

The impact of change requests on project completion in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Introduction:

Changes requests are part of delivering any project. But to keep the project on schedule and within its budget, those changes have to be managed. A change request (or an amendment) is a mechanism that identifies, defines and tracks those changes in a way that's acceptable to all parties. That includes whatever added costs or time is required to implement the change.

A change request is a change management document and practices that addresses any change in the project scope, detailing what needs to happen, how much it'll cost and when it can be expected to reach completion. It means modifying existing project's contracts and control, in effect, adjust the price and timeline of the project. Because of the impact a change request has on the budget and schedule, change request aren't acted upon until both the owner of the project and the contractor responsible for the change agree on terms and conditions. It can be requested either by the owner or the contractor.

Change orders represent a ubiquitous aspect of project management across industries. These modifications to project scope, schedule, and cost often arise due to evolving client needs, unforeseen circumstances, or shifts in project requirements. While change orders can enhance project outcomes, they also introduce complexities that impact project management. This proposal aims to explore the multifaceted impact of change orders on project management and suggests strategies to mitigate their negative effects.

What are the Change requests?

Change requests are formal documents that alter the original scope, schedule, or budget of a project. They may involve additions, deletions, or modifications to project requirements, specifications, or deliverables. Change orders can originate from various stakeholders, including clients, project sponsors, regulatory bodies, or internal teams. Effective management of change orders requires clear communication, diligent documentation, and proactive risk assessment.

Impact on Project Scope:

Change requests often necessitate adjustments to project scope, introducing new tasks, dependencies, and deliverables. Failure to manage scope changes can lead to scope creep, schedule delays, and cost/schedule overruns. Project managers must assess the impact of change orders on project objectives, resource allocation, and stakeholder expectations. By maintaining a comprehensive scope management plan, project managers can minimize the disruptive effects of scope changes and ensure alignment with project goals.

Implications for Schedule Management:

Change requests frequently disrupt project schedules by introducing new tasks, resequencing activities, or extending project timelines. Project managers must evaluate the scheduling impact of change orders and adjust critical path activities accordingly. Effective schedule management involves prioritizing tasks, optimizing resource utilization, and implementing schedule compression techniques to mitigate delays caused by change orders. By implementing project scheduling tools and techniques, project managers can maintain schedule adherence and minimize project duration extensions.

Influence on Cost Management:

Change requests have significant financial implications for project budgets, resource allocation, and cost forecasting. Project managers must accurately estimate the cost impact of change orders and obtain approval from relevant stakeholders before implementing changes. Failure to manage change order costs can lead to budget overruns, financial disputes, and erosion of stakeholder trust. Through effective cost tracking, variance analysis, and change control procedures, project managers can ensure financial transparency and accountability throughout the project lifecycle.

Strategies for Mitigating Negative Effects:

To mitigate the negative effects of change request on project management, several strategies can be implemented:

- **Establish clear change management processes:**

Define procedures for initiating, evaluating, and approving change requests to ensure transparency and accountability.

- **Communicate effectively:**

Foster open communication channels among project stakeholders to facilitate timely resolution of change-related issues and mitigate misunderstandings.

- **Anticipate and mitigate risks:**

Conduct risk assessments to identify potential sources of change and proactively address them through risk mitigation strategies and contingency planning.

- **Document meticulously:**

Maintain detailed records of change requests, including rationale, impact assessments, and approvals, to facilitate audit trails and compliance with contractual obligations.

Conclusion:

Change requests represent a double-edged sword in project management, offering opportunities for innovation and adaptation while posing challenges in scope, schedule, and cost management. By understanding the impact of change orders and implementing proactive strategies to mitigate their negative effects, project managers can navigate change with confidence and deliver successful project outcomes. Effective change management practices are essential for enhancing project resilience, stakeholder satisfaction, and organizational competitiveness in dynamic environments. Change orders may affect positively in manners of cost sometimes but it will always have negative impact on the schedule

