

Q1.a) Discuss the role of business (delivery) projects, development projects and change projects in achieving a competitive edge in modern industrial firms. How can they be used in a concerted way? Highlight situations or industries where each of the three types is especially crucial.

In today's society and modern industrial operations, the business (delivery) project, development project and change project have an important role in achieving a competitive edge. Each type of its projects has its own advantage and a combination of these 3 can provide a competitive edge.

Business (delivery) project is a type of project that is often concluded via contract between a client and company, as the purpose of these types of projects is to create a client-specific product or service that is then delivered and possibly implemented at the customer (Tonnquist, 2021, p. 43). For this type of project, customer satisfaction is an important aspect, then by trying to fulfill the customer's requirements and/or using effective methods in comparison with other companies, it leads to the customer's closeness and trust, which is an important component for this type of project. This type of project has a big role in today's society, as it is used today in retail and in some e-commerce. (Maxim & Amelie & Tatina, 2023).

Development project is a type of project that has its focus on technology, as the idea for this type is to "develop new technologies, products or services for manufacturing and/or sale to mass market or for use in the firm's delivery projects" (Maxim & Amelie & Tatina, 2023). It is important for companies that apply this type of project to have a good risk platform, as such projects consist of some risk taking. In order to achieve a competitive advantage with this type of project, it is important to offer customers innovative products and services that meet the customer's needs and to be at the forefront compared to competing companies. This type of project is an important cornerstone for innovatively driven companies such as technology companies and medicine.

Change projects compared to business projects and development projects, the focus is on the organization, as the aim is to improve the organization's routines and behavior among employers to achieve a better performance in the organization as a whole (Tonnquist, 2021, p. 43). This type of project can contribute to a competitive advantage in changing structure, improving work methods or improving the working environment, which in the long run can contribute to efficiency in companies and increase motivation among employees. This type of project is particularly important in the industry where flexibility is important, such as logistics.

A company can achieve a competitive edge by using all 3 project types, for example if a company is to invest in a new project that it has not worked with before, it will then have to apply methods for development project management. New projects lead to changes in the organization (PMI, Organizational change management, report, p.2) and in this case change management is needed. To then sell on the results of the new project, so a business project management can be a good starting point. A combination of all three of these can contribute to increased creativity and effectiveness, which can contribute to a unique innovation, thus leading to the company being at the forefront compared to competitors.

Q1.b) Based on the ideas in McKinsey & Co's report "The Art Of Project Leadership: Delivering the world's largest projects", PMI's report "Enabling organizational change through strategic initiatives" (available on Canvas) and scholarly PM literature, discuss similarities and differences of managing delivery projects and change projects in terms of the key PM knowledge areas, skills, and approaches.

Delivery projects and change projects differ in concept, this in turn leads to management differences for the two different types as each type needs an adapted management ability. According to "Shenhar & Dvir", project management is adapted to the project's complexity, technology and management strategy must take into account the various project's goals and challenges. Since projects that are "high tech and high technology uncertainty" need greater adaptability from the project manager compared to projects that are "low tech and low uncertainty" as their, following plans are more important (Shenhar & Dvir. pp. 607-632). According to PMI's report, when it comes to change project management, it is important to have a change strategy that is adapted to the organization and its culture. This strategy should clearly include certain communication and engagement of all interested parties, so it becomes easier to involve these interested parties. Change management is complemented by project management as it is a cornerstone to ensure that the strategic initiative is delivered on time with the right quality and within budget via a good project plan which in turn must include stakeholder and risk management (PMI's report, p1-16) .It is the same for delivery projects. What differs between these two projects is the scope, as for delivery projects the focus is on the production and delivery of a specific work, this means that scope management is more applicable for this type of project compared to change projects as the focus is more on change as it may require more time to achieve.

Referenser:

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Q2.a) Describe and compare the standardized stage-gate and agile project management approaches in terms of their key components, goals, challenges, and areas of applicability.

Stage-gate and agile project management are two common methods of project management.

Stage-gate is a sequential process, the project as a whole is divided into different phases, as each phase must deliver a specific result. Usually at each phase there is a follow-up (gate reviews) when the results of the terminated phase are followed and based on that it is decided whether the project should be continued or interrupted. Agile projects, on the other hand, can be described as a cyclic process, where the project consists of various short stages that are constantly followed up by continuous feedback and deliveries, based on this it becomes possible to take quick measures for the unwanted change.

Stage-gate and agile project management have different goals, then for stage-gate the focus is on minimizing risks, since the concept is to deliver a result within a structured and controlled process and therefore the fewer risks or the better the risk analysis and management platform have the safer the project is carried out. However, for agile projects, it is different. The Agile project focuses more on flexibility, therefore the project is based on different short stages, which in turn makes the project more adaptable to the unpredictable changes.

When it comes to the challenge, it is difficult for both project methods to handle the unpredictable, as in the stage-gate method this can lead to delays, especially if a mistake is missed during a follow-up after the gate and is discovered in the final phase of the project, then it becomes costly to undo it. For the agile project, it can also be difficult to work with something where the end result is often unclearly defined, which can in turn affect the motivation of employees.

Agile and stage-gate projects have different areas of application, as the scope of agile projects is usually unclear at the beginning of the project, so this type is more applicable in projects that can contain various changes and uncertainty, for example technology development. Stage-gate projects are applicable in projects that have a clear scope and goal where the desired achieved result is clearly defined, for example development projects, where you have a clear picture of the project's outcome, such as design, construction, etc.(Tonnquist, 2021, kap 3, 4,5,7,13).

Q2.b) Based on the Roland Berger and PwC reports on PMOs (available on Canvas), discuss how the ideas and recommendations can be used for enhancing standardized and agile project management in technology-intensive settings. Highlight the main challenges and PMO's key functions/areas of focus in both environments.

Both agile and standardized project management have their advantages, as in the case of standardized project management, it is a method that helps an organization to consistently deliver a result with a reduced risk through good risk management. Agile offers a more flexible way of working that can handle the uncertainty of a project in different phases. By improving standardized and agile project management in technology-intensive settings, you can achieve some competitive advantage. According to the report "The PwC Global Project Management Report 2012" this improvement can be achieved within a continuous improvement in the organization and culture creation which in turn this leads to the encouragement of team members, and to overcome doubts it is important with communication in the technology-intensive projects as the purpose is to ensure that all parties agree on expectations of the project. In order to facilitate communication, the use of technology is important as it can in turn be a way to facilitate communication. In the technology-intensive environment, it is relevant to use agile project management as it is a more flexible method to manage the uncertainty in the project and at the same time increase flexibility (PWC, global project management report. 2012). In addition to these methods, it can also be beneficial to implement a PMO (Project Management Office), this can ensure that project management is carried out in a standardized and efficient way, and the PMO can be good for risk identification (PWC: is your PMO executing your business strategy. 2022). As we also know, projects by their nature are time-limited and unique, in order to get the best result from a project, it is important to have the right knowledge and skills, therefore it is to an advantage to invest in the development and training of team members (Roland, B. Unleashing the PMO's potential. 2019. p.15-16) . The methods mentioned above contribute to improvement, but challenges can still present such as difficulties in responding to changes, lack of the needed skills, technology or resources. These opponents can be overcome, through strong involvement of the entire organization and a clear vision.

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Q3.a) Analyze the interplay between the projects and the permanent organization (SEC AB).

The organization described appears to be a project-based organization. Since the organization works with different projects and the company's income is generated by different projects (Tonnquist, 2021, kap1). For the company SEC AB, projects are very important, the success of projects and the permanent organization are connected and it is projects that generate income for the company. The company has 15 senior consultants who are an important asset for projects to succeed. In addition to that, the company generates different assets for different projects, such as a specific infrastructure or the younger employees. Nowadays, companies face employee dissatisfaction and the seniors do not want to be active in the internal non-invoiced work. This, in turn, can lead to various competence deficiencies, which can lead to problems in the execution of various projects. Over time, it will affect the company's brand, which is an important part of company sales.

For companies to start achieving better results, it is important to create a balance between the paid and non-paid activities. New methods and opportunities for motivation need to be found or created to encourage the seniors to the internal activities. The reduced income is due to resource availability at each project as there are delays in various projects due to the fact that the junior project members are in demand, and in this case it seems that a better management of projects is needed where greater emphasis should be placed on risk management.

Q3.b) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages for the individual project member to work in this type of organization.

SEC AB is a project-based organization, where the advantage of this type of organization for the individual project member is several, of which we can mention the possibility to work with different types of projects, which is something that SEC AB offers, as they are active in several different industries such as construction, mining and manufacturing. Another advantage is that opportunities to work with different senior consultants who have a lot of experience in their field of knowledge, this is an important opportunity for junior work as they get an important chance to learn more and gain more experience, and lastly you can mention the continuous learning process as with each project there are new things to learn and with each company you collaborate, there are always some things to pick up both for the workers and for the organization as a whole (Tonnquist, 2021, kap1) .

But every organization also has its disadvantages, in this case we can mention dissatisfaction due to a lack of resources. According to the organization's description, junior members are usually overbooked, which leads to delays in the project and this leads to stress among the rest, which affects the quality of the work. The uncertainty can also be a disadvantage as all revenue for the company is generated by projects, which can lead to uncertainty for workers if something should happen to the project. Another disadvantage mentioned in the description is the internal unpaid activities, as attending them requires time from workers and perhaps that time they want to spend on other things, and the company sees an absence of seniors in these activities, which in turn can affect the junior member's development.

Q3.c) Reflect on some possible reasons for the negative development and provide tentative recommendations to the CEO. Which areas you would like to investigate further to increase your confidence that the suggested course of action is correct?

Based on the organization's description, it can be reasoned that the negative development can be due to several different reasons, among other things one can mention the lack of presence of senior consultants at the internal activities, these activities are important for the company's development and a lack of these can lead to a lack of innovative and development capabilities, which will affect the company in the long run. Another reason can be the lack of resources, the company seems to have problems with overbooked junior project members, this can affect the remaining members of a project as they can begin to experience higher levels of stress which can lead to a lack of workers and delays in a project affect in its revenue, then as previously mentioned so the company's revenue comes from the various projects. This, in turn, can make workers feel some kind of insecurity. I would recommend investing more in project management as a good part of the company's problems seem to arise due to ineffective project management which has led to delays. This can be achieved, by spending more time on the pre-study phase and planning, using a better and more efficient work type in project planning, and more focus should be on better work planning and work distribution. Another aspect that the company should invest in is the inclusion of all employees within it, so motivation will increase and this can improve performance. Inclusion of workers can also contribute to better planning when everyone contributes with their opinions and decisions are made jointly, so this leads to all employees being aware of their obligations and how they should interact. The company should also invest time in following up and evaluating continuously, because then it is easier to discover the newly arisen problems and remedy them before they escalate.

Referenser:

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