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PM Premium Services Project Planning and Scheduling

If you have a critical project that needs to succeed but find yourself lacking the experience to properly complete the project, you're not alone. In fact, government studies find that only 10% of projects ever finish on time.

We work with your project staff to implement the tools and methods needed to attain timely project completion. We can even help set up a Project Management methodology if your project currently does not support one. Our intensive planning and implementation sessions can be customized to meet your project needs so you see firsthand how tools and methods are applied on the project.

We help condense completion times, align the project team, create an efficient work plan and identify deliverables all in a time frame and at a pace that works for you. Follow up visits and remote coaching sessions help identify how well the tools and methods are being implemented and what further actions are needed.

Contact us for more information at info@pm4dev.com

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A quarterly journal that brings information on modern project management methods, practices, and tools

1. SMART Goals

The most important thing about setting the objectives of the project is that they have to be SMART:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time-bound



The more abstract the objectives are, the more difficult it is to measure performance. Project managers need to discuss the objectives with the project team, the target group, and project partners. Objectives must be understandable and acceptable to those who will help achieving them.

S- Specific

Goals have to be specific. The scope of the project should be so well defined that it should not give room for doubt or misunderstanding. For example, if a wall has to be constructed, the scope

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2. Program and Project Management

Project Management is defined as “the process of combining systems, techniques, and knowledge to complete a project within established goals of time, budget, scope and quality”. Program management is concerned with doing the right projects. The program manager has to keep the long term vision of the program and monitor the projects to ensure they are contributing to the final goal, whereas project management is about doing the projects right, which is to deliver the outputs within the scope, budget, schedule and quality constraints.

Program management focuses on the interdependencies among the program projects and their integration to deliver program objectives.

In a program management structure, project managers are assigned to the various projects within the overall program. Each manager carries out

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of the project should be the building of a wall, while its goal should be the completed version of the project. Being specific would mean that more detailing to the project scope is also mentioned in the guidelines , for example, whether the wall is to be made of brick or wood panels with its approximate measurements. It highlights the **WHY, WHAT** and **HOW** aspects of goal setting.

M - Measurable

Goals should be measurable. The project manager should be able to qualitatively and quantitatively make a report of the project based on mathematical estimations. As in the above example, if a brick wall is to be made, the project manager should be able to guide his team on the required number of bricks / wood panels, height of the wall, number of workers required, etc. It follows the principle of "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."

A - Achievable

Projects have to be achievable. A project goal has to be within the practical applications of project implementation. The project vision should result in a concrete goal and not one that is beyond the means of the project manager and the project team. For this, the project plan will have to outline and provide resources to make the end goal achievable. It should also be stretched within limits to bring out the dedication and commitment of the project team in order to be a motivating factor for the next project.

R - Realistic

Projects cannot be abstract, obscure or fantastic. It has to be real, with a realistic end goal. It has to be **do-able**. It deals with what can be done in the project to achieve the end goal. There should be a high bar / level for achieving results without breaking the team.

T - Time-bound

Projects are different from operations. They are time bound and require specific time frames for every stage of the project. Since a project is specific and brought about as a result of 'need' and 'requisite' at a specific time, so should it be timely and prompt. Outlining specific time schedules makes a project unique, attainable and successful.

PM4DEV has customized Project Management consulting, training and assessment programs for Non Profit, Development and Government clients around the world. Our services include:

Consulting



- Project Management Organization
- Project Management Competency Development
- Project Review and Recovery
- Project Management Methodology

Training



- Fundamentals of Project Management
- Mastering Project Management
- Adaptive Project Management
- Custom Training

Workshops



- Project Planning and Scheduling
- Team Development
- Project Management Kick Start
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Systems



- Monitoring and Evaluation Information Systems
- Enterprise Project Management Systems
- Project Knowledge Management Systems
- Project Management Scheduling Systems

Contact us to obtain more information about how our services can meet your needs.

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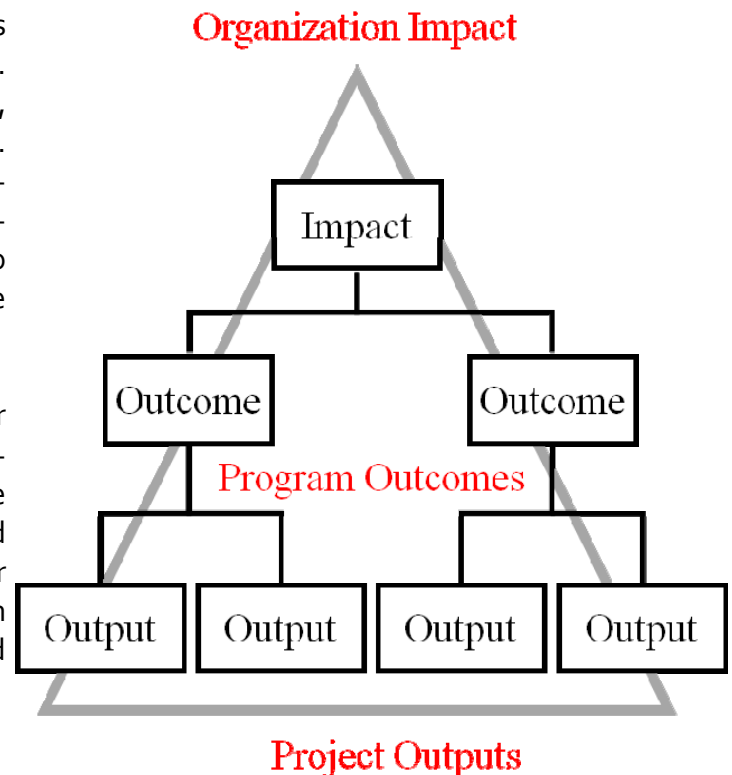
the management responsibilities we described above. The program manager's major responsibility is to ensure that the work effort achieves the outcome specified in the program strategies. This involves setting and reviewing objectives, coordinating activities across projects, and overseeing the integration of outputs. Programs usually last many years, from 5 to 10 years, the program manager is also involved in the financial viability of the program and the selection of projects and donors that align with the program strategy. A program has a series of long term development goals it needs to achieve, and the quality of the project's outcomes will determine the success of the program.

Program Management

Program management is the process of managing several related projects, often with the intention of providing continuity of interventions to a group of beneficiaries. A program is more than a set related of projects; it's the coordination of the projects to obtain benefits that the individual projects may not be able to achieve. The benefit of having a program is to take advantage of economies of scale and to reduce coordination costs and risks.

Many organizations that have the resources and the infrastructure use this type of process to manage projects from similar areas, such as health, education or economic development. In this structure, the project manager's job is to ensure that the project succeeds. The program manager, on the other hand is more concerned with the aggregate result or end-state of the program. For example, an education program may include one project that is designed to educate children, and another to rebuild old schools. These two projects are different with respect to their success goals, but they fit together in the same education program. Additionally, the two projects could start at different time, but their combined results contribute to the program goal. In this structure program management focus more on delivering outcomes, while project management focus on delivering outputs. The reason is that outcomes take longer to achieve and in many cases longer than the schedule of the project.

Many development projects face the dilemma that their projects cannot effectively measure the final outcomes because the changes in the beneficiaries take more time to be measured. Additionally, projects are planned and designed to deliver outputs, and that is where they put more or their focus. From a program perspective the organization can monitor those changes beyond the life of the project and thus be able to measure outcomes.

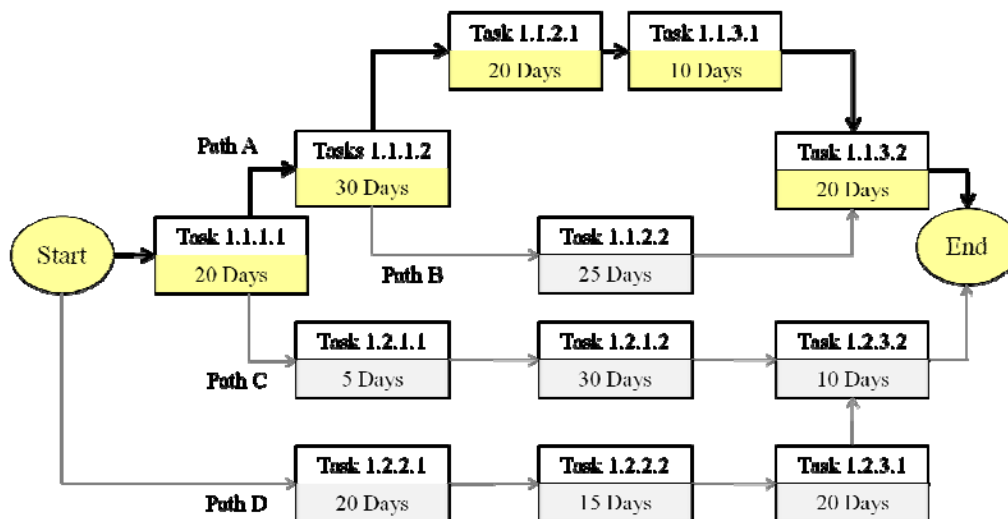


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3. Critical Path Method

A network diagram is a graphical representation of the sequence of project activities and the dependencies among them. There are two types of network diagrams, activity on arrow (AOA) and activity on node (AON). The most common network diagram uses the AON diagram technique in which boxes represent activities. The complex and dynamic nature of development projects make this tool especially valuable because it helps the project team to identify the potential interactions of project activities that can be easily missed otherwise. The value of the network diagram is that it provides the project team with visibility and control over the project schedule. It also helps determine the total duration of the project and its critical path or path with the longest duration.

The figure below shows an example of a project network diagram that includes the duration estimates and dependencies; the diagram also shows the dependencies among the activities and how these can form parallel paths.



The Critical Path is the Path A in the network diagram with the longest total duration (100 days). Activities on the critical path cannot be delayed or the whole project will be delayed, unless the loss of time can be offset somewhere else on the critical path. To find the critical path add up the duration of the activities for each possible path through the network, to determine which has the longest total duration. The difference between the longest total duration and the shortest path(s) is the total amount of float or slack for the non-critical path activities.

Float or slack is the amount of time that an activities or a task in a project network can be delayed without causing a delay to subsequent activities or tasks and the project completion date.

The critical path is in essence the shortest time a project can be completed, even though the critical path is the longest path on the project. It is not the path with the most critical activities or the shortest path on a project network diagram. There are cases in which a network diagram may have two critical paths that have the same total duration. A benefit of Critical Path Analysis is that it helps identify the minimum length of time needed to complete a project. Where there is a need to accelerate a project, the CPA will help identify which project steps to accelerate and complete the project within the available time.

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4. Maturity Level –1 Awareness

In the Development Project Management Maturity Model, the first level identifies the initial stage of an organization as it begins to use a project management methodology. At this level the organization is aware of project management methodologies, but hasn't yet taken steps to formalize it.

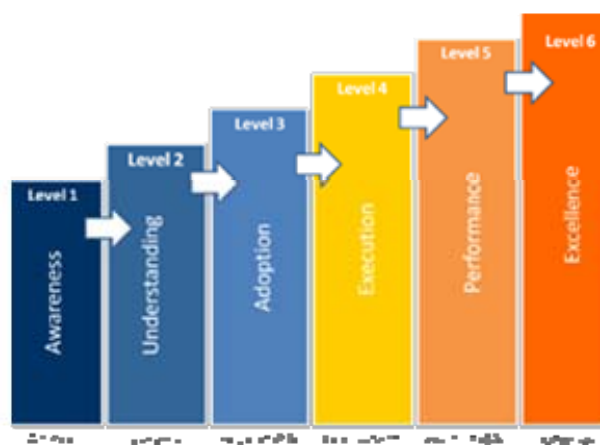
Projects are often delivered through the personal heroics and effort of the project manager and his/her team. Project success tends to be delivered in spite of the organization rather than because of it. There are few or no standards or common process in project management. At this level the project depends on the expertise and experience of the project manager who most of the time develops his/her own methods, processes and tools to manage the project.

This level can almost be renamed the "Do it yourself" or "Do it your own way" level. There are no standards and project management processes are ad hoc. There may be an awareness of practices followed by other projects, but their use is entirely at the discretion of the project manager. This does not mean that projects will necessarily fail or be subject to poor management. In fact, for a given project the practice of project management is largely dependent upon the process knowledge possessed and practiced by the team members. It may be very poor. On the other hand, there may be excellent practices but they are known only within the team itself. There is no organized way to share these best practices outside the team.

Because of the ad hoc nature of this type of project management, these best practices may not travel very well. That is, they may not be very useful to other teams who are practicing project management their own way. Management may well be aware that there are project management processes and standards but there is no evidence that any movements have been made to establish them in this organization.

The key characteristic are:

- There is no defined and documented process in place.
- Project managers and teams act in an ad hoc manner when process activities are needed.
- Processes and practices may be taken from prior experiences or knowledge possessed by one of the team members.
- Skills and training on formal PM is limited; people recognize the need for standard roles and responsibilities.
- There are no standard tools, each project uses whatever they find is useful.



For an organization to move to the next level, it needs to build a common language around project management, identify the current practices and methods used by projects and organize this information to understand the gap that exists from a complete methodology that covers all critical processes of project management. A course on the basic concepts or project management is a good start to get everyone on the same page and identify the areas that need improvement.

(Part two of this article will come in our next Quarterly Journal, Maturity Level 2—Understanding)

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5. Competency Level 1—Novice

Competency is defined as the ability of an individual to perform a job properly; is the combination of knowledge, skills and behavior used to improve performance; or, having the ability to perform a specific role. A competency model usually has different levels as a way to identify potential areas of improvement; so that, people can work on building the skills that they lack of. The PM4DEV Project Management Competency Proficiency Levels identifies 5 levels of competencies a project manager must have to be successful. Novice:, Apprentice, Practitioner, Knowledgeable, and Expert:

(For more information about PM4DEVs Competency Model read our previous Journal PM Connect Q4-10)

The first Competency Level is the Novice. Novice is a person who is just starting to build his/her skills in project management. Most of the time is a person that has recently graduated from a technical school or university and has a technical background. The Novice typically starts as a Project Assistant in a project under the direct supervision of a project manager or project coordinator. As a novice he/she will use this opportunity to learn the basics of project management.

Typical characteristics of this level include:

- A new team member, may have a strong technical background but limited of no management experience.
- His/her role in the project is limited to a technical role or support role.
- Knowledge of project management technique and practices is limited
- Is able to follow directions but requires constant supervision in managing assigned project activities.
- Helps organize information to identify/explain major trends, problems, and causes.
- Build some time management skills or coordinating the activities of the work team
- Starts taking course on project management

(Part two of this article will come in our next Quarterly Journal, Competency Level 2—Apprentice)



Our objective is to serve the needs of the global development community by providing the tools and processes to plan, implement, and monitor projects in a more consistent, reliable and predictable. We believe that organizations that systematically apply project management methodologies can ensure that donor, organizational and beneficiary resources are used in the most efficient, and effective manner; and that will increase their chances of meeting the needs of the beneficiaries. We are the first project management consulting company dedicated exclusively to the development and relief organizations, our consultants come with years of experience in the largest development organizations of the world and have a rich background of skills and professional certifications and backed by more than 15 years of international experience .

PM Connect is the Journal of Development Project Management that offers wide ranging and comprehensive coverage of all facets of project management. Published quarterly, it provides a focus for worldwide expertise in the use of new frameworks, principles, technologies, methods, and techniques .

The points of view presented in this publication provide the PM community with topic summaries, that in PM4DEV's experience, have proved critical in the successful implementation of project management methodologies. For more information about PM4DEV , please contact us via email to info@pm4dev.com

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