

Project Management

The Association of Project Managers (APM) defines Project Management as “a unique, transient endeavour undertaken to achieve a desired outcome”. Facilities Managers frequently find themselves responsible for the delivery of Projects either as Project Managers themselves or as part of a bigger Project team.

A Project is differentiated from business-as-usual because it has a timetable with at least a start and an end date; it will have a collection of project resources, time, money, people and equipment intended to be used to deliver the project; and it will have a specific outcome such as a facility relocation, a refurbishment or procurement exercise.

Projects are deemed successful if they deliver the outcome with an agreed upon quality, do not overrun their end date and remain within budget. It is important to realise however, that outcome, time and budget are interrelated, and during a project trade-offs may be required between them. Prioritising quality may increase time and cost factors; Speed could jeopardise cost and quality; and reducing costs may impact on timing and quality.

In addition every Project has a degree of uncertainty or risk associated with it, and an impact, usually expressed in terms of the net benefit that it will bring to the organisation. Projects are often more complex than business-as-usual in that they involve several concurrent streams of interdependent work and do not follow a known formula.

To address these challenges a number of Project management systems, tools and methodologies have developed over the years such as Critical Path, PERT, GANTT and PRINCE2. A standard approach assists the Project manager so that common events, processes and steps can be carried out smoothly and without the need to devise new solutions for every Project. Project team members and other stakeholders are reassured by the use of proven and familiar techniques.

Projects are usually split over their lifetime into a number of phases, which are discrete and sequential divisions of the total workload. The number of phases depends on the nature of the Project with more complex Projects, often called Programmes, involving component sub-Projects operating concurrently in different phases.

The sequence of phases in a Project is known as its life-cycle. These usually begin with some form of Initiation phase which would include Project definition, feasibility and objective setting; followed by a Planning phase to identify the timetable and resources required; an Execution phase to produce the deliverables as detailed in the plan; a Control phase to monitor progress, approve variations and sign-off deliverables; and a Closure phase to formally accept the deliverables and to shut down and review the Project or its phases.

The Association for Project Management (APM) provides products and services for Project Managers including registered membership and qualifications, events, publications and online services.
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