

Project integration
management
interview
management essay



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To see a project through to a successful completion, there are various processes and methods needed to provide a structure within which to work. Based on best practice, the Project Management Institute (PMI) has established a general guide to areas, the understanding of which, are essential to the successful, on time completion of a project. These areas of expertise are detailed in "A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge" (2008), published by the Project Management Institute. These areas are known as the Project Management Body of Knowledge or PMBOK and include such topics as the management of project integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk and procurement.

This report covers one knowledge area from both the Core and Facilitating Functions of the PMBOK in relation to an interview with Jason Duigou, an experienced Project Manager. This interview is contained within the book "IT Project Management: On Track from Start to Finish" (Phillips, J. 2002). The area of Project Integration Management is also considered.

The interview illustrates that Mr Duigou considers certain areas of Project Management to be especially important. Foremost amongst his recommendations is ongoing regular communication between the team members and close supervision from the Project Manager. He recommends that the correct tools be available to the Project Manager to facilitate the communication process between the Project Manager and between the team members.

Project Integration Management

As the ninth area of knowledge within the PMBOK, successful Project Integration Management is determined by all the other elements of the project. The Project Manager's knowledge of PMBOK is essential to the final, timely integration and delivery of the project.

The interview emphasises the four core areas of project management which need to be integrated into a final comprehensive product. In the interview, Mr Duigou strongly recommends that the scope, time and cost constraints are thoroughly discussed amongst all the stake holders at the outset to ensure the final integration of the project goes smoothly and delivers the fourth core requirement, a quality product. Mr Duigou states " verify that all questions regarding the plan have been addressed before the implementation and provide a clear understanding of the objectives, roles and responsibilities of all resources during the project" (Phillips, J. 2002).

Managing the scope of the project is extremely important to the successful completion of the project. Many projects may fail as a result of becoming bigger or more complex than was originally planned. The scope of the project has to be completed within a finite time span. Time management is one of the three elements referred to as the triple constraints, together with cost and quality. Extending the time on a project usually means the cost will increase. The Project Manager is accountable to the client for keeping within the budgetary constraints of the project. Contingency funds should be built into the financial plan to cover unexpected cost blow outs. Mr Duigou suggests that contracting certain elements of a project is a good way to achieve results when working on a limited budget.

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Core Function – Cost

Cost management is one of the core issues covered in the PMBOK. It is one of the major elements, if not the major element that determines the outcome of the project, for without sufficient funds, the project may falter. Most companies have limited capital to dedicate to their projects and may have other initiatives competing for valuable resources. Mr Duigou suggests in the interview that “ the project manager must have the right tools for the job to provide dynamic data at any time to enable the project manager to proactively monitor the project including budget and expenses as they are reported.” He states that without such tools and efficient communication, the project manager may be ambushed by unexpected demands made on the original budget by unforeseen events outside the control of the project team. There are various cost management tools that can be employed to help keep control over this area. These tools may include but are not limited to return on investment, payback analysis, net present value, earned value management, cost estimates and baselines.

Describe knowledge area

Identify processes of knowledge area

Establish connection between interview and knowledge area processes

Impact of this area on project management

Facilitating Function – Communication

Communication is a key success factor in all projects. Poor communication often leads to the failure of the project. The PMI has determined that the

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Project Manager may spend up to eighty nine percent of their time engaged in communication of various forms. The communication process encompasses the collection and generation of information together with project information storage. It is critical for the Project Manager to disseminate information during all phases of the project to all stakeholders. Equally, team members need to provide status reports between themselves and the Manager at frequent and regular intervals.

The interview with Mr Duigou illustrates that this experienced Project Manager considers communication to be essential to the successful completion of the project. Mr Duigou states “ continual communication and commitment on the part of each unit is absolutely necessary in order for the data to be current and accurate”. He recommends the use of software to assist in communication and to facilitate project integration.

He also emphasises in the interview the importance of timely and effective communication to resolve team disagreements and maintain the team’s focus on the goal. He feels that disagreements are often the result of inadequate or unclear communication and can be dealt with by addressing communication issues in a judicious manner before they lead to major problems which may jeopardise the quality and timely delivery of the project.

Conclusion

This report has looked briefly at the area of Project Management Integration, the core function of cost and the facilitating function of communication in relation to an interview conducted with an experienced Project Manager. An

analysis of this interview shows that Mr. Duigou feels that certain areas of the core functions assume a higher priority than others when considering the successful completion of a project. Foremost amongst the most necessary functions is the regular, clear communication between all stakeholders. In the beginning of the plan, all questions, from all parties need to be answered as accurately as possible to facilitate the formation of a clear goal. He also recommends that this be followed up by frequent, close supervision by the project manager, either by face to face meetings when teams are in close physical proximity or by the use of shared electronic project management tools when teams are separated geographically.

Mr Duigou considers that keeping a team focused and motivated can be one of the most challenging aspects of delivering a quality project on time. He states that giving team members positive feedback in the form of recognition and praise when they meet or exceed expectations is essential to counteract the tendency to lose motivation, especially on long term projects. This can be considered to be part of good communication.

The core function of project cost management is the other issue highlighted in the interview. The management of cost and unexpected budget stress is intertwined with the issue of clear and timely communication of any potential change to the scope and available resources of the project. The project manager needs to be able to proactively monitor expenditures so as not to be taken by surprise, as far as possible, by unexpected changes to any of the core areas.

It would be difficult to determine which is most important - communication or budget, for without sufficient funds and resources the objective will not be reached. The same can be said for communication between the stakeholders. Misunderstandings regarding the four core areas of project management are inevitable if communication is infrequent and close supervision by the Project Manager is lacking.