

Need for Professionalism in Projects

Parin Gosar¹, Gayatri S² and Dr. B. E. Narkhede³

¹ Pursuing M.Tech in Project Management, VJTI, Mumbai, India

Email: parin_gosar@yahoo.com

² Pursuing M.Tech in Project Management, VJTI, Mumbai, India

Email: gayatri1989@gmail.com

³ Head of Project Management, VJTI, Mumbai, India

Email: benarkhede@vjti.org.in

Abstract— Any human endeavor; be it setting up an industry, doing research, establishing any trade or business or going for entrepreneurship of any nature faces challenges as well as offers opportunities for growth. Success of that endeavor lies in effective management of challenges and utilization of opportunities. Project management focuses on these aspects. This paper emphasizes the challenges faced, in general, by any project, need of project management and project management professionals along with the implicit and explicit opportunities that are available in knowing project management and owning professionals for handling projects.

Index Terms— ROI, project charter, critical path, float, scope creep and schedule slippage

I. INTRODUCTION

Management is the key to succeed in any field. Management ranges from dealing with people to crisis handling to correct decision making. A good management is always rewarding and leads to the positive growth of the community involved directly or indirectly.

One way to define management is to utilize resources efficiently and get the work done by the people to achieve the goals of an organisation keeping in mind the success of the organisation. When it comes to the success of an organisation, the administrative abilities play a bigger role as compared to the technical knowledge. Management consists of the bigwigs of a company. Management is the base to start a business and continue its growth in terms of name, fame and wealth and maintain the position after achieving greater heights. Management plays an important role to maintain the positive growth graph of an organisation.

Any set of interlinked activities which are unique and temporary is considered to be a project. Managing the resources and carrying out these temporary activities effectively and efficiently and delivering the deliverables on time are called Project Management. Project Management includes the management of cost, scope, time, quality, human resources, risk, stakeholders and safety.

The following literature survey briefs about the lapses in projects that lead to project delay or failure.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Reference [1] Projects fail or get delayed mainly when the uncertainties involved with the parameters of the project are ignored or misunderstood. While working on any project, faulty initial deadlines along with

inconsistency or irregularities may lead to schedule slippage. This is mainly because of improper determination of the deadlines tied to higher level objectives which has critical links into schedules of other projects in the organization's portfolio.

Reference [2 & 3] To start and execute the project effectively, its need, requirements, benefits and progress are to be communicated with the stakeholders. Meeting and considering the demand of all the stakeholders is not possible. Hence, it becomes difficult to execute the project effectively. The oral communication in projects is not effective every time as it may not stand as a testimony. Also, the role played by the media has high impact on projects. Miscommunication through media comes into picture when the facts are not conversed to stakeholders. Reference [4] When the need and requirements of a project become uncertain, the setting of project goal gets disturbed and thus leading to blurred vision of the said project. This gives rise to scope creep followed by increase in cost, resources and schedule slippage. Since, there is no anti-scope-creep spray in project utility belts, the project delays or fails.

Reference [5] Projects usually compete for resources (people, money, time) against other projects. This leads to a tough competition among all the projects. This mainly occurs due to the absence of the upper management in resource allocation. Reference [6] The risk or reliability in a project is generally determined by trusting someone else's assessment. This may lead to risks never thought of. Unwanted uncertainties rising during the project phase are the risks. To manage risk is a difficult task as all possible risks can't be predicted. Thus, the solution for this is to analyse the factors which may lead or act as a risk in the project and accordingly the plans should be made.

Reference [7] Project requires skilled people to carry out the project activities. To find and keep such skilled people tied to the project is another challenge. This makes developing countries dependent on others and thus contributing to price rise of the project and also elongates the chain of stakeholders. Reference [8] Various factors were identified which affect the Web-Based construction project management systems. Many probationers still don't know or are uncertain about the measures that should be used to evaluate system performance. Reference [9 & 10] In any large scale project, when there is a need for decision making, there always occurs difference of opinion between two individuals or an individual and organization or the project team and its stakeholders. Due to such non-cohesiveness the projects are affected economically. Reference [11] The focus on procuring process needs more attention as construction projects consume non-renewable sources of energy. The traditional construction procurement system is not capable of dealing with sustainability parameters. Most of the projects' characteristics are not identified which affects the use of construction procurement system.

Reference [12] The projects under World Bank fail to manage their entire life cycle. The projects funded by World Bank have lack of ownership of the local stakeholders and in identifying institutional capacity of the borrower to implement and then operate the project are hurdles in managing the life cycle of a project.

Reference [13] The problems associated with simultaneous multiple project handling are capacity, complexity, conflict, commitment and context. These factors vary according to size, urgency and skills required for a project. Many problems can be alleviated by identifying the common elements like resources, accounting and reporting systems to reduce the degree of complexity. Reference [14] Projects should have hybrid model i.e. a combination of orthodox and political models. It helps in an acknowledgement of political nature of the public decision making and can use the tools of orthodox model in shaping eventual decisions. Also the projects are to be planned with alternative approaches to avoid last minute delay. Reference [15 & 16] Understanding the need of the project is most important. The selection of a project must be done after detailed analysis of the opportunities and hurdles associated with it. The planning must be done considering the future aspects of it. Reference [17] The change in scope affects the schedule of a project. Most of the time it becomes difficult to include such changes and manage the project under predefined parameters.

The aim behind writing this paper is to study the causes of recurring issues in projects and finding the way out to achieve success in any project so as to induce positive impact on society, technology and economy.

III. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Above mentioned reasons of the project delay are mainly due to lack of synergy of technical and managerial aspects with the project constraints like cost, time and scope. These constraints affect the social, economic and technological factors associated with the projects. The projects suffer due to lack of experience in maintaining cost, scope and time and in following the set methodologies. The project professionals are either from technical or management background. Thus, they may lack in the knowledge areas defined by the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK).

IV. METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the requirements of the people involved in a project, it is first essential to know the qualities needed while being in a project. These are

- Planning - To determine the goal and the way to achieve it.
- Organising- It's all about deciding where and when decisions will be made and who will do what for whom.
- Leading – It is about involving the people for discussion and motivating and guiding them to achieve the goals.
- Commanding- It follows unity of command. The process of assigning, monitoring and convincing people falls under commanding. Precise commanding leads to the accurate management of the team to achieve the set goals.
- Controlling- It is necessary to monitor the project at every stage. Minute carelessness in project may place the project on the path of failure. Thus, we can say that the progress of the project should be on the fingertips of the project manager so that he/she can take corrective actions if and when required to keep the project on the track and to achieve the set goals.

These qualities are to be comprehended in the best possible way in order to run the project successfully and the following study on Navi Mumbai metro project stands as a testimony to the statement. During the study, the communication flow in multiple-project environment was learnt which is diagrammatically represented in figure1.

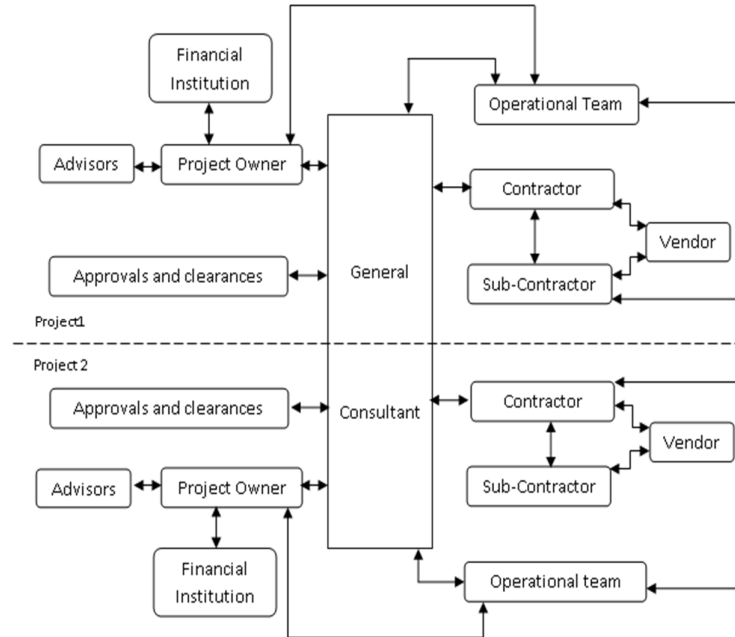


Figure 1. Communication flow between the stakeholders of the project

It is clear from the fig. 1 that the inability to execute project makes its owner dependent on General Consultant (GC). Thus, the GC has to manage the project entirely. Major approvals and the requirements are to be obtained from the project owner and government organisations. If the project is funded by some institutions under loan basis then the amounts are released on the basis of progress made. In order to have continuous flow of money the project is to be kept on track. In multiple-project handling, the degree of complexity increases and the role becomes more vital. GC is the body responsible for the planning, designing, execution, controlling, closing and commissioning of the project. Thus, it becomes necessary for GC to have technical knowledge and managerial qualities. The role and responsibilities of the stakeholders are described in the table below:

TABLE I. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

Sr. No.	Stakeholders	Role and responsibilities
1	Project owner	Arranging funds Specifying requirements Setting clear goals
2	Financial institutions	Providing and releasing funds
3	Advisors	Making project efficient through experience
4	Contractors and subcontractor	Executing project as per plans Selecting proficient vendors
5	Vendors	Providing continuous flow of materials
6	Operational team	Accepting handover Generation of revenue Repair and maintenance
7	General Consultant	Disseminating Planning Designing Obtaining clearances Monitoring critical path Performing quality checks Mitigating risks Resource allocation Executing tendering and bidding process Assisting operational team Multiple project handling

Based on the table-1, it was understood that the general consultant has to possess right *chiaroscuro* of both the technical and the management skills along with the intricate knowledge of the project parameters. This is because the general consultant has to fulfil the requirements of project owner while managing different stakeholders and at the same time ensuring methods to overcome uncertainties in the project. He has to get timely approvals and clearances, so that the project can be kept on right track, avoiding time and cost over-run. Since, he assists the operational team, it becomes obligatory for him to hold the operational knowledge. As the flow of information takes place via general consultant, his role becomes all the more vital. Any communication gap can incur huge loss in the project, thus making it necessary for the general consultant to own good communication skills and high persuasive talent. Due to execution of multiple projects at a time he should have resource allocation skills and must be in a position to identify the common resources so that the allocation can be made more efficient. He should be well-versed not only with financial knowledge but also negotiation skills in order to carry out tendering and bidding processes. It is clear that the role of GC is like a project manager who is responsible and answerable for anything related to the project. By applying the defined methodologies of project management, such multiple-project environment can be handled more efficiently. The benefits of having professionals in project are listed below.

- Projects are selected on Return on Investment (ROI) basis, so that the invested amount can be recovered and actual revenue can be generated as fast as possible. To achieve this, project management helps in planning the resources to ensure that time and budget performances are maintained.
- People working on a project may drift off the topic easily and spend too much time on unnecessary tasks. The project management tools help in solving the above said problem by focusing on the project charter, barriers resolver and prioritising the activities, so that the project team is always on the required ground.
- In any project, the requirements collection is the initial phase as it strengthens and justifies the goals to be achieved. It also helps to communicate the benefits of projects to the stakeholders. Efficient project management helps in analysing the project and deciding the optimum requirements needed for its successful completion.
- A project is a set of activities interconnected with each other. These interconnected activities form a path. The path with maximum duration and zero total float is the critical path. Any disturbance in the critical path may lead to an unsuccessful project. Executing the critical activity and completing it

on time can be done by monitoring and controlling the resources for which softwares and tools are available. This can be effectively done by knowing the intricacies of project management.

- In the new era of technology, softwares are pumping station for almost all activities. The project management softwares are used to calculate required resources, time for completion of the activities and the cost involved for carrying out the activities. For utilizing these softwares up to its maximum capacity, the people are to be trained so that they can work in actual fact. Apart from the training in using the software, minutiae of project management can help the project team to manage the vendors with their effective communication so that the required materials are delivered at the right place and on time. This avoids delay in project due to scarcity or non-availability of resources.
- For projects, effective verbal as well as written communication is essential. Project benefits are to be explained to the stakeholders to get the idea about their expectancy. During the execution phase of the project, its progress must be informed consisting outcomes, changes and hurdles to the superiors and stakeholders. Thus, clear and defined communication plan is required. Post project too, communication plays an important role. The handover of project to the client means to give details of the project which will be required during the operational period. Thus, communication is necessary from start till the project enters operational phase. Clear idea of project management will result in effectual communication.
- The scope of the project depends on the state of mind of stakeholders. The change in the scope, delays the project completion. The scope change may be because of the change in demand, requirements, cash inflow, union matters, government issues, etc. The project team, with experience and thorough knowledge of project management, gets well trained to face such situations and becomes superior decision makers.

Project closure is the last phase of the project. Before closing, all the legal documents are cross checked and verified. Some of these documents will be required for future purpose like government issues, renewal of licenses, loan applications and maintenance purpose. Handover is done after achieving the goals and complete quality check. This quality check is performed in the best possible manner using project management tools and techniques. Project management techniques also help in keeping the service receiver and service provider in loop even after the handover of the project.

V. RESULT

From the above content, it is derived that having project professionals help in delivering the project on time and in budget, keeping it on right track by efficient monitoring and coherent communication, understanding the project requirements along with appropriate resource estimation and being capable of handling unexpected issues. All these will help in potent handover and effective closure with post-project or operational assistance.

VI. CONCLUSION

Projects must be strategically aligned to support the organization's corporate strategy if they are to survive the ever-changing priorities of the organization. Solid project planning reduces the risks associated with any project. Need for professional project management techniques emerged with growing scope and complexity of projects, with tightening restrictions and requirements for use of material, financial and labour resources and for quality of work and performance.

Today every organisation involved in projects want people specialised in all fields for carrying out the project activities smoothly. The introduction of project professionals to handle the project intricately will prove to be a positive solution for increasing the success rate of projects. The professionals should be aware of optimum usage of tools and techniques available to complete a project. These professionals do not just learn through experience or nearly being in a project environment but capture the essence of managing projects through hands on training on simulated projects which make them understand the optimal synergism of knowledge area, thus making them diligent project handlers. Because of these, the presence of professionals in handling projects will reduce the chance of project failure as they can mitigate the chances of cost overrun or overtime they can also handle multiple projects without resource conflict and with effective communication. Their ability to handle and use technology to its fullest will also save many projects. There proficiency in understanding the resources of a project and acquiring only the needed resources will avoid wastes and thus,

this increases profit. Having professionals will make R & D arena richer, thus contributing to the increase in gross domestic product and helping in the development of a country.

VII. FUTURE SCOPE

Reference [18] After identifying the importance of project professionals, the creation of them is the next step. This can be done by formally educating the people on project management. But, the available infrastructures are not capable of fulfilling the demand of ever growing project professionals. Thus, the needed support is to be made available so that the demand of erudite project professional can be met. Industrial involvement will help in gaining hands-on experience and help the professionals grow more organization-friendly.

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