



Project Management Templates, an Appropriate Solution for today's Complex Project Management and World Life

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ABSTRACT: Nowadays projects have been too long and complicated. Around the world, our awareness and knowledge of urgent needs for improving the deliverance of defensive, critical, often large and long term projects, which cost several billion dollars, is crucial. Researches show that the traditional linear project management techniques and tools, that are still essential, are not often sufficient for the management of projects of the 21st century. Therefore, a new method for simplifying the management of such projects is in progress, which is the use of project management templates. Project management templates are used as a framework for the management of complex projects. In this paper, the prepared project management templates have been introduced and samples were provided for examination.

Key words: Complex project management, project management templates, project management process

INTRODUCTION

Traditional linear project management techniques and tools, that are still essential, are not often sufficient for the management of projects of the 21st century. At the same time it is obvious that the current workforce of project managers, business analysts and engineers and architects have a limited capacity to respond to challenges of various and sometimes big projects. In the 21st century, the business process has become complex, in more close relationship, dependent and interrelated than ever before, in addition, the business today denies the traditional management structures for the creation of complex organization of strategic suppliers, customer network, the fleet working with political groups, regulatory bodies and even competitors. Through this alliance, the organizations are dealing with the pressure of unprecedented changes, global competition, and compression of time of market, rapid technological changes and of course the increase of the complexity.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

"Project management is the skills, tools and management processes that are necessary for successful completion of a project." Project management includes the following items:

- A set of skills. Knowledge, skills and professional experience are necessary to reduce the risk level in a project and thus enhance its chances for success.
- A set of tools. Varieties of tools are used by project managers to increase their chances of success. Examples include templates of document, record of

statistics, scheduling software, modeling software, audit checklist and review forms.

- A set of processes. Different management techniques and processes are needed to monitor and control the time, cost, quality and scope of the project. Examples include time management, cost management, quality management, change management and problem management [1].

PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

The following figure shows a brief sketch of the life cycle of the project.

The project life cycle consists of four phases or stages:

A. Project Initiation

Starting phase is the first phase of the project. In this phase, a commercial (business) problem (or opportunity) is recognized and defined as a commercial case that offers a variety of strategic options. Then the feasibility study is conducted to examine the possibility of any alternative solution related to the commercial issue and a final proposed solution is presented [1,2].

When the proposed solution was confirmed, a project is initiated to implement the approved strategy. "Terms of reference" is completed, which proposes the objectives, scope and structure of the new project, and a project manager is appointed. Project manager begins recruiting the project team and establishes a project office environment. Then he tries to get permission to go into the detailed planning phase.

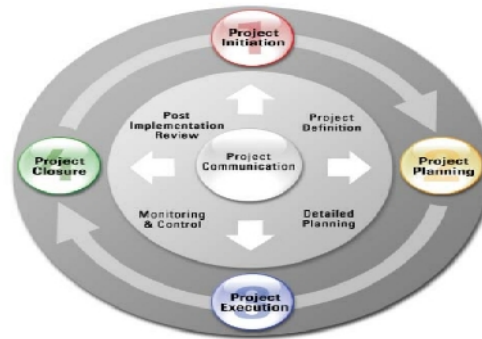


Fig. 1. Project Life Cycle.

B. Project Planning

When the project scope is defined in terms of reference, the project will enter a phase of detailed planning. This issue requires the creation of the following items:

- Project plan (with a brief sketch of activities, tasks, dependencies and timelines).
- Resources plan (listing of work force, equipment and materials needed).
- Financial plan (identifying costs of workforce, equipment and materials).
- The quality plan (presenting qualitative objectives, insurance and guarantee and controlling measures).
- Risk plan (highlighting the potential risks and the measures to be undertaken to reduce the risk).
- Admissions plan (listing the criteria that must be considered to obtain customer acceptance).
- Communication plan (list of needed information to inform shareholders).
- Logistics plan (identification of products that must be acquired from foreign suppliers).

C. Project Execution

This phase involves the implementation of the activities and the works listed in the program of the project. While the tasks and activities are carried out, a set of managerial processes are performed to monitor and control the deliverable items of the project. This includes identification of changes, risks and problems, assessment of the quality of deliverables and measurement of items which have been produced against the criteria for acceptance. When all deliverables were produced and the customer accepted the final solution, the project is ready for closure [3].

D. Project Closure

Project closure is the clearance of final items to customer, delivery of project documentation, termination of the contracts of suppliers, the release of project resources and establishing communication with all stakeholders about the closure of the project. The last remaining step that must be done is to examine after implementation to determine the

overall success of the project and list all of the lessons that we have learned for future projects.

Therefore the most common project management processes that are done in most projects are as follows:

The initial processes: The processes that assist the project in order to begin the next phase.

Planning processes: These processes are of two types:

The main processes: Main processes are processes that due to dependence on each other are done in a certain order in most of the projects. These processes include:

- Project scope planning-----Project scope definition---
- Definition of project activities
- Sequencing activities-----Estimation of the duration of activities----
- Development of scheduling
- Resource planning-----Estimation of costs-----
- Budgeting the costs----Development of project plan

Facilitating processes: Facilitating processes are processes that are done according to needs and in order to facilitate the process of the project. These processes include:

- Quality planning-----Organizational planning----
- Communication planning
- Risk detection-----Risk measurement----Developing response to risk----
- Logistics planning
- Applications planning

Executive processes: Executive processes like the planning processes include two types of processes:

- The main processes-----Implementation of the project-----Facilitating processes
- Determination and the acceptance of the project scope-----Quality assurance
- Development of project team-----Distribution of information-----Selection of resources
- Administration of contracts.

Controlling processes: These processes frequently control and measure implementation of the project. Reorganization of project plan is possible through appropriate repetition of planning processes. Controlling processes like the planning processes are divided into two categories:

The main processes:

Total control of the changes:

Preparing reports about the performance:

Facilitating processes---Controlling the project

scope---Controlling the project schedule---

Controlling the project costs---Controlling the

quality---Controlling the risk response---Closure

processes

These processes lead to the delivery and appropriate and acceptable completion of projects. And include:

Completion of implementation of the project

An example of a project management template

The following example is a short section from the template of the “learned lessons “in the final phase of the project that the description of this template and its executive example is provided [4,5].

“The template of the learned lessons”

The record of “learned lesson “is an integral part of any project which meets several goals. While the completion of the official document of “learned lesson “is completed during the completion process, the recording of the learned lessons should occur throughout the project lifecycle in order to ensure that all information is timely and accurately documented. The document of learned lessons is used as a valuable tool by other project managers in an organization in which similar projects are allocated to them. This document should not only explain what was wrong during a project and recommendations for avoiding similar incidents in the future, but it should also explain what has gone well and how similar projects can benefit from this information. This document should contact with the administrator of the project and the Project Management Office (PMO) in order to enter the organization's assets and archives as part of the learned lessons of database. If the organization does not have a PMO, formal communication tools of learned lessons should be used to ensure that all project managers are included.

An example: The purpose of the document of “learned lessons “for new construction projects (NBC) is to record learned lessons of the project in an official document to be used by other project managers in similar projects in the future. This document can be used as a part of new project planning for similar projects in order to identify what problems have occurred and how to manage these problems and how is it possible to avoid such problems in the future. Moreover, this document explains in details what is good about the progress of the project and why it has progressed well, so that other project managers would be able to capitalize on these works. Project managers may also use this document to determine who the members of the project team are and in order to solicit feedback for future planning of their projects. This document will

be formally communicated to the organization and will be part of the organization's assets and archives.

Approach and method of the learned lessons

The method of the learned lessons explains that how the document would be created, what would it contain and how the lessons would be classified. It is important to cover the learned lessons in the early stages of project planning. The reason is that methodology should be established with a set of appropriate tools to get these lessons during the project lifecycle. Project journal is an example of a tool to record these lessons. If until the end of the project no attempt is made for the learned lessons, it is likely that many lessons and details can be removed from the document.

The concept of learned lessons document should be determined ahead of time, they must be sufficiently explained to be of value for future use and concepts should be consistent with other learned lessons documents or organizational standards. The classification of the learned lessons is also taken into account. Many organizations classify lessons through project lifecycle phase or by the knowledge in which the lessons are applied. An example: The learned lessons of NBC project are collected through the inputs of project journal during the project lifecycle. Also the learned lessons are collected from the realized and unrealized risks in project risk register and, if necessary, through interviews with project team members and other investors. Lessons learned from this project are used as a reference for future projects and include sufficient detail levels, so that other project managers may have enough information about it which helps them to base their project planning. Lessons learned in this document are grouped by knowledge areas of the project. These areas of knowledge include the following items: logistics management, risk management, integrated management, quality management, time management, cost management, landscape management, human resource management and communications management. Note that: Some areas of knowledge may not include learned lessons if none of them are documented throughout the project lifecycle [5].

CONCLUSION

Researches show that traditional linear project management techniques and tools, that are still essential, are not often sufficient for the management of projects of the 21st century. Therefore, a new method for simplifying the management of such projects is in progress, which is the use of project management templates. In this paper project management templates and their application method and some examples were provided.

As it turns out, this tool is an appropriate tool for managing today's complex projects. Therefore implementation of such templates in project management of Iranian companies is very practical and useful. In future studies, a sample of these templates can be used in the public and private organizations of Iran and by a variety of tools, including questionnaires and success of this type of templates can be examined over a period of time.

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