

Project management processes and techniques are used to coordinate resources to achieve predictable results. However, project management is not an exact science and there is never a guarantee of success. Since projects involve people, there is always complexity and uncertainty that cannot be absolutely controlled.

Project management is both science and art. It is science in that it relies on proven and repeatable processes and techniques to achieve consistent results. It is an art because it also involves managing and relating to people and requires the project manager to apply intuitive skills in situations that are totally unique for each project. A good project management methodology provides the framework, processes, guidelines and techniques to manage the people and the work. A good methodology increases the odds of being successful and therefore provides value to the organization, the project and the project manager.

The value of utilizing a methodology to manage project deliverables includes the following:

- **Completing projects more quickly and cheaply.** One of the biggest benefits of using a common methodology is the value of reuse. Once the processes, procedures and templates are created, they can be used (perhaps with modifications) on all *projects* in the future. This results in reduced project start-up time, a shorter learning curve for project team members and time savings from not having to reinvent processes and templates from scratch on each project.
- **Being more predictable.** One of the first benefits that should occur with good project management processes is that the timing of activities and project completion will be more predictable. A more thorough job of planning will enable the team to better understand the work to be completed and then do a better job of estimating this work. As the project progresses the PM can do a better job of managing the work, raising the likelihood of hitting the estimated schedule and budget. This ability to be predictable is crucial in making business decisions about which projects to execute. Organizations should strive to achieve a level of predictability of 80%. In other words, 80% of the projects will finish on-time and within budget (accounting as well for any approved scope change requests).
- **Saving effort and cost with proactive scope management.** Many project teams have difficulty managing scope, which results in additional effort and cost to the project. Having better project management processes will result in being able to manage scope more effectively.
- **Better solution “fit” the first time through better planning.** Many projects experience problems because there is a gap between what the customer expects and what the project team delivers. Using a methodology typically enables the team and the sponsor to make sure that they are in agreement on the major deliverables of the project.
- **Resolving problems more quickly.** Some teams spend too much time and energy dealing with problems. Having a proactive issues management process helps ensure that problems are resolved as quickly as possible.
- **Resolving future risk before the problems occur.** Sound risk management processes will result in potential problems being identified and managed before the problems actually occur. Thereby mitigating their impact to the project.
- **Communicating and managing expectations with customers, team members and stakeholders more effectively.** Many problems on a project can be avoided with proactive communication. In addition, much of the conflict that does arise on a project is not the result of a specific problem, but because of surprises. Effective communication reduces surprises and ensures that the customer and the team understand the timing of project activities and the deliverables that will be developed.
- **Building a higher quality product the first time.** An effective methodology takes into account the quality of the deliverables. Start by understanding the needs of the customer in terms of quality. Once those needs have been

identified, the team can implement quality control and quality assurance techniques to meet the customer's expectations.

- **Improved financial management.** This is the result of better project definition, better estimating, more formal budgeting and better tracking of the project actual costs against the budget. All this rigor results in better financial predictability and control.
- **Stopping "bad" projects more quickly.** "Bad" projects are those where the cost-benefit justification no longer makes sense. A project may have started with sound cost-benefit justification. However, if the project is late and over-budget it may hit a threshold where the business case is no longer valid. Effective project management allows you to identify these situations earlier so that you can make better decisions to re-scope or cancel the project.
- **More focus on metrics and fact-based decision making.** Metrics give you information that helps you determine how effectively and efficiently your team is performing and the level of the quality of your deliverables. Metrics also give you the information necessary to validate whether or not you were successful.
- **Improved work environment.** When projects are successful, organizations may also see additional intangible benefits. Customers will have more involvement, project teams will take more ownership of the project, morale will be better, and project teams will exhibit a greater sense of professionalism and self-confidence.

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