

The importance of project management construction essay

[Engineering](#), [Project Management](#)



The purpose of this report is to demonstrate the importance of project management and the attributes the client should seek when selecting a project manager. By defining measurable objectives, project managers offer strategical qualities and direction to the desired milestones as well as to the completion of the entire project. The employment of their services allows for the organizing of information and activities including future risk assessment that leads to a quality product within the time and budget restraints. In addition to the purpose of a project manager, there are certain background attributes that would contribute to the success of a project such as managerial skill and technical expertise that are relevant to the client's goals.

Introduction

According to the Association for Project Management (APM), project management is identified as the process by which projects are defined, planned, monitored, controlled and delivered such that the agreed benefits are realised. A project manager is appointed by the client and serves as their representative throughout the entire progression period of the project, if permitted by the contractual agreement. It is the project manager's responsibility to predict as many possible dangers and problems in time to plan, organize and control activities so that the project remains on schedule (Lock, 2007). Various risks can be avoided by planning strategically including defining measurable objectives at the start of the project so that those issues can be accounted for before reaching the construction phase. It is essential to incorporate a project manager because they are able to coordinate and

organize information or activities, increase product quality, reduce risks, manage budgets, as well as complete the project under strenuous time restraints. In order for a project manager to bring these successful traits to a project they must possess an array of managerial and technical skills. This report will closely evaluate how defining measurable objectives, organisation, product quality, and budget management will improve the overall construction process as well as evaluating various attributes that project manager should have to effectively deliver a quality product.

1. 0 Why hire a Project Manager?

1. 1 Define Objectives

Defining measurable objectives-the “ scope” of the project-at the start of the project is crucial to any successful project. “ Scope Creep” is one of the most common reasons why projects are unsuccessful whether it is due to schedule delays or drastic unexpected increases in budgets. For example, Federation Square in Melbourne, Australia had major increases in the original budget. The Federation Square opened in October 2002 with an original estimated budget at \$100million but, due to poorly defined objectives, the budget has increased drastically to approximately \$460million over the last 7 years. (VAGO, 2003) “ Scope creep”, refers to tasks that are added to the initial reasons or scope of the project, which can occur both after the project as well as during the process. During the planning period, the engineer is not always certain of what the problems are before the construction phase. This is mostly due to the lack of research. If the construction phase commences as planned and there are utility lines unaccounted for, this would introduce

complexity to the project as well as alter the original objectives. The lack of definition could throw the entire project off course from the original purpose of construction. The project manager hired will be able to take the necessary actions to combat these issues with the client.

1. 2 Organise Information and Activities

Construction projects are unique in the aspect that each project presents its own complexities. With any complex system, it is a requirement that information and activities be well organised which is one of the many reasons for commissioning a project manager. There are a variety of programs that aid the project manager in this area including Microsoft Office Project. Organization allows for optimal communication between the project manager and the “ key players” that could take the form of graphs, charts, etc. This information keeps the involved parties aware of their preparation time before their services are needed. If a problem occurs, organization also allows the project manager to make quality decisions based upon the progression of the project in relation to the next milestone or deadline. In addition to organizing activities, labelling the distribution of funding is equally important. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) classifies these in the form of “ Work Breakdown Structure,” or WBS, which is a deliverable-oriented hierarchical decomposition of work to be executed by the project team to accomplish the project objectives and create the required deliverables (PMBOK, 2004). In regards to the budget, a WBS allows money to be distributed based upon its original intentions in a way that keeps the project manager up-to-date with the remaining funding. WBS is

just another way to keep complex projects simple and easy to manage as well as keeping the client “ in the know”.

1. 3 Increase Product Quality

Due to the economic crisis, many clients desire a high quality product associated with little cost. During the planning process, the project manager has the opportunity to research the services and products necessary to complete the project with the client’s best interest in mind. Generally, most project errors occur during the construction process possibly due to unforeseen circumstances, field issues, and the work ethics of the contractors involved. Particularly in the US, based on a study done in 2006-2008 on the most common reasons why contractors fail in which performance and management issues were ranked in the top 5. Performance issues accounted for 36% of failures and management issues accounted for 29%. To assist in eliminating these problems, it is the responsibility of the project manager in conjunction with the construction manager to ensure that the structure is built with minimal errors and safety hazards. Through this “ checks and balance system,” field issues can be successfully managed with little to no effect on the schedule or future structural performance.

1. 4 Manage Budget

The budget is the primary “ skeletal system” to a successful project. In any project, whether in the public or private sector, financial funding is essential. Without it, delays in financial support progress are inevitable. During the planning process, the project manager uses the WBS to assist in organizing and managing the funds as well as ensuring that there are funds allocated to

future risks also known as the contingency. In a recent survey conducted by the National Audit Office (NAO), approximately 24% of delays in schedules were due to the incurred additional costs. This information conveys that the given budget was not managed properly or there were too many unforeseen risks involved. With the assistance of a project manager, such risks can be accounted for during the planning period to avoid schedule delays.

2. 0 What attributes should be considered when hiring a Project Manger?

2. 1 Managerial Skills

When selecting a project manager, the client should not only be aware of how a project manager can enhance the overall performance of a project but also what skills to look for when employing their services. In order to produce a successful project the client should hire a project manager based on their leadership skills. Leadership skills consist of team building, problem solving, and communication skills, just to name a few. Project managers are faced with difficult situations throughout the course of the project which cannot be solved by themselves. The project manager must depend equally on all of the “ key players” by building an effective and efficient team that may or may not be temporary and motivate them to the client’s desired vision. With those difficult situations, quick and quality problem solving techniques are equally critical to the completion of the project. For instance, if there is an unpredicted pipe underneath the work site and there is change in the initial scope, the project manager must be able to make a quality decision based upon the time and budget restraints. This issue can also be affected by the

communication links between the “ key players”. As stated earlier in this report, communication can be conveyed through organisation, charts, graphs, and schedules to keep the involved parties informed, especially the client(s). Leadership is just one attribute that covers an array of sub-skills that a project manager should possess to help determine the success of a project.

2. 2 Technical Expertise

In addition to the managerial attributes, technical expertise is also important to have when working with a client’s vision. Technical expertise may include scope, cost, risk, contract, and construction management and helps to aid the client’s knowledge beyond the initial concept of the structure. When managing the scope, the project manager must keep the primary vision in mind so that cost, contracts, and the construction process of even the most complex project remain simple. The project manager is able to make the client aware of the different risks that they might encounter before the project progresses past the conceptual phase as well as offer advice throughout the construction process. Again, these attributes are just a few that a project manager can contribute to a successful project and should be considered during the selection process.

3. 0 Conclusion

3. 1 Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, defining measurable objectives, organisation of information and activities, increased product quality, budget management, and managerial and technical skills are all very important to a project that is

classified a “ success” by the client and the parties involved. The client should be increasingly mindful when employing the services of a project manager that, “ A leader is only as good as his followers.” Without the stable foundation of any team or project, the product is bound to fail but if they are somehow incorporated from beginning to end, the temporary and longevity use of the product is sure to be met.