IT Project Management

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1   Introduction

IT project management is the broad activity that results in IT projects being completed. There are about as many ways of managing a project as there are managers and projects.

The general consensus that is that *good* IT project management is an application of an aggregate of skills to manage different aspects of a project, such as managing:

- project scope: resist scope creep.

- project time: estimating with unexpected events in mind

- project cost: estimating with unexpected events in mind

- people: be a competent people-manager; attract talent to the project, keep people engaged and happy.

- quality: know what quality checks need to be in place and how stringently that methodology should be applied.

- risk: there are many risks that projects face, many of them unexpected. lead developer leaving, technology changing or not materializing, technology not maturing, etc.

- communication: often communication need to be facilitated between team members, business members, external parties, etc.

- procurement: ensure everyone involved has what they need. this may involve software tools, licenses, etc., or even a comfortable chair.

- integration: projects are rarely stand-alone. integrating within the larger picture may involve communicating and convincing other teams, etc.

2 IT Project Portfolio

The individual IT projects are often part of a larger IT portfolio. At an organization level, such a portfolio must itself be managed. Here, the role of managenet is higher level, to manage where individual projects fit into the bigger picture.

- Determine need:

  - Must have: there is an internal or an external mandate to have the project complete. This often comes with deadlines and potentially penalties.

  - Business critical: the project is critical to company success.

  - Nice to have: projects that help the bottom line, but are not critical to success.

- Determine priority and scheduling. A *must have* project may benefit greatly from the *nice-to-have* project, so scheduling may bump up the *nice-to-have* to be done sooner.

- Allocate budgets: budgets often drive the amount of work that goes on in project. By allocating resources, the potfolio management can guide which projects get more bandwidth than others.

Projects are often initiated by creating a project proposal, which often outlines the need, approach, and rough budget guestimate. This gets reviewed by project portfolio stakeholders and upon approval the project is initiated.

Everyone involved should be aware of the budget guestimate—and whether it's an overestimate or underestime. The budget often determines whether the project was a good idea or a huge money sink.

3 Roles

Just as there are different aspects of the project to be managed, there are different roles to play for "managers".

- Project manager: manages communication between all parties. Plan and execute the project, controlling for risks, and handling all the unexpected issues that often arrise during all projects.

- Project sponsor/owner: the business manager that has fiscal ownership of the project.

- Project champion: the business manager that pushes (handholds) the project through the stages; often someone who reports to the project sponsor.