
SESSION SIX: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

ELEMENTS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Projects can be specific and deadline-driven, or ongoing.

Examples of specific projects include response to RFPs, job creation or replacement, expansion, new construction or renovation, launch of new product or service, seasonal issues or acute crisis response.

Examples of ongoing projects include acquisitions, recruitment, communications, and marketing.

Some projects may be both, for example, in workplaces with a dedicated RFP task group that reactivates when an RFP is due.

Whether specific or ongoing, projects have specific deliverables and measures of success. Planning and management keep these projects on the track to success.

Project management can include:

- team meetings.
- budget creation and monitoring.
- milestone monitoring and timeline adjustment.
- quality assurance.
- troubleshooting.
- risk management.
- communications.
- reports.
- evaluation and review.

CREATING A PROJECT PLAN

A project plan outlines and explains the processes of the project being managed.

This plan provides the parameters by which the manager can develop timelines and goals by which success is measured.

Elements that a project plan will define include:

- specifications/customer requirements.
- communication.
- costs.
- risks.
- resources.
- scope.
- time.
- quality.

WORK STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN

The first step to developing a project plan is listing the Work Structure Breakdown, or WSB. This gives both a macro and micro view of the project, listing the end goal and deliverables while illuminating each individual task required to successfully complete the project. The WSB identifies the project itself, as well as the processes involved and the milestones to ensure the project is on track.

The Work Structure Breakdown starts with the goal. Examples include 'expand our market reach into Europe' or 'renovate the old office building into our new workshop'.

With the goal clearly identified, the WSB then defines the deliverables needed to accomplish the goal. These are activities, such as 'research market options in Europe,' or 'prepare tender for construction'.

With the goal and deliverables defined, the WSB increases detail to tasks within each deliverable. This enables responsibility and accountability to be assigned to a group, department or individual. With this accountability comes a work description and timeline. Under 'research market options in Europe' might be the task: send two-person team from marketing to Frankfurt Business Expo. The names of the two people are listed, and dates of the conference are noted.

The primary benefit of a Work Structure Breakdown is the ability to develop a reasonable plan for project success. Related benefits include better project communication, accurate estimates of costs, timelines and potential risks, increased confidence and productivity within the project team, and easier tracking and accountability.

ORGANIZING THE TASKS

A large number of tasks are required to complete a project.

The strength of your project management plan is in the organization of those tasks into assignable, accountable pieces

Some tasks may need to be broken down further into subtasks.

When the project management plan is completed, each task or subtask should be assigned to a person or group, with clear guidelines as to what needs to be done and when. If a task seems too large or multilayered to do this, divide it further into sub-tasks.

Organizing those tasks is done by grouping the tasks under general deliverables or themes.

For example, if the goal is to renovate a vacant building into a workshop, the deliverables would be architecture and design, internal renovation, external renovation, landscaping, and communications (to keep staff, customers and the public up to date on what is happening and what is in store).

Under architecture and design, the tasks could be:

- Develop RFP for services
- Select applicant
- Meet with staff for focus group on needs and vision for space
- Meet with design team to brainstorm potential designs
- Review and approve design

Now, the task 'develop RFP for services' includes several key tasks in itself. As a result, consider sub-tasks such as:

- assemble RFP team, clarify parameters and specifications.

- create advertising.
- circulate to media/social media.
- receive and shortlist submissions.
- contact interview candidates.
- develop screening and scoring protocol.
- host interviews.
- select successful applicant.

The more detailed your chart is, the easier the management will be.