Perspectives on projects, project success and team work

Taking a socially constructed view – a project can be defined as a temporary inter-subjective phenomenon that exists within the communication network of many individuals to which resources are assigned to do work that brings about beneficial change.

Objective phenomena often associated with a project are:

Resources such as raw materials, equipment, tools, human resources and skills, finance etc.

Work on a project is usually broken down into activities and tasks denoted by a strong verb, such as design, create, collect, deliver etc.

Products are created as a result of product work. These are the tangible objects and will depend on the type of project. For example, a business project might create a strategy document; and education project may produce training material and deliver a workshop; an events project would produce promotional material, a timetable etc.

Individuals involved with a project will be the members of a team who undertake the project work and other stakeholders who can influence, contribute to, or will be affected by, the project.

Beneficial change refers to a subjective phenomenon associated with a project. Projects can be considered to be “engines of change” (BS6079 2010). Changes brought about by a project can have intended and unintended consequences, that can be beneficial or detrimental, and are often referred to as project outcomes (as distinct from outputs or products).

Project life cycle

1. Create idea of a project in individuals' minds and develop a project proposal.
2. Design a process for project delivery and develop a project plan.
3. Coordinate, and integrate project work to deliver change (incorporating reflection).
4. Reflect on experience to identify lessons learnt and process improvements.
5. Bring the project to an end with a final handover.

Adapted from Maylor (2010) and Morris (2013).
Sustainable development: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland 1987).

Three dimensions: economic growth, environmental protection, social progress.

A re-conceptualisation of project success

Project constraints

Cost

Quality + Scope = Performance

Time

Levels of success (adapted from Dalcher 2011)

- Project management success
- Product success
- Business value
- Future potential

On completion
Short & long term
Short & long term
Long term

Author: Karen Thompson
Published in the UK by Bournemouth University © 2015
Perspectives on project, project success and team work

TEAM WORK

Building on human strengths, team work can be optimised by meeting individual needs:
- **Involvement** in decision making
- **Practice and feedback** to develop competence
- **Purpose** and **connecting** with others.

Motivational trifecta
- Autonomy
- Mastery
- Purpose
  (Pink 2009)

Human brains evolved for:
- Survival and adapting to change
- Problem-solving
- Social collaboration

**Individual capabilities for project team work**

- Meeting deadlines
- Ability to generate ideas
- Verbal comms
- Reliability
- Handling conflict positively
- Coping with uncertainty
- Driven to succeed
- Written comms
- Problem solving
- Working with others
- Handling ambiguity

**Project team member**

**Author:** Karen Thompson

Published in the UK by Bournemouth University © 2015
References


Perspectives on project success

Project Assessment

Was the project deadline met?
Were all milestones achieved?
Did the schedule slip?

Have all project costs been recorded?
Are costs within budget?
Is the overall project cost within budget?

Have new opportunities been created?
Is the use/impact of the change being monitored?

Have all products been tested?
Has feedback been obtained?
Are all products fit-for-purpose?

Are all changes agreed?

Were all products delivered?
Were all products complete?

Were all products delivered?
Were all products complete?

Were all products delivered?
Were all products complete?

What has been the impact of the project on the business or organisation?
Have the expected benefits been delivered?
Has the project added value to the business or organisation?

What has been the environmental & social impact of the project?
Is the change sustainable?
What impact will the change have on:
- Carbon emissions / energy?
- Biodiversity
- Well-being?
- Local economy?

Author: Karen Thompson
Published in the UK by Bournemouth University © 2015