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Leadership Essentials

Leading Projects

A collaborative leader builds great project teams



What is a project?

Defined by the Project Management Institute (PMI) as 'a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result', a project has a specific one-off purpose and is not 'business as usual'.

That is:

"A project is temporary in that it has a defined beginning and end in time, and therefore defined scope and resources. And a project is unique in that it is not a routine operation, but a specific set of operations designed to accomplish a singular goal. So a project team often includes people who don't usually work together – sometimes from different organizations and across multiple geographies."

Project Management Institute (2020)

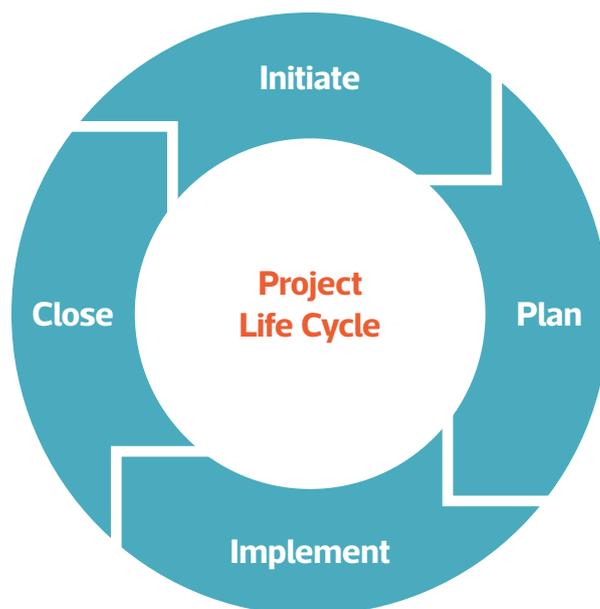
It may be intended to cover gaps in what you currently do, or to address some failing in the systems or processes employed, or perhaps to explore new opportunities. Some projects are long and complex, others can be quite short and simple.

Programme and Project Management

Although the tools used for project and programme management tend to be the same or similar, a programme manager has wider responsibilities and manages multiple projects, while a project manager manages the team responsible for achieving the deliverables of a specific project.

Project Management Process

- **Initiate:** Establish the purpose and scale, the time frame to completion, identify final deliverables, name team members and the other resources needed.
- **Plan:** A detailed time-line of what will be done by when, the resources required, the costs, any quality standard specified, and clarify features of deliverables.
- **Implement:** Generate deliverables while tracking time, money and quality – and also be ready to respond to change.
- **Close:** Once deliverables are ready and of accepted standard, close the project and disband the team.



The Project Team

Complex projects are delivered by a large number of people in different roles. Some look after quality, some monitor costs, some keep track of time and others have specific roles. You may also have a **project board**, who oversee the project manager's work and the progress of the project.

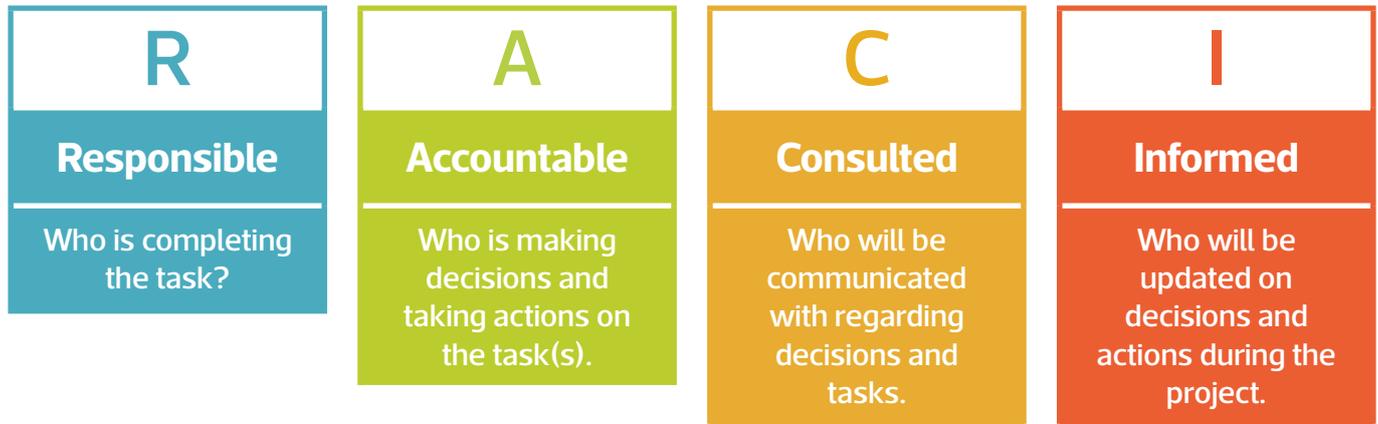
The **project sponsor** is the person who commissions others to deliver the project and champions the cause throughout the project. Finally, there are the **end users**, those who will use the outcomes of the project. If you are given the role of **project manager**, you will be required to keep the project to schedule and within cost limits.

It will also be your responsibility to manage time and lead the team, dealing with delays and conflicts, as well as handling day-to-day delivery issues. **Members of the project team** may operate under a dual authority system – they report to their own line manager as well as the project manager. As the project manager, you will have to ensure that you communicate effectively with all members of the project team, their line managers if applicable and project board members, sponsors(s) and **end users**.

Tools and Techniques

RACI Matrix

RACI organises your project so that everyone knows what is happening by mapping out who is Responsible, Accountable, must be Consulted with, or kept Informed.



Gantt Chart

To track the overall schedule, you will need to break your project down into component parts (subtasks), with start and finish times for these measured against the project plan. You need to consider what the impact of delays in any area will have on other parts of the project and what the costs of this could be.

A Gantt chart is a project planning tool that schedules tasks and helps you track and monitor project progress and set priorities.

It is a visual presentation of what needs to be done, and when, and can easily be altered by the Project Manager if potential delays are identified.

That is, the Gantt chart is a 'live' document to be regularly monitored and updated in response to changing circumstances.

"Gantt charts are the typical way of presenting plans in traditional project management approaches - with the tasks written in a column on the left-hand side of the page and bars representing the duration of those tasks across the page."

Newton, R. (2016)

'Page', of course, will nowadays usually mean a spreadsheet or generic project management software, with the individual tasks itemised on the vertical axis and timescales on the horizontal axis.

Critical Path Analysis (CPA)

A disadvantage of the Gantt chart is that it does not show you which tasks are critical to the project being completed, and this is where CPA is so important.

CPA identifies the sequence of scheduled key tasks that are critical to the project, and the amount of time required for each.

The CPA is the longest path in time through the project, which will also be the shortest time possible to complete the project:

"If any task on the critical path is extended - the project will extend. Alternatively, to shorten the project you must shorten the critical path. Critical path analysis identifies the critical path with the aim of reducing it."

Newton, R. (2016)

The Project Triangle

Sometimes called 'The Iron Triangle', the Project Triangle shows the constraints of time, cost and scope that are faced by the Project Manager.

The constraints are interconnected in that that changing any one constraint will affect the other two. For example, if the scope of the project is increased, then time and/or cost may also need to increase.



The project triangle

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Dimensions of Leadership

The Institute of Leadership & Management's Dimensions of Leadership offer, often elusive, insights into great leadership. This is not a static representation but an evolving description of the complex nature of leadership activity.

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