

2) What are the eight major problems that act as barriers to learning from post-project reviews?

According to Chapter 10 of the textbook, there are eight main barriers to learning from post-project reviews, which are divided into four specific areas, with two barriers per area. [Psychological barriers] include the “*inability to reflect*” and “*memory bias*”. This area concerns with an individual’s uniqueness, but more about his/her struggle to be cognizant or think in a way that’s commonly acceptable by others. It’s possible that an individual’s thought-process is impaired, causing the individual to forget certain things at any time, leading him/her to make poor judgements and decisions; another possible scenario is when an individual processes information slower than others for various possible reasons (e.g., neurological disorder, language barrier, distracting environment, etc.). Whatever the reason, both psychological barriers negatively affect the way in which an individual thinks, and interprets external situations, which spans into relational, professional, and other personal struggles. Anyway, in the context of project management, psychological barriers can target any project team member and/or stakeholder; and if at least one individual encounters these struggles without addressing them nor taking self-care, the resulting defects can spread to others in a repeatedly, negative cycle, hurting overall morale (weak decision-making, low self-esteem, etc.), which affects the ability to reflect on noticeable changes in the project’s progress and lessons learned through post-project reviews. Instead, such barriers can make individuals focus on less important parts of the project that are generally easier to deal with and/or require minimum amount of personal responsibility.

[Team-based shortcomings] is another area of concern, which includes “*reluctance to blame*” and “*poor internal communication*.” Similar to *psychological barriers* as mentioned earlier, team-struggles also negatively affects the way in which project team members behave/act while at work; in fact, team-struggles result partially from *psychological barriers*. Poor team morale prevents effective communication internally, which may cause project team members to argue among themselves about the authority to control certain project assets (e.g., work ownership) and any of the six success factors (scope, time, cost, resources, performance, and value), and the accuracy of project statuses. Even though team members share a common end-goal, there could be at least one member who decides to handle difficult situations in a passive-aggressive manner by choosing to be less constructive toward other members’ performances in order to avoid as much criticism and blame as possible; and their reluctance to share their own knowledge leads to decreased collaboration and poor team dynamics – both are important whenever team members are required to work at a fast pace in order to complete time-consuming activities & tasks on time.

Even if some knowledge is shared explicitly, the remaining obscurity still contributes to an overall, unhelpful knowledge: an epitome of [epistemological

constraints], which includes “*difficult to generalize*,” and “*tacitness to process knowledge*.” If the internal project team and project-involved stakeholders fail to understand the project’s status and progress at any point, they will not only be more confused further down the project lifecycle, but also be required to further assess project status and progress, and verify accurate results. Indeed, additional assessments and/or evaluations would help reduce overall project risks and maintain project performance, but until these are achieved, the project would already be behind schedule, face cost overrun, and be on its way to early closure.

Moreover, [managerial problems], rather than individual- and team-struggles, may be the primary barrier to learning from post-project reviews. Managerial problems include “*time constraints*,” and “*bureaucratic overhead*.” As seen in *team-based shortcomings*, some projects have tight schedules, so project team members must apply good time management and be able to maximize their productivity by working collaboratively and helping one another overcome individual struggles for the benefit of the entire team; there could also be disagreements over project control because the project may lack transparent leadership and/or clear expectations with regards to individual accountability and responsibility. In this case, a good organizational structure is needed to ensure the project organization is functioning the way it’s meant to be; and in reference to Chapter 11, certain factors have to be considered to create an effective structure, such as the organization’s size, complexity, and interdependencies among different functions of the same organization. Upper management is accountable for maintaining both a strong organizational structure and organizational standards to keep members involved in the project compliant with realistic, administrative expectations; however, if unrealistic or unclear expectations exist, the upper management needs to clarify them to the lower level individuals, otherwise, everyone will contribute to weakening the organization’s structure by lacking accountability, responsibility, and reliability. Also, upper management needs to provide necessary support to managers at lower levels and the people they supervise to do their jobs efficiently, and grow professionally; importantly, upper management has to acknowledge the efforts by lower level individuals in their reflecting on the project’s progress during post-project reviews. By feeling seen and heard, lower level individuals bring back their trust in upper management, and their motivation to work and learn at the same time to produce better project outcomes.

3) What is a project audit? Why is it important?

A project audit is a form of evaluation used to fairly assess details on risks and issues in the project so that accurate results, and lessons learned from the process of obtaining the results, can be communicated to stakeholders involved in the project including, but not limited to, the project manager, project team members & business team members, a project sponsor/champion from the business side, a senior executive, and the Project Management Office (PMO), if it exists in the project organization. A project audit has many advantages. First, the project auditor can conduct one at any stage of the project lifecycle (preferably once during the progression of the project, and once at the end of the project), either formally – using well-established standards in a

large organization – or informally – by meeting with every project-involved stakeholder regularly, in smaller organizations, to gather unique information from each person. The project audit helps to clearly understand the knowns and unknowns in order to gain further awareness of existing barriers to project success, including uncertainty: an inevitable situation that needs to be continuously monitored & controlled in order to mitigate the overall project risks, and protect the six success factors (scope, time, cost, resources, performance, and value). The project manager needs to consider the knowns and unknowns in a project, and his/her team members' findings, in order to re-assess the main purpose and the scope of the project for accuracy and alignment with organizational vision.

Since details regarding knowns and unknowns are documented or noted, the project audit provides to project-involved stakeholders, "explicit knowledge," which they could use to make the project progress more efficiently and effectively. In addition, a project audit allows project-involved stakeholders to update the project status as the project passes through its lifecycle. The continuously updated project status allows the stakeholders involved, primarily the project manager and his/her team, to see if the project has met at least the core requirements that were previously set by the project sponsor, and the triple constraint (scope, time, and cost) in that project plans have been followed consistently in terms of schedule and budget, and have been aligned with organizational objectives. By knowing and understanding the project status, the project manager and his/her team can adjust their work approaches/processes/procedures in order to better improve the project status for the next cycle period. Such improvement will get the project manager and his/her team closer to achieving organizational vision, and meeting both clients' expectations on time & on budget (or under budget, if possible) and the original scope; and get the project manager and his/her team to remain compliant with both industry standards and broad legal requirements (federal, state, and local).

Grade: 95 / 100

Professor's Feedback:

2. Good coverage and examples, nothing to really pick at.
3. An audit starts with identifying standards and metrics then moves into data and examination; then report and review the results.

The audit is often conducted by external sources, but does not have to be. The important thing here is that the Audit team is unbiased.

Review of processes, standards and control are usually the focus of the auditor or audit team.

You brought up communication which is an important aspect. Good audit results will increase Stakeholder's confidence in the project team.

I don't totally agree that an audit is aligned with organization vision – the audit is a tool that serves a "reality check". However, if you meant to say that an audit will get/keep the project on track so the project can continue to meet organization objectives, then I'm OK with that.