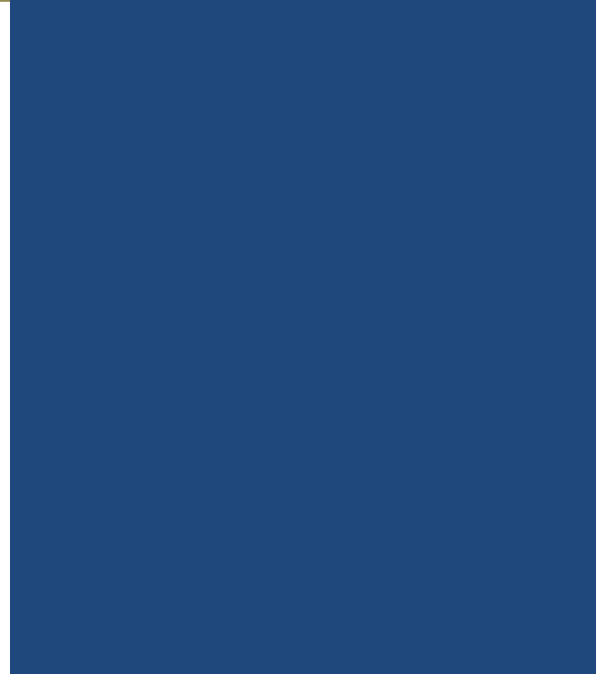




PROJECT MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

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1. What is the difference between a project and routine work?

A project is an effort or process that is undertaken which often introduces a change. This involves various types of activities and resources aimed at achieving a certain output by considering certain constraints such as time, quality and cost. Projects are normally done within a limited duration which has a well-defined start and end dates. Also projects are one-time efforts aimed to change things in a specific way. One can consider a project successful if it is able to meet the expectations of the stakeholders.

Whereas

Routine work is a short activity that is part of an organisation's program that recurs or is done most often to keep the organisation running such as customer service, general accounting and technical support. This type of work does not have a clearly defined end point. This is mostly done in an environment that is stable within a single function. Example; the accounting department keeping track of all incoming payments from customers and all outgoing payments for expenses.

2. Describe different stages of the project life cycle.

Project life cycle is the various stages of a project. This involves basically five stages i.e. the **Initiating, Planning, Executing, Controlling and Closing Phases**. Each stage has a clear purpose. They are also iterative and should not be thought of as one-time processes.

Initiation Phase

This phase of a project is where the scope of the work to be carried out is defined and a contract between the sponsor and the project team is established. This stage arises from a number of reasons such as, an internal proposal for a new product, belief that a particular process or an activity is not working as efficiently as it should be. This is mostly preceded by an extensive feasibility study which concludes that the project to be taken is viable. This helps to confirm stakeholders' interest; estimate the budget required and sets out a broad specification for the project. Any formal recommendations for actions or change of project are mostly done at this stage. This stage also ensures that everyone in the team is on the same page from the start.

Planning Phase

This is a very crucial and extensive stage for all those who have a legitimate interest in the project, i.e. project stakeholders. Failing in planning is very disastrous for projects. Without planning, one would not know what to do next and "failing to plan means planning to fail". This is where the project starts to be implemented from idea to reality which outlines all that is entailed in the project by translating it into specific actions. Clarification, quantification and documentation of the project are focused in this phase. This however, determines the success or failure of the project whether or not the stakeholders would be committed for the project. The best planning approach is one that allows a project to be planned for its immediate future in detail and planning tasks that lie further out at a higher level.

Executing Phase

This is where the project becomes reality. The success or failure of the project will depend solely on how well the project team works together and how effectively the project manager can lead and motivate them. At these stage customers' shows interest and it must be ensured that they are informed about the progress and consulted as appropriate.

Controlling Phase

This stage is where the project is monitored against key dates and any milestones identified in the project. This helps to achieve the project objectives against time and budget. Projects are normally reviewed according to the plan established on regular basis to deal with any potential problem by making any necessary changes to the plan if needed.

Closure

This means the project has ended and all deliverables are formally signed off and the team is disbanded. The project is evaluated at this stage in terms of its success and likely impact.

3. Outline the key skills every good project manager should possess.

A project manager must be very good at managing people and handling uncertainty and risk. The key skills every good project manager must possess are;

- **Communication Skills:** Every good project manager should possess excellent communication skills. The backbone for every successful project is the written oral communication. This can be achieved by the manager by ensuring that the information given out is explicit, clear and complete, i.e. project documents, meeting updates, status report and it is well understood by the audience.
- **Organisation Skills:** This is the most important skills every good project manager should possess and this can be of many forms. This is where the manager tracks and locates project documentation, requirements information, memos, project reports, vendor quotes, contracts, personnel records etc. in a short notice. He however, puts them together in teams, organize meetings, manage and organize media release schedules depending on the projects. Time management skill is closely associated with this skills and it should be possessed by the manager.
- **Budgeting Skills:** Project managers are mandated to establish and manged budgets. This requires knowledge regarding finance and accounting principles. Cost estimates for project budgeting is the most important skills and this can be calculated by using different methods available. Project managers use these skills on most projects such as reading and understanding vendor quotes, preparing or overseeing purchase orders and reconciling invoices. These costs are linked back to the expense items in the project's budget and activities.
- **Problem Solving:** Project managers use this skill to define problems in the project. He defines the problem that arises from the project whether it is an internal or external

problem, whether there are interpersonal problems between the team members, whether managerial, technical and this help to get to the heart of the problem. Examining and analysing the problem takes a little time and after the problem has been defined, decisions have to be made. After the analysis has been made, the best course of action to take and implement the decision will be solely determined by the project manager.

- **Negotiation and Influencing:** Negotiations is basically working with others to come to agreement. Negotiation on projects is essential in almost every area of the project from scope definition, to contracts, budgets, resource assignments etc. While influencing is the ability to get people do things they would not do otherwise. It is also the ability to change events and minds and to influence outcomes. This skill is utilized in all areas of the project and therefore it essential for every project manager to possess.
- **Leading:** Good project managers are leaders who impart vision, inspire and motivate others, establish direction and gain consensus for strategic goals. They focus on results and are concerned with getting the job done according to its requirements. They exhibit the characteristics of both during different times on the project.
- **Team Building and Human Resources:** Good project manager must possess team building and managerial skills by bringing people from different parts of the organization to form teams and to work together. This requires some component of team-building groundwork. He is to help them work through the various team-forming stages to become fully functional.