

Project Managers

Description:

The role of the Project Manager is to plan, execute, and finalize projects according to strict deadlines and within budget. This includes acquiring resources and coordinating the efforts of team members and third-party contractors or consultants in order to deliver projects according to plan. The Project Manager will also define the project's objectives and oversee quality control throughout its life cycle.

Responsibilities:

A project manager is the person who has the overall responsibility for the success of projects. Below is responsibilities list for a project manager.

- Manage the project taking into account integration across all areas.
- Engage with stakeholders.
- Develop Project Plan.
- Direct project resources.
- Monitor and manage the project schedule.
- Monitor and manage the project budget.
- Monitor and manage the project risk.
- Deal with operational issues.
- Organize steering committee meetings; including ensuring those minutes will be taken.
- Report to the steering committee, raising strategic issues.
- Prepare Project Status Reports and Project Change Requests for the steering committee.
- Ensure project meets requirements and objectives.
- Manage project team members.
- Negotiate and resolve issues as they arise across areas of the project and where they impact on other activities, systems and projects.

- Look after the interests of the project team.
- Organize and chair project reference group meetings, as appropriate.
- Communicate project status to project sponsor, all team members, and other relevant stakeholders and involved parties.
- Maintain project documentation.

Additional important remarks, in order to be successful, the project manager must be given support and authority by senior management.

Role of Engineers in Project Management:

Engineering assignments are often completed by project teams. The engineering project manager serves in the role of team leader and has the ultimate responsibility for the successful performance of the project. The project manager has key responsibility for managing the project's scope, deliverables, schedule, budget and quality.

1. Scope

The scope of the project defines what the project is intended to accomplish. It may contain a "problem statement" or similar summary of the project goals. Scopes define the key project activities, their anticipated sequence and desired outcomes.

The project manager must be wary of "scope creep"--as the project progresses, scope creep occurs when new, unanticipated tasks are identified that can increase the cost of the project or delay meeting the assigned schedule.

2. Work Products

Work products, or "deliverables," are defined at the onset of a project. Smaller projects may conclude with one final major deliverable, which could be a study report or a set of design plans. Larger projects frequently have interim deliverables at key milestones which are used to assess the progress and direction of the project.

Project managers are also responsible for many routine deliverables including regular progress reporting, updated schedules, meeting minutes and project correspondence records.

3. Schedule

Once the schedule for the project is determined, the project manager or her designee will monitor the progress of the project. Schedules can be as simple as major milestone schedules, or, for larger projects, very detailed schedules can be developed using specialized scheduling software. Detailed schedules define not only the start and completion dates for an individual task, but the relation (or "dependence") of that task on other project tasks.

Budget

Project managers often use a "work breakdown structure" to estimate the level of effort for individual work tasks. These tasks are then rolled up into an overall project budget. This estimate of the required level of effort is then compared against available funding for a project, and work scopes are adjusted as needed to keep the project budget within the funding limits.

Once the project budget is established, the project manager tracks the actual project expenditures against the forecast expenditures and implements corrective action as needed. As the project progresses, the project manager periodically prepares "cost to complete" estimates to determine whether the project can be completed within the assigned budget.

Quality

The project manager is responsible for assuring that all internal project quality assurance procedures are followed. Each member of the project team is charged with implementing quality assurance checks and reviews on the project tasks completed under their direction.

The project may require formal reviews or independent audits of the quality program implementation at key milestones in the project process.

Project Team

On larger projects, a deputy project manager may assist the project manager. Other task leaders may lead selected elements of the project. Often, a senior manager assists

the project manager with complex issues such as contracting, insurance or the allocation of staff and other resources to the project team.

Qualifications

Engineers typically serve in staff positions, or task leader positions, prior to advancing to the role of project manager. Specialized training in the project management functions provided by external sources (seminars, on-line training) or by in-house training programs prepares the project manager for success in this role.