improve. You are now ready to set out your communications objectives.

List the top three objectives that you want to achieve from your project communications. For instance, you might want to inform stakeholders of the project progress, boost management buy-in or improve your team productivity.

Step 3: Communications Guidelines

Then set out your communications *guidelines* for controlling communications within your project. For example, you may decide that:

- ✓ All messages will be distributed through pre-defined channels
- ✓ All critical communications will be pre-approved by management
- ✓ All communications will be tailored, based on stakeholder needs

Step 4: Target Audience

Now define exactly who it is that your team will formally communicate with. Remember, formal communications are a method for controlling the messages sent out by your team. They



promote a single consistent view of your project to a specified audience so that "everyone has the same version of the truth".

Step 5: Stakeholder Needs

Each target audience group will have their own needs. These *stakeholders* will require information that is specific to their role in the project. For instance, a Project Sponsor will need to be informed of high priority risks and issues, whereas a Quality Reviewer might need to be notified of the current status of project deliverables.

Step 6: Key Messages

Then list the key messages that need to be sent to each Stakeholder. Key messages may include project status, project issues, project risks, project deliverables or project resources. The next step is to define how you will deliver each message to them, through a delivery channel.

Step 7: Delivery Channels

There are a huge variety of ways in which you can deliver your key messages to stakeholders (e.g. emails, newsletters, meetings, conferences). For each stakeholder, identify the channel that you will use to deliver your key messages.

Step 8: Communications Schedule

Now you are ready to create the schedule of communications events, activities and actions that are required to deliver the right messages to the right people at the right time throughout the project. Create a detailed schedule of events and for each item listed, specify the timeframes for completion and any dependencies on other events in the schedule.

Step 9: Communications Events

For each event listed in your schedule, describe it in depth. Make sure that you define the purpose of the event, how it will take place and when it should occur.

Step 10: Communications Matrix

And finally, once you have listed the events and described them in detail, you need to identify who will manage them and who will review their effectiveness. Create a Communications Matrix which lists for each event who is accountable for the event, who will take part and who will review its success.



Once you have taken these 10 steps, it is up to you to get your Communications Plan approved by your manager and then execute it to deliver communications efficiently across your project.

And just one last tip - to improve your communications you need honest feedback on your team's performance. Implement feedback measures such as questionnaires, feedback forms and surveys to learn how to continually improve communications within your project team.

How to Manage Large Projects

Would you like to manage large projects?

The most difficult thing about managing a large project is juggling the set of deliverables, timeframes, staff, suppliers, equipment, materials, contractors and customers. It can be an extremely challenging task. To make things easier for you, we've described here:

How to Manage Large Projects

So what is a large project? It's usually one that:

- Involves a large financial expenditure
- Takes anywhere from 6 months to 2 years
- Has a big project team in different locations
- Involves the creation of large quantities of deliverables
- Requires external suppliers and contractors.

Large projects typically have higher risk and are harder to control than small projects, as they involve large quantities of people, time, money and resources. So they have a lot more to lose when things go wrong!

You have 10 different processes available for monitoring and controlling large projects. Each of these processes are described below:

1. Manage Time



Delivering "on schedule" is usually the hardest challenge for a large project, due to the sheer amount of work involved. You need a clear time management process to record time spent by staff, log it in a timesheet register and update the project plan with current progress.

This process allows you to track progress and control delivery against the original target date set. All staff should complete timesheets and hand them to the project administrator weekly.

2. Minimize Cost

To minimize the cost of the project, a cost management process should be implemented. This involves recording all expenses in an expense register and regularly updating the project plan and financial plan schedules with the status of the project budget.

Only by gaining an up-to-date view of the total project spends, can you control expenditure and minimize costs.

3. Control Quality

The quality management process is used to conduct quality assurance reviews to check that the deliverables produced by the project meet the quality targets set.

A set of quality control measures are put in place, to monitor and control the quality of each deliverable produced.

4. Reduce Change

Using a change management process, the Project Manager can identify any requests for change and review their potential effect on the project.

Large projects all too frequently suffer from scope creep, whereby changes are implemented without approval. This causes delays and budget over-runs. The change process will prevent this occurring, by monitoring and controlling all changes and implementing a formal process for their approval.

5. Mitigate Risks

Large projects usually encounter a larger amount of risk, so the key to success is in identifying these risks early and mitigating them before they impact on the project. Using a risk



management process, you can identify and mitigate project risks early.

Low and medium priority risks will be addressed by the Project Manager, however high priority risks will be raised at Project Board meetings to be addressed.

6. Resolve Issues

Complex and technical projects usually encounter a high number of issues, as the project deliverables may be unique in nature. The trick is to resolve them as early as possible. Implement an issue management process, to enable staff to raise issues and have them resolved by the Project Manager in a timely manner.

7. Manage Procurement

If you're obtaining goods and services from external suppliers, then you will need some form of procurement management process. This process will explain how you want to procure items, through the issuing and fulfillment of Purchase Orders.

It will also explain how you intend to manage the performance of your suppliers, by conducting supplier reviews at each contractual milestone.

8. Get Acceptance

It's not enough to produce top quality deliverables, you have to gain acceptance from your customer that each deliverable meets their requirements. This is called the acceptance management process.

As you finish each deliverable, get your customer to sign it off as being 100% complete. It will help you manage the project and get permission to perform project closure when you're ready.

9. Perform Communications

On larger projects, it's crucial that you keep stakeholders properly informed. By implementing a communications management process, you can distribute formal communication messages, to ensure that you deliver the right content to the right people at the right time.

10. Complete Phase Reviews

And lastly, to manage large projects, you need to implement phase reviews at the end of each



major project phase. Each review allows your team to determine that they have met their objectives for the current phase and can therefore progress to the next phase in the project life cycle.

How to Manage Small Projects

Do you often manage small projects?

If you do, then you will know that the way you manage small projects is different from managing larger more complex projects. To help you make this distinction and improve your success in managing smaller projects, we've described in this newsletter...

How to Manage Small Projects

So what is a "small project" vs. a "large project"? It's fair to say that small projects have:

- A lower project budget
- Very short delivery timescales
- Less people and more limited resources
- Lower risk and fewer project issues
- More clearly defined deliverables

However small projects are not necessarily *easier to manage* than large projects! They may still be complex and involve a range of departments, resources, suppliers and customers to complete them.

So to boost your chances of success, we have set out here, the Project Life Cycle for managing small projects:

Step 1: Create a Terms of Reference

For small projects, the first step to take is usually the creation of a Terms of Reference. This document describes the project vision, scope, objectives, deliverables, timeframes and known risks for the project.

You need to get all of the project stakeholders to agree to this document, so that you gain a crystal clear view of what the project is to achieve. Without formal approval, projects suffer scope creep, lack of change control, poor sponsorship and communication problems.



Step 2: Appoint the Project Team

Thanks to your Terms of Reference, everyone agrees what it is that has to be achieved. You're now ready to appoint your team. For small projects, you will usually need to gain the support of senior management, to allocate resource to your project, from within the business.

You will probably have a very limited budget for appointing external suppliers, consultants and contractors. But if they are required, you will need to formalize supplier contracts at this point.

Regardless of the project role appointed, make sure you create a clear Job Description first, so that staff know exactly what's expected of them.

Step 3: Set up the Project Office

Even small projects need the support of a project office, who help with project reporting, risk / issue / change resolution, training and administration. For small projects, you will need the services of your project office to make sure that your project conforms with internal standards and processes, and to get project support when you need it.

Step 4: Create a Project Plan

The Project Plan is more than just a schedule of events. It describes the entire Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) for the project by defining all of the phases, activities and tasks required to deliver it. It also sets out the project scope, milestones, effort, deliverables, resources and dependencies in detail.

For smaller projects, your project plan will become your "single view of progress for the project." By updating it immediately after your weekly project status meetings, you can ensure that you remain on track.

Step 5: Create a Quality Plan

With a clear view of the project plan, you now need to work out how you're going to ensure that you will meet the requirements of your customer. The Quality Plan will help you do this by defining your quality targets, complete *Quality Assurance* reviews and *Quality Control*.

Step 6: Create a Communications Plan

The final step in the planning process is to set out a plan for keeping stakeholders properly informed of the progress of the project.

Using the Communications Plan, you can define the communication needs of all stakeholders. You can then build a schedule of communications events so that you inform the right people with the right information at the right time.



Step 7: Build the Deliverables

Of course the largest amount of time allocated in your Project Plan, will be spent building the physical deliverables for your customer. Whether it's creating new products, deploying new services or re-engineering processes, make sure that you use a Deliverables Register to record the progress of your deliverables towards completion.

Step 8: Monitor and Control

While your team are building the project deliverables, your job is to monitor and control the critical elements of the project. This includes:

- Time Management
- Cost Management
- Quality Management
- Change Management
- Risk Management
- Issue Management

Step 9: Close the Project

Once all of the deliverables are complete, your job is nearly finished. At this point, you need to close the project by completing any outstanding items, filing project documentation, releasing suppliers, terminating contracts, re-allocating resources and communicating closure to the project stakeholders.

Step 10: Review Completion

Even for small projects, it's necessary to review it's completion. By completing a Post Implementation Review, you can gain an independent assessment of the level of success of the project, the areas for improvement and any lessons learned.

