

## Project Management Training Course Example Workbook

This is an extract of some sections from our project management workbook. We work with you to agree the full, relevant, contents.



### Workbook table of contents

<b>Subject</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	What Is project management? .....	4
1.1	Who needs project management skills? .....	6
1.2	How does project management achieve co-ordinated performance?.....	6
1.3	But project management methods seem so technical and complicated .....	6
1.4	The three basic ingredients of a successful project.....	6
1.5	Quantity .....	7
1.6	The four main stages of project management.....	8
1.7	Be practical .....	9
2	Project definition .....	9
2.1	Project purpose .....	10
2.2	Problem related projects.....	10
2.3	Project approval .....	10
2.4	Stakeholder management.....	11
2.5	Final project definition.....	12
2.6	Gathering Information .....	12
2.7	Strength and weaknesses .....	13
2.8	Opportunities and threats .....	13
2.9	Identifying project strengths and weaknesses.....	13
2.10	Strengths.....	14
2.11	Weaknesses.....	14
2.12	Opportunities .....	14
2.13	Threats.....	15
2.14	Risk management .....	15
2.15	Estimating costs .....	15
2.16	'Ballpark' estimates.....	15
2.17	Comparative estimates.....	16
2.18	Feasibility estimates. ....	16
2.19	Feasibility studies .....	16
2.20	Project modelling.....	16
2.21	Case study .....	17
2.22	Skills profiling .....	18

3	Project planning .....	19
	3.1 Achieving quality of outcome .....	19
	3.2 Project specifications .....	20
	3.3 Project objectives .....	21
	3.4 Project objectives should be: .....	22
	3.5 Project timing.....	23
	3.6 Relationships/Dependencies .....	25
	3.7 Project costs.....	26
	3.8 Project resources .....	26
	3.9 Machinery.....	26
	3.10 Manpower .....	26
	3.11 Materials.....	27
	3.12 Methods .....	27
	3.13 Money .....	27
	3.14 Project budgeting .....	28
	3.15 Project summary sheets .....	28
4	Chapter Four .....	29
	4.1 Project Implementation .....	29
	4.2 Achieving synergy .....	29
	4.3 Getting and giving feedback .....	30
	4.4 Progress monitoring .....	30
	4.5 Measuring progress.....	31
	4.6 Comparison of results.....	31
	4.7 Evaluation and prediction .....	31
	4.8 Take action.....	33
	4.9 Project progress meetings .....	33
	4.10 Monitoring progress against costs .....	34
	4.11 Using graphs to visualise progress .....	35
	4.12 Monitoring project timings.....	36
	4.13 Monitoring quality of outcome achieved.....	36
	4.14 Monitoring day-by-day performance .....	36
	4.15 Inspection and testing.....	36
	4.16 Auditing actions and results.....	36
	4.17 When things start to go wrong .....	37
5	Project Completion .....	39
	5.1 The project report.....	39
	5.1 Management actions .....	39
	5.2 Celebrate.....	40
	5.3 Evaluate the project.....	40
6	The Project Manager .....	41
	6.1 The project manager's role .....	41
	6.2 Problems which may arise as a result of inadequate project management ....	43
	6.3 Pareto Principle .....	43

# 1 What is project management?

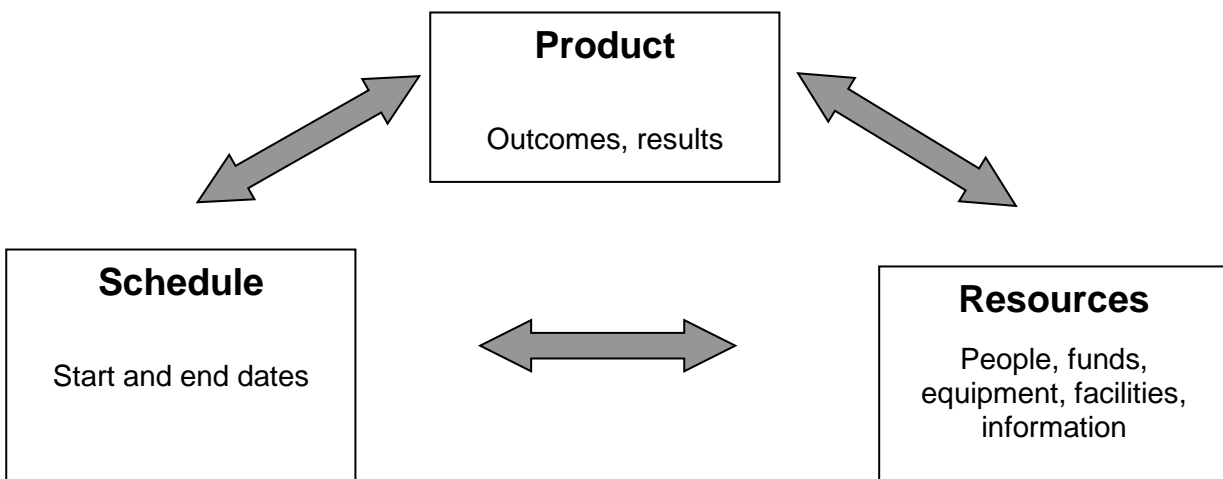
The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines **project** as a:  
Plan, scheme; planned undertaking, esp. by student(s), for the presentation of results at a specific time

The particular emphasis on educational projects indicates where most of us gain our first acquaintance with the principles of project management - a team of students working together to complete a history or science project by the end of term. This also points out that even those of us who never think of ourselves as someone who 'manages projects' already have a considerable amount of expertise when we begin our working lives.

In organisations, however, we need to alter the emphasis slightly. A more specific definition of work-based projects has been provided by the British Standard Institute as follows:

An enterprise (activity or set of interrelated activities) that has a definable start and a definable completion BS 4335

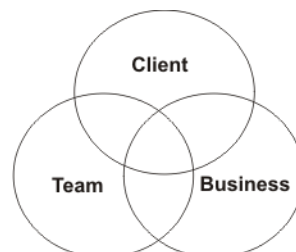
Whatever the definition, a project always has the following ingredients:



The emphasis on a 'definable start and a definable completion' reveals the more precise time dimensions required by work-based projects. The 'interrelated activities' that make up your projects will also have to compete for resources within your organisation.

When developing a project, the manager needs to remember that a project is built:

- for the client
- by the team
- for the benefit of the business



All three interests must be considered and protected throughout the project.

## 1.1 Who needs project management skills?

Project management, like management theory itself, developed from an engineering background with an emphasis on efficiency through control. Though control remains important in all types of management, it has also been recognised that managers, team leaders, and supervisors achieve effective results through the co-ordination of results achieved by other people. Project management allows you to achieve both co-ordination and control through the efficient planning, effective implementation, and successful completion of a wide range of projects, large or small.

Comparing the project manager to a conductor of an orchestra is, perhaps, a false analogy. After all, in an orchestra every member is playing from the same music sheet, they already possess the skills to play the tune, and there's always the opportunity for rehearsals. Still, it gives us something to aspire to!

A project manager is often referred to as a 'plate spinner' who has to spin many plates on the end of poles. All you have to do is to keep all the plates spinning at once, or at least catch them when they drop!

To do this you need to share the vision of the project sponsors so that you can help them to realise their objective.

## 1.2 How does project management achieve co-ordinated performance?

Co-ordinated performance is achieved by creating a positive working relationship based on agreed objectives and detailed planning; this provides your project group with clear guidelines and frees you from the necessity of constant supervision and control. Your group also gains a clear sense of direction and increased motivation from a greater feeling of responsibility for and involvement in the work they are carrying out. Your organisation gains because the empowerment of your subordinates enhances the empowerment of your section, your department, and, eventually, the organisation as a whole.

## 1.3 But project management methods seem so technical and complicated

Project management methods originated in large and complex engineering projects like the *Manhattan Project* to develop the atom bomb; or early NASA space projects, where teams of experts in different fields came together to work towards complicated outcomes over a number of years. Complex and technical systems are still used on large engineering or construction projects, but the basic methods of project management can be effectively used by any manager, team leader or supervisor who needs to organise a group of people to complete a task or group of tasks over a given period of time. This workbook shows how you can use project management methods in your own work to suit your own needs.

## 1.4 The three basic ingredients of a successful project

- Quality
- Time
- Costs

(1) The **quality of outcome**. To what standard must the outcome be measured?

In general terms, quality means ensuring that a product does what it is intended to do or is 'fit for its purpose' i.e. it fully meets expectations. It is important that the standard is defined at an early stage, for example to reorganise the office to improve processing efficiency by 35%. To get from point A to point B, you first need to know what point B is and where it is now or will be at the end of the project.

Many organisations take BS or ISO standards and procedures appropriate to their business to ensure there is company wide consistency. Such quality measures should be built into the project so the company's suppliers are aware and work to the same standards.

- (2) The **time** you will require for the whole project and for each stage within the project. How much time? How urgent is urgent? What will happen if the status quo is maintained?

For example how long it will take to move the desks, then the filing cabinets, then the computers, and so on. Time is an irreplaceable resource in project management.

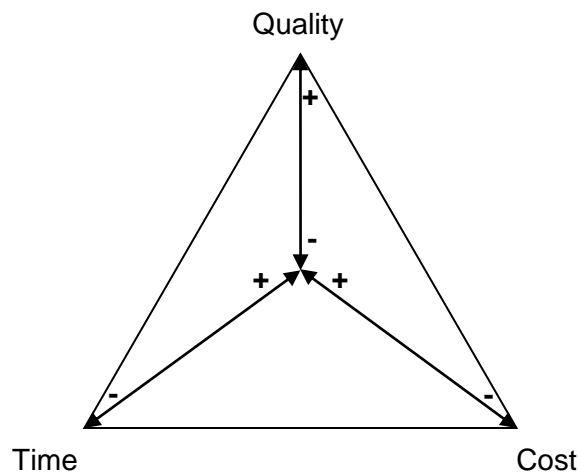
- (3) The **costs** that are likely to be incurred by each stage and by the project as a whole. How much money do you need? How much will be saved by changing the procedure?

For example the net costs of working time lost during the reorganisation of the office, of additional labour brought in to move heavy furniture and equipment.

These three ingredients are the most important at the beginning of project development.

They are often summarised as:

'quality of outcome versus time versus costs'



The elements are not separate and unrelated, however; they must be integrated through your project management. Their integrated relationship is shown more clearly by the triangle trading off the elements of quality, time and cost for the defined project scope.

Your project costs and time commitments will have to be justified by the quality of results achieved. In other words, you will need to show what your organisation gains against what it has to spend to achieve those gains.

## 1.5 Quantity

With some projects quantity is a fourth element which has to be considered - How many? What will happen if quality is sacrificed for quantity?

All project managers will constantly be engaged in some form of trade off between these objectives. If one element is changed then it is likely to affect the others. If there is an initial miscalculation or one of the elements changes during the project's progress, the project will fail to deliver its promised benefits.

Examples of these issues are:

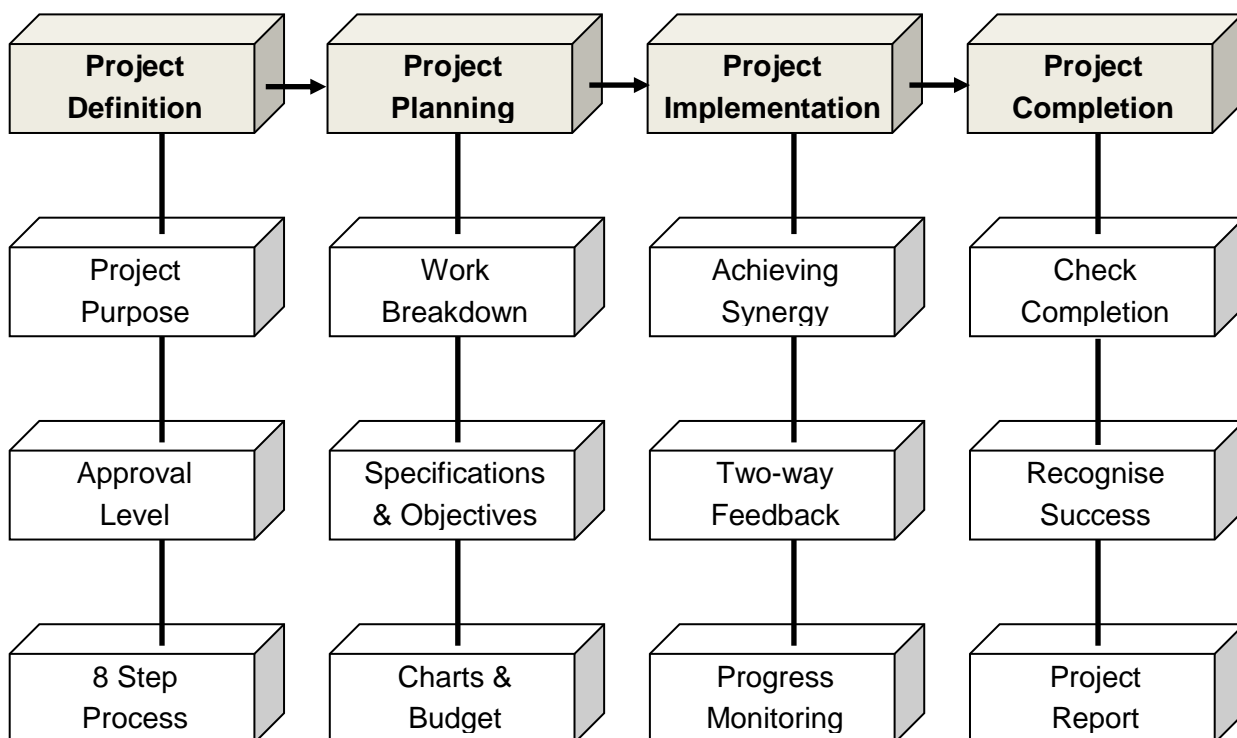
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|--|--|
| The client demands an earlier completion date -                                    | The work will cost more to complete and/or there may be a reduction in quality |
| The client insists on a higher specification -                                     | The work will cost more and/or will take longer to finish                      |
| Financial constraints restrict the amount of money available to the project team - | There may be a reduction in quality and/or an extended completion date         |

Effective management of the project should allow managers to avoid these difficulties or take appropriate corrective action should things start to go wrong.

Let's look now at how the three key elements might relate in your own area of work.

### 1.6 The four main stages of project management

Project management involves a non-routine set of tasks or a new development that can be managed separately over a specific period of time. To evaluate the 'quality of outcome versus time versus costs' factor in any project, you will need to break it down into four sequential stages:



- (1) **Project definition:** where you develop the original purpose or need for the project into a detailed definition of the three parameters and the outcome they will produce. You then design an initial strategy to achieve the outcome you have defined.
- (2) **Project planning:** where you break the project down into a sequence of activities, detail specifications for each of these, agree objectives with the person responsible for each activity, budget for resources required and create a project summary sheet for use during the implementation stage.