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In this chapter we will discuss:

- **Importance of project review**
- **Types of project review**
- **Project review stages**
- **Project status review meetings**
- **Types of project status meetings**

Once a project is organised, in term of building the project team and drawing of the operating rules, it is time for the project manager to design and develop an effective tool used to check whether the activities are proceeding as per the plan. This task requires a machine review the performance of various project aspects such as project status, product design and process.

IMPORTANCE OF PROJECT REVIEW

Once the project enters the implementation phase, the project manager should take up the responsibility of reviewing the status of the project in a timely and phased manner. Project review conducted at various stages of project implementation play a major role in the success of a project. The project manager conducts reviews to find out;

- if the project can accomplish the business goals
- Whether the rules of the organisation are understood properly and implemented
- If it is worthwhile to take up the project at all before entry in to measure contracts
- Whether the project is managed effectively and the team members are sure of completing the project, by following the guidelines.

Reviews give the project manager and the organisation at chance to solve problems before they get out of hand, Or to improve the way in which the projects are being handled. To derive the maximum benefit out of the reviews the project manager has to to take follow up action with an open mind. Reviews ensure that the project utilizes the available fund to gain business advantage. On the whole, a review helps the project manager;

- Keep in mind the purpose of carrying out a project
- Determine the appropriateness of the project activities from time to time
- Gauge the way in which the objectives are being accomplished

- Verify the completion of the project
- Evaluate the cost of the project
- Understand the project requirements

TYPES OF THE PROJECT REVIEWS

A project manager has to conduct various reviews throughout the life of a project to ensure that it is progressing toward achieving the planned objectives. The manner in which these reviews are conducted depends on the success of current and future projects. In general, a project manager conducts three types of reviews:

- Status reviews
- Design reviews
- Process reviews

Status reviews

Status reviews are the most common and frequently conducted review in organisations taking up projects. Status reviews are usually conducted at two levels:

1. Cursory reviews
2. Comprehensive review

Though deciding the frequency of project reviews is largely a matter of judgement, a weekly cursory and a monthly comprehensive review are conducted for projects of 1 year duration. The frequency with which project reviews are conducted also depends on the frequency with which problems occur. Project reviews are conducted frequently whenever a problem arises. Care should be taken to avoid conducting too many project reviews. The project manager should take care that team members give status reports that are substantiated by meaningful numerical figures on cost performance, time and scope. The project manager should also be aware of the possibility of misreporting. In many cases, team members report that they are on schedule even if they are not, in the hope that they will be back on schedule by the next reporting period. The project manager should design a reporting system that can detect deviations which are greater than the permissible variance limits.

It is always an advantage to have an organisational structure that focuses on correcting problems, rather than punishing those held responsible for these problems. Therefore, project reviews must be conducted with the aim of solving the problem rather than meting out punishment. A problem-solving project review has three steps;

- Identification of existing problem
- Identification of factors that cause problems
- Exploring solutions that can solve the problems.

Design reviews

Generally, a project is subjected to a design review usually at all the major milestones. The primary objective of conducting a design review is to check whether the design of the product or service being produced is of the desired performance quality. Thus, a design review is more of a tool for reviewing the performance factors than the cost, time and scope of a project.

The performance of the product determines the project success or failure. The design of the product plays a major role in the effective performance of the product. Many projects fail due to improper product design. While deviations from the schedule with regards to the cost, time and scope of a project can be corrected, a deviation in design would result in a underperforming product that would be rejected by the client. Therefore, design review plays an important role in ensuring the performance quality of the project deliverables.

A design review should cover aspect like

- Conditions of manufacturability, serviceability, tooling, economics of special machinery and processes to ensure beta integration of design with manufacturing to ensure overall optimisation.
- safety of operators and maintenance personal and precautions taken to minimise damage.
- Scope statement along with technical specification based on which the performance of end product can be evaluated.

Informal reviews are also done by implementing management by walking around where the project manager personally goes around all the department to make sure that the work is progressing as planned in term of design. In order to make sure that a design is reviewed properly.

Project reviews

The primary objective of conducting a process review is to determine whether the process are going on as planned and whether any improvement are possible. A process review is conducted Idea once in three months or at major milestones in the project, which ever come first. Process review can be conducted once a month if the project is of shorter duration the two objective of process review are are

1. Measure the performance of project processes those are going on well
2. To improve the processes those are standard. Even if there is nothing wrong with the processes, there may be some scope for improvement and process reviews how improvement can be made.

Processor review are conducted by the project manager or an external facilitator both of them have their own limitations leadership is one of the processes crucial for the success of a project. a process review conducted by the project manager will not get the desired feedback as the team members will not feel free to be critical about the leadership skills software project manager. And external facility can gather better information in such situations.

Sometimes, relations between the project manager and his team may deteriorate if the team gives a negative feedback on the leadership skill of the project managers.

PROJECT REVIEW STAGES

A review should always be conducted before taking any major decisions that can affect the future of the project. Some of the important points are the stages at which a review is conducted are as follows;

- in the initial stage of the project life cycle, i.e., after the project proposal has been submitted
- State when and in evaluation is conducted ,i.e., after the primary business case has been accepted.

- During the implementation of the project, i.e., while the activities of the project are being carried out, particularly at the following points;
 - before entering into major contracts.
 - when the major output of the project is to be delivered
 - point where the risk is substantially high
 - at point where major problems of occurs
- When the project is completed
- When auditing has to be conducted

Review after submission of project proposal

a review at this point would help project manager to know whether:

- The proposal is worth the resources on undertaking an initial investigations.
- The proposal is in in keeping with the the existing business strategy.
- The proposal is flexible, in case it does not complain with existing business strategy.

Review in the implementation phase

There are different type of reviewing technique to monitor the project in the implementation phase. Status review design review and process review are carried out during this phase of the project.

Review at the time of completion of project

A Project is closed either when it accomplishes its objective or when it fails to do so. Closing a project is a formal activity aimed at discharging all the assets belonging to the project in a proper manner. The project managers conducts a review at this stage to

- Evaluate The project efficiency by comparing the delivered output with the planned one, in terms of time, cost and performance standards.
- Ensure that the benefits are well documented for use in future projects.
- Documents relation learn as these may be helpful in the management of future projects.

Review in the implementation stage

This kind of review is usually conducted anytime between 3 to 6 months after the completion of the project. The project manager undertakes the review to judge whether the project was successful in meeting its goals or not. These reviews should;

- Evaluate the benefits of the project and compare them with the benefits envisaged in the initial plan
- Judge the effectiveness and efficiency of the daily would output of the project when it is put toto use in real life situations.
- Suggest two corrective measures, if necessary
- Document the lessons, as these may prove helpful in managing future projects
- Be conducted keeping in mind the information requirements of the the various stakeholders, like the sponsor of the project, the functional departments, the end users and the clients.

PROJECT STATUS REVIEW MEETINGS

Meetings are an effective and essential means of conducting project reviews in an organisation. These meetings are aimed at reviewing the project status and have a specific agenda. At these meetings, decisions are made, different aspects of the project are discussed and the work is planned and scheduled. Project managers usually use a top-down approach for conducting a project status review meeting. The sequence of events at a review meeting is generally as follows;

1. The Project leader presents the changes in the project scope that may have an impact on its future
2. The client presents the changes in the period that may have an impact on its future
3. The project manager presents the status of the project, with a note on the impact of changes that were considered or approved earlier
4. Activity managers present the progress since the last status meeting
5. Activity managers of future activities present the changes having an impact on the project status since the last meeting
6. The project manager checks status of the problems that remained unsolved at the previous meetings
7. Members present in the meeting explore new problem areas and assign responsibility for solving the problems.
8. Closing comments are made by the project leaders, the client or the project manager
9. The project manager closes the meeting after announcing the venue, date and time of the next review meeting.

The following aspects have to be decided upon before holding a review meeting:

- Frequency of meetings
- Preparing agenda
- Meeting coordinator
- Recording and distributing minutes

Frequency of meetings

If an activity manager submits his report to the project manager on a weekly basis, and the project manager internally submits his report to the senior manager on a bi-weekly basis, a project status review meeting may be conducted once in two weeks. But there is no hard and fast rule about the frequency of meeting. The frequency is usually based on the length and duration of the project.

Preparing agenda

The agenda lists the issues that are to be discussed at the meeting. It helps the project manager to ensure that everyone participates in the discussion. The agenda should not have many topics for the discussion. The reason that provides background information for each topic that is listed, participants can come better prepared for the meeting. Depending on the importance of a topic, the agenda specifies a time limit for discussing the topic.

Meeting coordinator

The meeting coordinator fixes the place and time for the meeting and arranges for the required equipment. While deciding the time and the attachment for the required equipment. While deciding the time and the arrangements for the meetings, the coordinator must consider the following;

- Is the room big enough to accommodate all the participants? The room should neither be too small nor too large.
- The convenience of the place.
- Are the seating arrangements comfortable? can additional seats be provided if required?
- Does the room have proper light and ventilation?
- Are the visual AIDS working properly?
- Is additional stationary available?
- Are name plates required?
- Handling of messages solution

Once these aspects have been taken care off, the preparation for the meeting are over. Let us now see how a review meeting should be conducted.

before starting a review meeting it is the responsibility of the project manager to respect the protocol stop the following measures precautions have to be taken to avoid the problem arises out of breach of protocol

- Participants must be given enough notice and the isn't given to them must contain background information about the topic that are to be discussed
- the head of the relevant departments must be informed about the requirement of experts subordinate
- Newcomers must be introduced to the other members before the meeting starts
- Participants must be listed in alphabetical order
- Significant contributions made by persons inside and outside the group must be acknowledged
- Participants must be informed well in advance if the meeting is been postponed or being cancelled.

Once the meeting gets underway, it is the responsibility of the project manager to encourage discussion, seek the opinion of all the participants and before concluding the meeting, to summarise what was discussed at the meeting. The project manager must ensure;

- That all the participants have a clear understanding of the objective of the meeting.
- That a time limit for the entire meeting has been set in the agenda and that this time limit is made known before the meeting begins.

The meeting will be success if all the participants agree upon the objectives from the same point of view. The leadership skills of the project manager and cooperation among the participants determine the success of the review meeting. The project manager and the participant should;

- Gate wanted with all participant before the meeting starts
- Allow other participants to come out with their ideas and recommendations
- Carefully listen to the views of all participants
- Welcome new ideas that support the objective of the meeting

- Help in arriving at a consensus
- Be flexible enough

Recording and Distributing Minutes

The minutes of a meeting form an important part of the project documentation. They provide proof that certain problems were discussed and certain decisions were arrived at. Therefore, recording and distributing the minutes is as important as preparing the agenda.

ADVANTAGES OF A PROJECT STATUS REVIEW MEETING

Apart from allowing participants to share information and make decisions, a project status review meeting also gives the project manager a chance to

- Make the team more cohesive.
- Keep the team informed about project's progress.
- Identify potential problems
- Make sure the team has a clear idea of where the project is going
- Ensure that the entire team is willing to put in their efforts to meet the project objectives.

Types of project status meetings

Project status meeting keep the participants informed about the projects progress. This meeting is usually attended by the representatives of senior management, the project manager, the client and the key members of the project team. These are the people who should be kept informed of the project progress. In the case of a project that is geographically dispersed, or projects in which different activities are being taken up in two different locations, it may not be possible for the project manager to bring all the parties involved under one roof to hold the traditional project review meeting. In such a situation, modern communication technology can be used to conduct meetings. Such a meeting could either be a long distance status meeting, which allowed two-way communication for a meeting conducted through a "visibility website" which allows only one-way communication.

Long distance status meetings

These meetings enable two-way communication between the parties involved through audio conferencing or video conferencing. This meeting needs a high amount of formality to ensure that all the topics in the agenda are addressed to make sure that all the topics are discussed at this meeting and to keep track of all the parties involved, a structured 'open job report' is prepared.

Visibility web site

A visibility website allows one-way communication between the project manager and the parties involved. This is the best way to keep people informed about the project development. This information is available across the globe through a uniform resource locator (URL). The most significant aspect of a visibility website is its ability to link team members spread across different geographical locations.

Reference:- project management , ICFAI university text book

Question

1. Explain project review and its importance
2. Explain project review types.
- 3.