

# [Management of offshore teams-web based tools: project](https://assignbuster.com/management-of-offshore-teams-web-based-tools-project/)

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Managementof offshore teams-Web based tools: ProjectManagement is the art and science of planning and leading projects. Projectmanagement is even tougher than project development these days. Technicalskills – though important – are not enough for effective, multiculturalteamwork. In Offshore projects different developers from different regions ofworld combine to give a single output. Every region has own cultures andcommunications gap which effects on the development. Management of theseprojects is quite tough than managing the projects being developed in a commonsoftware house.

To address these gaps and issues different web based models andtools are presented. An openly accessible web-based communication model formulticultural teams (comMCT) was developed which consists of four modules i. estructural, functional, organizational and interpersonal aspects.

Elsethan the model there are number of tools used for the project management. Thosetools are mostly web based which allows the offshore team to register andresolve the communication issues. Asana is one of the tools which is explainedin the work below. These models and tools are expected to enhance learner’sknowledge, practice and reflection on communication issues and contribute tomore effective and satisfied offshore teams.                                                 Introduction: Multiculturecommunication is adiscipline that studies communication acrossdifferent cultures and social groups, or how culture affects communication. It is used to describe the wide range ofcommunication processes and problems that naturally appear within anorganization or social context made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds.

Intercultural communication issometimes used synonymously with cross-cultural communication. We all communicate with others all the timeNo matter how well we think we understand each other, communication is noteasy. Any moment that we’re dealing with people different from ourselves, the likelihood is that they carry a similar list of hopes and fears in theirback pocket. Culture” is often at the root of communication challenges.

Our culture influences how we approach problems, and how we participate ingroups and in communities. When we participate in groups we are often surprisedat how differently people approach their work together. Our culture influenceshow we approach problems, and how we participate in groups and in communities. When we participate in groups we are often surprised at how differently peopleapproach their work together. The problems are obvious: Peoples from variedethnic and cultural backgrounds must find ways of understanding and agreeingwith each other, and they must develop and respect their own identities. Both large and small businesses often have aglobal reach. If you have foreign clients, purchase raw materials abroad orlead tours internationally, cultural differences and communication problems cancause misunderstandings that harm your company’s bottom line. Success of a project when developed by anoffshore provider is largely dependant on the way the project is remotelymanaged from the client’s side.

If you hope to make a project successful withvery little input from your end as a customer, it is unlikely that the projectwill achieve success in the long term. The basic reason is very simple: youknow your business requirements best. Software services companies working inanother part of the world can only develop a solution based on the inputprovided by you. Fairly large projects have a dedicated project manager who interacts with the multiculturalteam and acts as a virtual bridge between the business and the softwaredevelopers. If your project does not have dedicated personnel for it, there isno need to despair. To compensate for this shortcoming, and, generally, improve communication in diverse teams, an openly accessibleweb-based communication model for multicultural teams (comMCT) has beendeveloped as part of a doctoral dissertation of one of the authors. The modelis partitioned into four modules clustering structural, functional, organizational, and interpersonal/behavioral aspects of communication. Itsystematically describes technical, cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinalfeatures of multicultural communication that have been found through a systematicliterature review  and structuredinterviews with 20 international project-management professionals .

Thus, thecomMCT model captures – in structured and accessible form – the wisdom ofhundreds of scientific articles. Moreover, it complements the scientificfindings by recent statements from experienced project managers. Onceimplemented, comMCT was evaluated in an expert evaluation study, in which 15international project managers estimated the applicability of the model fortheir professional practice and for novice users.

ProjectManagement Study: SPM Phases: There are different schoolsof thought about the number of phases during a project. Some claim there are 3phases, others say it’s 5. At the base of it, the PMBOK points-outthat the number of phases is determined by the project team and type ofproject. Project management is solely based on the idea that a project goesthrough a number a phases characterized by a distinct set of activities ortasks that take the project from conception to conclusion. Projectsare big and small, with constraints like cost, time and resources. As projectsbecome more complex, it’s important to structure and define projects throughoutthe entire life-cycle.

That way, you won’t get lost in the hustle and bustle. One way to organize a project is to sort it into 5 phases and here they are.                                              The 5 Phases of a Project§ Project Initiation Phase – a project isformally started, named and defined at a broad level during this phase. Projectsponsors and other important stakeholders due diligently decide whether or notto commit to a project. Depending on the nature of the project, feasibilitystudies are conducted.

Or, as it may require, in an IT project – requirementgathering and analysis are performed in this phase. In the constructionindustry a project charter is completed in this phase.§ Project Planning Phase – a project management plan isdeveloped comprehensively of individual plans for – cost, scope, duration, quality, communication, risk and resources. Some of the important activitiesthat mark this phase are -making WBS, development of schedule, milestonecharts, GANTT charts, estimating and reserving resources, planning dates andmodes of communication with stakeholders based on milestones, deadlines andimportant deliveries.

A plan for managing identified and unidentified risks isdetermined as this may affect aspects of a project later on. Risk managementplanning includes: risk identification and analysis, risk mitigationapproaches, and risk response planning.§ Project Execution Phase – a project deliverable isdeveloped and completed, adhering to a mapped-out plan. A lot of tasksduring this phase capture project metrics through tasks like status meetingsand project status updates, other status reports, human resource needs andperformance reports. An important phase as it will help you understand whetheryour project will be a success or failure.§ Project Monitoring and Control Phase – occurringat the same time as the execution phase, this one mostly deals with measuringthe project performance and progression in accordance to the project plan. Scope verification and control occur to check and monitor for scope creep, change control to track and manage changes to project requirement.

Calculatingkey performance indicators for cost and time are done to measure the degree ofvariation, if any, and in which case corrective measures are determined andsuggested to keep a project on track. To prevent project failure, consider whyprojects are likely to fail and the ways to prevent failure.§ Project Closure Phase – A project is formally closed.

It includes a series of important tasks such as delivering the product, relieving resources, reward and recognition to the team members and formaltermination of contractors in case they were employed on the project.    SPM: Complex projects arealways fraught with a variety of risks ranging from scope risk to costoverruns. One of the main duties of a project manager is to manage these risksand prevent them from ruining the project. In this post, I will cover the majorrisks involved in a typical project. 1. Scope Risk: This risk includeschanges in scope caused by the following factors:§ Scope creep – the project grows incomplexity as clients add to the requirements and developers start goldplating.§ Integration issues§ Hardware & Software defects§ Change in dependencies2. Scheduling Risk: There are a number of reasons whythe project might not proceed in the way you scheduled.

These includeunexpected delays at an external vendor, natural factors, errors in estimationand delays in acquisition of parts. For instance, the test team cannot beginthe work until the developers finish their milestone deliverables and a delayin those can cause cascading delays. To reduce scheduling risks use tools such as a Work BreakdownStructure (WBS) and RACI matrix (Responsibilities, Accountabilities, Consulting and Information) and Gantt charts to help you in scheduling.

3. Resource Risk: This risk mainly arises from outsourcingand personnel related issues. A big project might involve dozens or evenhundreds of employees and it is essential to manage the attrition issues andleaving of key personnel. Bringing in a new worker at a later stage in theproject can significantly slow down the project.

Apart from attrition, there is askill related risk too. For instance, if the project requires a lot of websitefront end work and your team doesn’t have a designer skilled in HTML/CSS, youcould face unexpected delays there. Another source of the riskincludes lack of availability of funds. This could happen if you are relying onan external source of funding (such as a client who pays per milestone) and theclient suddenly faces a cash crunch. 4. Technology Risk: This risk includes delays arisingout of software & hardware defects or the failure of an underlying serviceor a platform. For instance, halfway through the project you might realize thecloud service provider you are using doesn’t satisfy your performance benchmarks. Apart from this, there could be issues in the platform used to build yoursoftware or a software update of a critical tool that no longer supports someof your functions.

Using aProject Management Tool to Help Mitigate Risk? Many of the risks mentioned above could beminimized or eliminated by implementing robust project management tracking andcommunication through the many online tools now available. We are trying to provide a web-based tool that establishes an iterativeapproach to overcome the difficulties in Multicultural Communication. Web-basedtool: Asana: Asana is software project management tool. Asana is a web and mobile application designed to help teams track their work. It was founded in 2008 by Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and ex-engineerJustin Rosenstein, who both worked on improving the productivity of employeesat Facebook. Asana is a web based application which provides ease to manage theprojects. It helps to keep track of team. It has multiple functionalities.

Itprovides platform to get all team at same place. It has feature of teamconversation where any member of team can text and keep in touch with others. It also provide the calendar where events can be added a reminder gets set. ProsDustin Moskovitz, the co-founder of Facebook, also designed Asana.

True to the aesthetic andsimplicity of the most popular social network, Asana is an intuitivetask-management system that works best for teams seeking real-time interaction. Asana allows its users to visualize their goals, track theirtime, assign priority to their tasks, and get updates on the project right inthe program. It also has a calendar function to graph the team’s tasksright onto the dashboard.

In addition, over the past year, it’s added an Android app, theability to convert a task to a project, conversations, and dashboards. It’sbeen beefing up–last year, its biggest con was that it didn’t have enoughfeatures. ConsAsana does not allow offline use. In addition, reviewers feelthat “ sometimes it is not intuitive enough to find something,” and list anumber of frustrating conversations with Asana’s seemingly lacking customerservice. A. Genesis of the comMCT Model: The comMCT model was developed aspart of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Vienna 6. The modelcaptures essential knowledge for communicating effectively in MCTs, andprovides a web-application to make this knowledge available in a systematic, structured, and comprehensive way 19. Its contents draws upon a systematic, qualitativeliterature study 7 followed up by a qualitative field study 8 aiming toexplore features of communication in multicultural teams.

In the literature review, a total of 159studies on cultural differences, the effects of diversity on teams, and thedynamics of multicultural teams were analyzed. In the field study, expertinterviews with 21 experienced project managers were conducted and analyzedthrough a qualitative content analysis 8. The field study’s target groupconsisted of project management professionals who have been working or hadworked as project managers in MCTs for five or more years, have managed atleast two MCTs, and preferably hold a project management certificate. Finally, to approve the concept, the comMCT model was validated employing a structured, webbased qualitative survey among 15 project management experts 6, 8-9. The major findings of that survey are summarized in Section IV and related tostudents’ evaluations in the Discussion section. B.

The Structure of the Model: As illustrated in Figure 1, the comMCT model considers the team as thecentral element that functions flexibly within the classical project boundariesof scope, time and budget. The arrows in the Figure indicate that the team isinfluenced by the project and organizational culture and reciprocallyinfluences these cultures. The penetrating field of communication is clusteredinto four modules, reflecting the structural, functional, organizational, andinterpersonal/behavioral aspects of communication.

Each module encompassesseveral elements addressing technical, cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinalfeatures required for effective communication in multicultural teams. Particular emphasis is given to exposing both benefits and disadvantages/risksof MCTs. The structural module includes the following seven elements: effectivecommunication plan, open communication structure, an interconnectedcommunication system, adequate communication procedures/processes, suitabletechnical environment, ad-hoc calls with preparation, and using the rightcommunication tools. The model provides three kinds of details for each element: definition/explanation, benefits/function, and whichadvantages/opportunities – assigned with the MCTs – are to be utilized, orwhich disadvantages/risks are to be overcome through the related element andhow.

Fig. 1. The structure of the com MCT model  The functional module addresses features suchas effective goal and rule setting, work/time planning, monitoring, controlling, decision making, and ensuring sufficient participation, all with aparticular emphasis on the multicultural composition of the team. Examples offeatures of the organizational module are effective team building, training, task-sharing, role and responsibility assignment, external support and, importantly, employing an adequate leadershipstyle. The vitalinterpersonal/behavioral module includes features such as forming a sharedvision, sharpening soft-shills, shared attitudes and values, and severalqualities articulated by the Person-Centered Approach 10, 13 such asempathic understanding and respectful, genuine sharing.  Overall, the model is designed to provide anencompassing and ubiquitously accessible resource for novice managers and teammembers, and to serve as a checklist for experienced professionals who may wantto expand their communicative repertoire in multicultural teams 19. Visit(http://www. 3mpati.

com/comMCTv2/index. php) for a webbased presentation of thecomMCT model and refer to 19 for a detailed description. III. EXPERT-EVALAUTION STUDY OF COMMXT: A. Research Setting, Participants, and Methods: In 2015-2016, a qualitative online survey with15 experienced international project managers stemming from 8 differentcountries was conducted 9. This study served as a proof of concept and aimedat gaining insights about the users’ perception of the comMCT model with regardto seven core criteria: completeness, structure, language, redundancy, understandability, originality, and usefulness for the professionals as well asfor novice users. In order to elicit interviewees’ experience and knowledgesystematically and thoroughtly, a structured questionnaire with open questionsand closed, Likert-scale questions was employed for and made accessible via thecomMCT website: http://demo.

moreit. com. tr/anket/index. php/438667/lang-en. Thequestionnaire was used as a main source for the data analysis. Theinterviewees’ responses to the closed Likertscale questions were analyzed usingdescriptive statistics and participants’ responses to the open questions weresystematically analyzed. B.

Limitations: The evaluation study is limited due to thenumber of participants. Nevertheless, it provides insight into comMCT’s  usability for project managementprofessionals. It also provides promising results regarding the envisagedapplicability of comMCT as an educational resource for novice users. Still, theexperts’ estimates regarding the applicability of comMCT for novice users andstudents require future research and validation. The two case studies inSection V address this educational concern within the framework ofperson-centered education.