

Project Quality Management

Prepared by Dr. Ehab Mahmoud



Project Quality

Lecture 9

PMG354

Executing the project

Prepared by
Dr. Ehab
Mahmoud

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Objectives



At the end of this lecture, we expect to acquire a knowledge about the project execution phase and all related activities that have been carried out to be able to make well and approved deliverables.

Lecture
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 - What is project execution?
 - What happens during the execution phase?
 - What challenges are you likely to face?
 - What's produced during the execution phase?
 - What Are Project Execution Gaps
 - Strategies for successful project execution
 - Bonus Point – Ensure the quality of output and deliverables with stakeholder
 - How a project management software tool can help execute projects

Introduction

You've done the difficult "figuring out" part; you know what needs to be done, who's going to do it, and when it needs to be done. You now have the predefined steps that will help your team actualize your plans.

What is project execution?

- The project execution phase is usually the longest phase in the project life cycle; and the most demanding. In the project execution phase:
 - Your team carries out all the planned activities, constructs deliverables, and presents them to project stakeholders
 - Your focus, as a project manager changes to performing and supervising all activities to create deliverables as outlined in the project plan
 - You'll need to continuously track the project's progress and ensure that the milestones and deliverables stick to the project schedule
 - You need to step back a bit and let your team carry out the project plan

What is project execution?

- In project management, there might be hiccups along the way but if you catch them early on, it's easy to course-correct. For this reason, the execution stage always happens in concurrence with the next phase—project controlling and monitoring
- Most of the activities during the execution phase will be handled by your project team. It's a fine line to tread because you need to give your team enough autonomy while taking care that everything goes according to plan.
- In essence, the project manager has three main objectives during the execution phase:
 - Managing people
 - Managing processes
 - Managing communication

What is project execution?

- The benefits of a well-executed The project are threefold:
 - project can be completed on time and budget
 - Team morale can be maintained
 - Stakeholders are satisfied with overall project progress

What happens during the execution phase?

- Task assignment: The project manager assigns specific tasks to team members based on their skills and expertise.
- Work implementation: Team members carry out their assigned tasks, following the project plan and timeline.
- Progress tracking: The project manager monitors the progress of each task, ensuring that work is being completed as planned.
- Communication and collaboration: Team members communicate regularly to share updates, address challenges, and coordinate efforts.
- Quality control: Quality assurance processes are implemented to ensure that project deliverables meet the desired standards.

What happens during the execution phase?

- Risk management: The project team identifies and addresses potential risks that may arise during execution to minimize their impact.
- Resource management: The project manager ensures that necessary resources, such as equipment, materials, and personnel, are available and effectively utilized.
- Stakeholder engagement: The project team maintains regular communication with stakeholders, keeping them informed and addressing any concerns.
- Change management: If changes to the project scope or requirements occur, they are documented, assessed, and managed according to established procedures.

What happens during the execution phase?

- Documentation and reporting: Progress, milestones, and any issues encountered are documented and reported to relevant stakeholders.
- Issue resolution: The project team identifies and resolves any issues or conflicts that arise during execution, ensuring smooth project progress.
- Continuous monitoring and adjustment: The project manager continuously monitors the project's progress, making adjustments as necessary to keep it on track.

What challenges are you likely to face?

- In one of his project management books, Filling Execution Gaps, Todd Williams identifies six gaps that companies need to close to ensure project success.
 - A lack of common understanding
 - Uninvolved sponsors
 - Misalignment with strategic project objectives and goals
 - Poor change management processes
 - Ineffective corporate governance
 - Poor leadership

What's produced during the execution phase?

- The execution phase is where all the action happens, and the plans start materializing. There will be changes to the scope and the documentation will change as a result.
 - Project deliverables
 - Change requests
 - Performance data
 - Issue log
 - Documentation updates

What's produced during the execution phase?

Project deliverables

- Project deliverables are the tangible outputs of the project. They need to be reviewed, tested, and meet the acceptance criteria given by the clients.

Change requests

- When client expectations change or there's a disconnect between the team's understanding of the client's requirements, scope changes happen. These are documented in the change requests, which are then reviewed and approved.

What's produced during the execution phase?

Performance data

- The execution stage produces a lot of data points that you can use to optimize your team's performance. You can find where your team is spending most of their time with the help of the project dashboard and how you can cut down on time and costs.

Issue log

- Whenever there are bugs, issues, or defects, you document them in the issue log. This will help you get back to the issues and fix them.

Documentation updates

- Any changes to the documents created during the planning phase like the project scope and project schedule will be documented.

What Are Project Execution Gaps

- Also known as strategy gaps, project execution gaps happen when the project plan you created doesn't go as expected.
- Whether your project paused due to lack of clarity, shrinking timelines, diminished resources, or changing goals—they're all considered project execution gaps.
- While lack of resources is to blame for most gaps—budget, materials, and bandwidth included—there are a few other key obstacles to be aware of ahead of the project execution phase:
 - Lack of support or buy-in from higher-ups or stakeholders
 - Unrealistic timelines
 - An undefined project vision
 - Lack of prioritization which leads to bottlenecks

What Are Project Execution Gaps

- As a project manager, it can be difficult to strike the balance between overseeing project execution to avoid gaps without micromanaging your team or hovering over their workflows. This is ultimately unproductive because it sends the message that members aren't trusted to manage their work and simply put, it's not good for morale.

Strategies for successful project execution

- The surveyed executive leaders said that only 60 percent of their project management strategies met goals. There's a huge gap between the plan and the day-to-day implementation.
- Here are some strategies for a project execution plan:

Strategies for successful project execution

1. Utilize project management software
2. Use project planning and project execution templates
3. Align on project execution goals
4. Be innovative
5. Delegate tasks for project execution
6. Encourage team collaboration
7. Identify task dependencies
8. Measure progress regularly
9. Review deliverables with stakeholders
10. Empower your team to make decisions
11. Be open to new ideas
12. Control the scope

Strategies for successful project execution

1. Utilize project management software

- If you're on the fence about whether project management software is necessary to effectively execute projects—it is.
- Especially if you spend a significant amount of time connecting with stakeholders, working with cross-functional teams, or managing multiple projects at a time, these tools will help bring full project transparency to everyone involved without having to send a single email.
- Project management software is essential for even seasoned project managers to oversee time, workloads, projects, and TBH, their sanity in the most productive way possible. These tools are designed to eliminate busy work and streamline project planning processes through workflow automation, task dependencies, drag-and-drop interfaces, and more

Strategies for successful project execution

2. Use project planning and project execution templates

- You can find a template for anything these days.
- Seriously! It's no secret that every powerful project management tool comes with a robust set of features to adopt. Ultimately, these features will be your best friend. But in the moment? Learning a new tool can be a process in and of itself. Templates curb this issue with a pre-built and customizable framework to kickstart your project execution process in the most productive ways possible.

Strategies for successful project execution

3. Align on project execution goals

- This isn't just about agreeing on the final project deliverables, it's about knowing how the project ties into your organization's long-term vision.
- Understanding the "why" behind your project will keep the project team aligned on the overall strategy and make sure the right tasks are prioritized. Clear communication starts by getting on the same page about things before execution starts.
- Project kickoff meetings, SMART goal-setting, and progress updates are great for promoting transparency and confidence across the team when it comes to reaching short and long-term goals. Plus, it reinforces collaboration in every stage of your project by ensuring each team member isn't stuck in their own silo's day in and day out.

Strategies for successful project execution

4. Be innovative

- When it comes to new ideas, there are never too many cooks in the kitchen—it's critical as a project manager to empower members to share their thoughts.
- Your team members are the ones in the thick of it—navigating the roadmap, following the timeline, and delivering on their promises. They know what they're talking about!
- Entering the execution phase, you might feel hesitant to welcome new ideas out of fear of jeopardizing the strategy you've just created. But pivoting is a natural part of the project process. You and your team share the same outcomes, and it will go far with them to know that they have the power to voice their thoughts, suggestions, and potential concerns while there's still time to do something about it.

Strategies for successful project execution

5. Delegate tasks for project execution

- Contrary to popular belief, project managers should not carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. They have enough to worry about as it is, and as a leader on the project, delegating tasks to other members will foster growth and confidence by sharing ownership across the team.
- By splitting even small responsibilities, project managers have more time to understand the big picture of things including the project's progress, team workloads, and status.

Strategies for successful project execution

6. Encourage team collaboration

- It's a project manager's responsibility to keep everyone in the loop from other team members to stakeholders.
- Constructive and open discourse is another way that project management software can help managers save time and be more efficient in their days, but it doesn't always have to be reserved for meetings and emails. Keep your project's status fully transparent by giving your key players access to view, comment, or even edit high-level reports or progress docs as you see fit.

Strategies for successful project execution

7. Identify task dependencies

- Knowing which tasks must be completed in a specific order helps projects stay on track and resources properly allocated. Considering that most strategy gaps come down to a lack of resource management on some level, staying on top of your task dependencies, milestones, and the critical path can sometimes be the difference between whether a project makes it through the execution phase at all.

Strategies for successful project execution

8. Measure progress regularly

- There's no way to know if you're staying on track if you aren't measuring the project's progress. Your project planning process included setting measurable goals and project KPIs (key performance indicators). This is where all the effort you put into documentation comes in handy.
- During the execution phase, risks may materialize. By continuously assessing the risks, you equip your team with contingencies to build a project risk management strategy and keep the project from failure.

Strategies for successful project execution

Summary

Project	Time	Cost	Workload	Tasks	Progress
Product	●	●	●	7	23%
Marketing	●	●	●	7	43%
Social Media	●	●	●	12	45%
CRO	●	●	●	4	65%
Quora	●	●	●	2	72%
SLI Project	●	●	●	6	38%
Sales	●	●	●	6	28%

Tasks



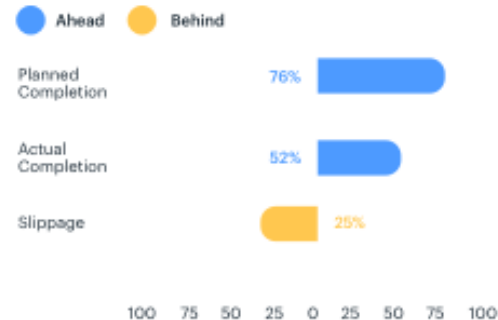
Workload



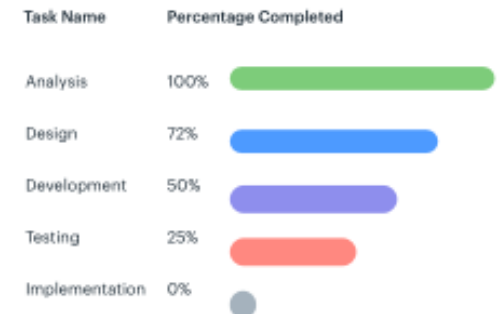
Created vs Completed



Time



Progress



Strategies for successful project execution

9. Review deliverables with stakeholders

- Following any of these strategies lead to better time management and increased productivity while avoiding execution gaps in project management. So, what should you do with the new-found time you've saved? Use it to make sure key stakeholders are happy every step of the way!
- While it may not always be necessary or possible, reviewing the project deliverables with stakeholders throughout the execution phase ensures they'll be happy when the project is said and done. Plus, it makes you look good!
- Especially if you're working with new clients, this gesture fosters stronger stakeholder relationships and reassures your team that they're moving in the right direction.

Strategies for successful project execution

10. Empower your team to make decisions

- An empowering environment is a sufficient motivator for team members that encourages them to go above and beyond. Give them enough authority to make decisions and take the necessary steps to fulfill the plan.

Strategies for successful project execution

11. Be open to new ideas

- It's good practice to involve the team in making some decisions. Even if they suggest a different approach than what you had in mind, appreciate their input, and be flexible enough to accept better suggestions. This will serve as a good motivator and make the team feel valued and their contributions acknowledged.

Strategies for successful project execution

12. Control the scope

- Almost every project suffers from a nasty monster called Scope Creep. It is when the project slowly grows out of your control and beyond the project's original scope.
- Now, you cannot and should not avoid all change requests. Most projects require you to iterate and adapt to change. Market conditions, client needs, organizational priorities can change and you need to deal with them.

Bonus Point – Ensure the quality of output and deliverables with stakeholder

- No matter how flawless your team is, there isn't a project that's devoid of defects. It's always a good practice to make sure that you've translated the client's expectations into the deliverable. Test those deliverables and see if they meet the acceptance criteria.
- Once you have the deliverables ready, you'd schedule a formal phase review with all key stakeholders. All deliverables are reviewed, accepted, and approved. If there are any passable issues, they are documented along with their resolution plan and all relevant plans and documents are updated accordingly. Once you have the green light from the stakeholders, you officially proceed to the next phase – the project closure phase.

How a project management software tool can help execute projects

- An entirely manual or spreadsheet-based approach can prove to be a stumbling block during project execution. What will serve your team's needs during the frenetic execution phase is a cloud-based project management tool that aids collaboration while also being highly intuitive to use.

How a project management software tool can help execute projects

- Project management software that provides total visibility into all the work that goes into a productive execution phase while also being extremely simple for every team member to use. Some notable features of the Project software are
 - List, Kanban, and matrix views
 - On Hold, In-Progress, and Done states
 - Powerful data-based reports
 - Automated reminders for when deadlines approach



Thank You

