

Advanced Project Management

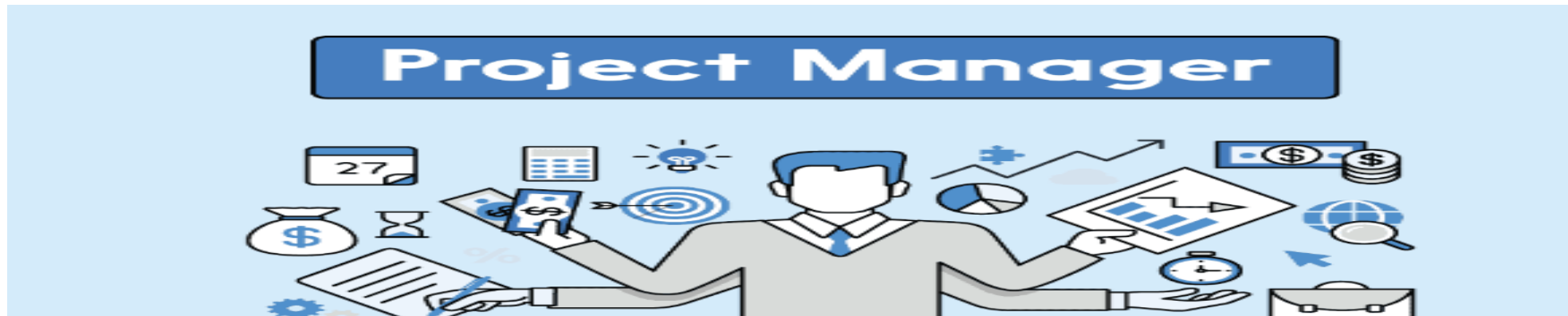
PMG 506
Lecture 4
-The Project Manager

The Project Manager



The Project Manager

The appointment of a PM (the project “leader”) is important to initiate any project. The PM is probably the major resource input to the project compared to the team, the capital, the materials, and any other inputs.



The Project Manager

As the leader, this person will take responsibility for planning, implementing, and completing the project, beginning with the job of getting things started. The way to get things started is to hold a meeting (kick-off meeting).



The Project Manager

The PM's first set of tasks, is typically to prepare a preliminary budget and schedule, to help select people to serve on the project team, to get to know the client (either internal or external), to make sure that the proper facilities are available, to ensure that any supplies required early in the project life are available when needed, and to take care of the routine details necessary to get the project moving.

3.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND THE PROJECT MANAGER

The Functional Manager versus the Project Manager

The functional manager in charge of one of a firm's functional departments such as marketing, engineering, or finance. Such department heads are usually specialists in the areas they manage. As functional managers, they are administratively responsible for deciding how something will be done, who will do it, and what resources will be devoted to accomplish the task.

The Functional Manager versus the Project Manager

The PM, new or experienced, must oversee many functional areas, each with its own specialists. Therefore, what is required is an ability to put many pieces of a task together to form a coherent whole.

The Functional Manager versus the Project Manager

That is, the project manager should be more skilled at synthesis, whereas the functional manager should be more skilled at analysis. The functional manager uses the *analytic approach* and the PM uses the *systems* approach. PM “manages” the project, but the functional managers may affect the choice of technology to be used by the project and the specific individuals who will do the work.

Functional vs. Project Managers

Functional Manager

- ❖ Expert in functional area
- ❖ Full authority over employees
- ❖ Competes for resources with other functional dept.
- ❖ Knows subordinates very well
- ❖ Functional environment is fairly stable & people are comfortable in their jobs

Project Manager

- ❖ May not be expert in any area
- ❖ May have limited authority over employees
- ❖ Competes for resources with other projects
- ❖ May not have known subordinates very long
- ❖ Project environment is temporary & people expect changes

3.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND THE PROJECT MANAGER

Project Responsibilities

The PM's responsibilities are broad and fall primarily into three separate areas: responsibility to the *parent organization*, responsibility to the *project and the client*, and responsibility to the *members of the project team*.

- **Above all, the PM must never allow senior management to be surprised!**
 - **“tweed coat management”**

PM Career Paths



PM Career Paths

The career path of a PM often starts with participation in small projects, and later in larger projects, until the person is given command over small and then larger projects.

Experience as a PM is seen as a mandatory or desirable step on the way up the corporate ladder.

PM Career Paths

The capability of a PM to meet the demands of senior management positions is evidenced by the PM's ability to achieve the project's goals without the need for *de jure* authority while operating in an environment typified by uncertainty, if not chaos.

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Acquiring Adequate Resources

Many details of resource purchase and usage are deferred until the project manager knows specifically what resources will be required and when.

Another issue may complicate the problem of resource acquisition for the PM.

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Acquiring Adequate Resources

Project and functional managers alike perceive the availability of resources to be strictly limited and thus a strict “win-lose” proposition. Under these conditions, the “winners” may be those managers who have solid political connections with top management. Often, there are times in the life of any project when success or survival may depend on the PM’s “friendship” with a champion or “sponsor” high in the parent organization

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Acquiring and Motivating Personnel

A major problem for the PM is the fact that most of the people needed for a project must be “borrowed.”

The functional manager may thus be a bit jealous or suspicious of the PM, a person who may have little interest in the routine work of the functional area.

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Acquiring and Motivating Personnel

It has long been assumed that in order to ensure creativity, professionals require minimal supervision, maximum freedom, and little control.



3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Acquiring and Motivating Personnel

The most effective team members have some common characteristics:

1. High-quality technical skills
2. Political sensitivity
3. Strong problem orientation
4. Strong goal orientation
5. High self-esteem

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

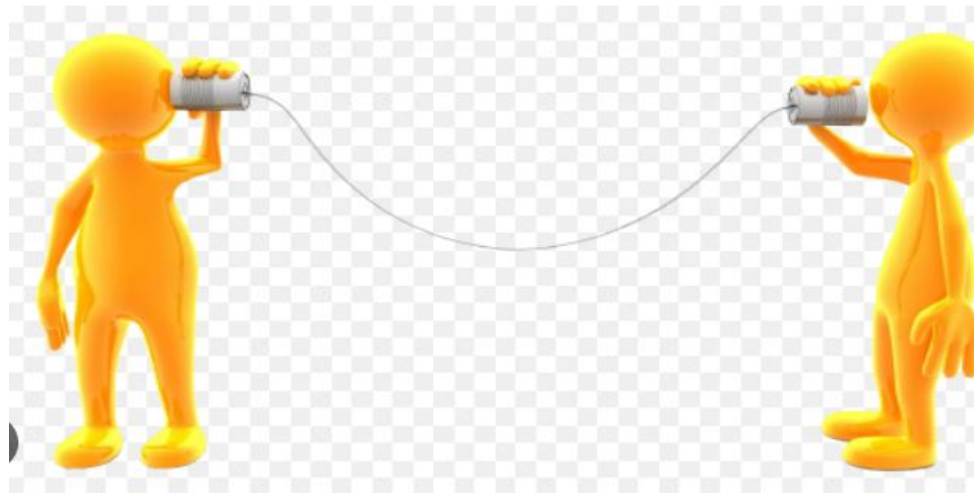
Failure and the Risk and Fear of Failure

Maintaining a balanced, positive outlook among team members is a delicate job. Setting budgets and schedules with sufficient slack but not sufficient to arouse suspicion in cost and time-conscious senior management, is also a delicate job.

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Breadth of Communication

Most of the PM's time is spent communicating with the many groups interested in the project



3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Negotiation

The project manager must be a highly skilled negotiator. There is almost no aspect of the PM's job that does not depend directly on this skill.



3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Dealing with Obstacles

From the beginning of the project to its termination, crises appear without warning. The better the planning, the fewer the crises, but no amount of planning can take account of the myriad of changes that can and do occur in the project's environment.

3.2 SPECIAL DEMANDS ON THE PROJECT MANAGER

Making Project Goal Trade-offs

The PM must make trade-offs between the project goals of cost, time, and performance and, of course, the ancillary goals.

Table 3-1 Relative Importance of Project Objectives during Different Stages of the Project Life Cycle

<i>Life Cycle Stage</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Schedule</i>	<i>Performance</i>
Formation	1	1	1
Buildup	3	1	2
Main	3	1	1
Phaseout	3	2	1

Note: 1 = high importance.

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Selection of the project manager is one of the two or three most important decisions concerning the project.

The following is a list of some of the most popular attributes, skills, and qualities that have been sought when selecting project managers:

The following is a list of some of the most popular attributes, skills, and qualities that have been sought when selecting project managers:

- A strong technical background
- A hard-nosed manager
- A mature individual
- Someone who is currently available
- Someone on good terms with senior executives
- A person who can keep the project team happy
- One who has worked in several different departments
- A person who can walk on (or part) the waters

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Above all, the best PM is *the one who can get the job done!* What is rare is the individual whose focus is on the completion of a difficult job, a “*closer*.” Of all the characteristics desirable in a PM, this *drive to complete the task* is the most important.

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Sensitivity

PM needs to sense interpersonal conflict on the project team or between team members and outsiders.

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Sensitivity

Successful PMs are not conflict avoiders, they sense conflict early, then confront and deal with it before the conflict escalates into interdepartmental and intradepartmental warfare.

The PM needs a sensitive set of technical sensors. It is common for competent and honest team members to try to hide their failures.

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Leadership, Ethics, and Management Style

Leadership has been defined (Tannenbaum et al., 1957) as “interpersonal influence, exercised in situations and directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals.”

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Leadership, Ethics, and Management Style

Another aspect of leadership is a strong sense of ethics. Nixon (1987) has identified some ethical missteps that are relatively common in business:

- “wired” bids and contracts (the winner has been predetermined)
- “buy-in” (bidding low with the intent of cutting corners or forcing subsequent contract changes)

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Leadership, Ethics, and Management Style

- kickbacks
- “covering” for team members (group cohesiveness)
- taking “shortcuts” (to meet deadlines or budgets)
- using marginal (substandard) materials
- compromising on safety
- violating standards
- consultant (e.g., auditors) loyalties (to employer or to client or to public)

3.3 SELECTING THE PROJECT MANAGER

Ability to Handle Stress

There do appear to be four major causes of stress often associated with the management of projects:

First, never develop a consistent set of procedures and techniques to manage their work.

Second, having “too much on their plates.”

Third, a high need to achieve that is consistently frustrated.

Fourth, the parent organization is having a major change.

Summary

This chapter addressed the subject of the PM. The PM's role in the organization and responsibilities to both the organization and the project team were discussed first. Common PM career paths were also described. Next, the unique demands typically placed on project managers were detailed and the task of selecting the PM was addressed.

The following specific points were made in the chapter.

Two factors crucial to the success of the project are its support by top management and the existence of a problem orientation, rather than discipline orientation, within the team members.

Compared to a functional manager, a PM is a generalist rather than a specialist, a synthesizer rather than an analyst, and a facilitator rather than a supervisor.

Summary

The PM has responsibilities to the parent organization, the project itself, and the project team. The unique demands on a PM concern seven areas:

- Acquiring adequate physical resources
- Acquiring and motivating personnel
- Dealing with obstacles
- Making goal trade-offs
- Maintaining a balanced outlook in the team
- Communicating with all parties
- Negotiating

The most common characteristics of effective project team members are:

- High-quality technical skills
- Political sensitivity
- Strong problem orientation

Summary

- **High self-esteem**

To handle the variety of project demands effectively, the PM must understand the basic goals of the project, have the support of top management, build and maintain a solid information network, and remain flexible about as many project aspects as possible.

The best person to select as PM is the one who will get the job done.

Valuable skills for the PM are technical and administrative credibility, political sensitivity, and an ability to get others to commit to the project, a skill otherwise known as leadership.

Environment Everything outside the system that delivers inputs or receives outputs from the system.

Facilitator A person who helps people overcome problems, either with technical issues or with other people.

Functional One of the standard organization disciplines such as finance, marketing, accounting, or operations.

Trade-Off Allowing one aspect to get worse in return for another aspect getting better. *T*

weed Coat Management The concept that highly educated people such as engineers require a special type of management.

GLOSSARY

Analytic Approach Breaking problems into their constituent parts to understand the parts better and thereby solve the problem.

Benefit-Cost A ratio to evaluate a proposed course of action.

Champion A person who spearheads an idea or action and “sells” it throughout the organization.

Contingency Plan An alternative for action if the expected result fails to materialize.

Discipline An area of expertise.



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