IT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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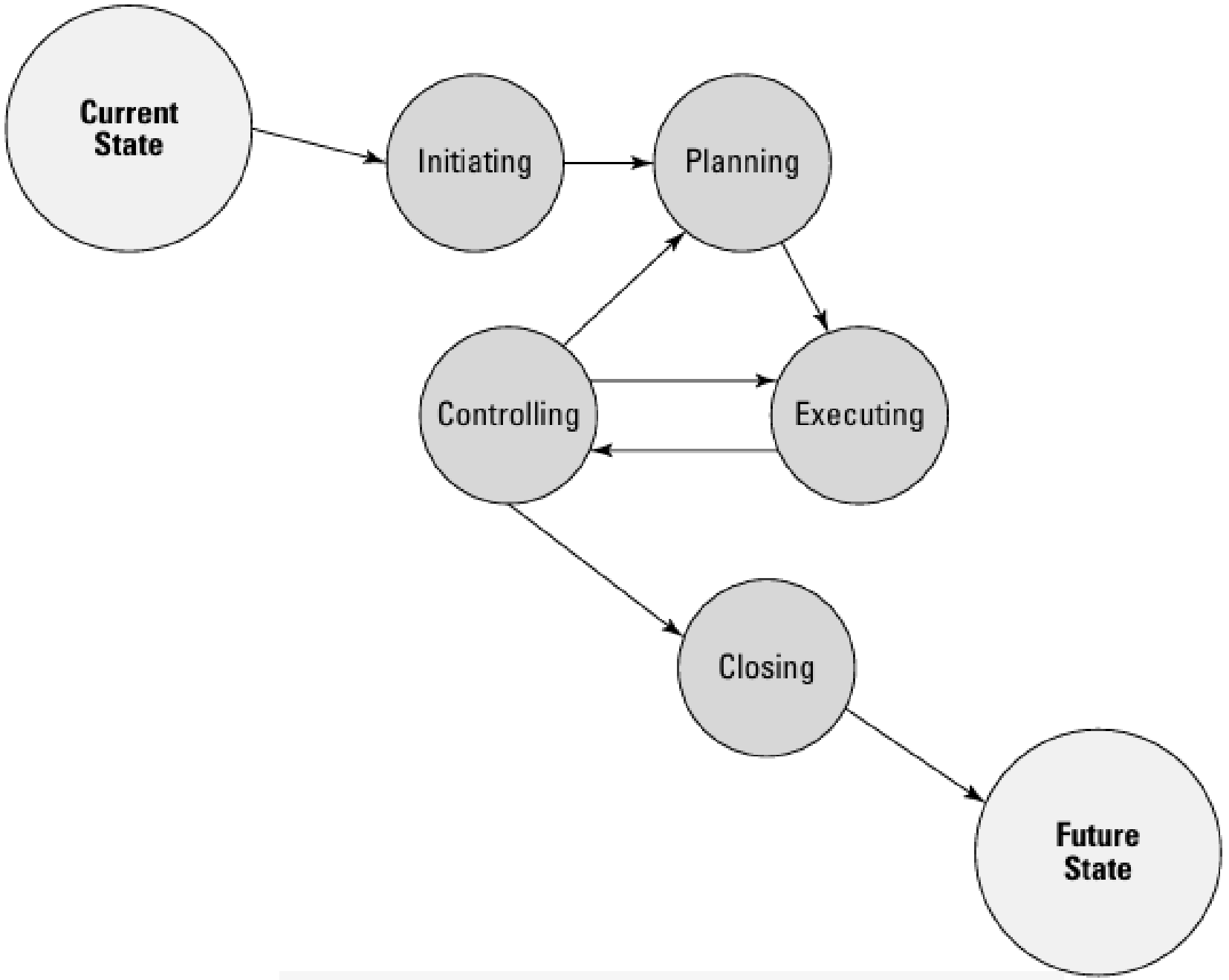
What is the difference between Scope and Objective.

Dealing with Politics

- **Don’t feed the fire**. When stakeholders try to get you on their side of an issue by complaining, gossiping, or moaning about a problem, a project solution, or another team member, don’t agree or contribute.
- **If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.** Don’t say anything negative about a stakeholder that you wouldn’t say in his or her presence. Do share constructive criticism openly and certainly do share compliments and kudos loudly and proudly.
- **Do stand up.** When you know you’re right, don’t succumb to what you know is wrong. Tact, honesty, and logic can go a long way here, but don’t roll over just because someone higher in the organization has a differing opinion. It’s okay to disagree but only stand up when you know you have the ammo to back up your position. Also be sure to stand up and admit when you’re wrong. This goes a long way to increasing your credibility and integrity.

Dealing with Politics

- **Do protect your reputation.** When you get down to it, your reputation is important. You must deliver on your promises, keep out of the gossip, treat everyone fairly, and focus on project deliverables. In other words, have integrity.
- **Don't micromanage**. As a software project manager, chances are you've come up through the ranks. You've worked with different software languages, developed countless applications, and can out-code your project team members. But not anymore. Your job is to lead, manage, and provide guidance. You must let your project team do the work.
- **Do play fair.** Some team members, stakeholders, and customers will drive your nuts, but you must treat everyone the same when it comes to discipline, time off, and kudos. If you're fair to your stakeholders, they'll respect you — and respect is what you need the most to abstain from office politics.


Current State
Initiating
Planning
Controlling
Executing
Closing
Future State

Initiating the project

- A problem needs to be solved.
- An opportunity needs to be captured.
- A profit needs to be made.
- An existing environment needs to be improved.
- A process needs to be speeded up and/or made more efficient

Conducting a feasibility study: In formal project management a feasibility study examines the high-level goals of the project, the needed resources, and any other factors that could influence the project's success. The point of a feasibility study is to determine whether this project can feasibly accomplish the time, cost, and scope objectives.

Determining the project deliverable: If the project is deemed feasible, then a product description is created. The product description is an early rendition of the product scope. The product scope for most software projects consists of the design documents that detail the result of the software project. In some instances, the product scope is very detailed — down to the color scheme, button fonts, and graphics. In other instances, the customer leaves the details to the project team, choosing instead to focus the product description on detailing the ideal functions of the software.

Creating the project charter: A project charter is written by the person who has the authority within an organization to authorize the project to move forward. This individual has the positional power to authorize resources and funds.

Project charter

It identifies the project manager in writing.

It identifies the project sponsor in writing.

It authorizes the project manager to spend organizational resources on the project.

It describes the product. That’s right; the description you worked so hard to create goes in the project charter.

It specifically identifies the business need that the project was undertaken to address. If you have a business case, you can pull information from there.

Planning the project

- The second process group, the planning process, determines how the project will move forward after the project feasibility, description, and charter are complete.
- Planning isn’t a one-time deal. Planning is an iterative (or repeated) process that happens as many times as it must throughout the project life cycle.
- The point of planning in software project management is to communicate exactly what you’ll be doing in the project.

Examining project planning approaches

- **Rolling wave planning:** Waves crest before they fall. The concept of the rolling wave approach is to crest with planning and then do the work. You have several successions of planning and executing your plan. This is a fine approach in a software project.
- **Scrum:** You may have heard of the software project management approach of scrum, named after the rugby term for getting a ball into play. Scrum calls for quick, daily meetings with members of the project team. The focus of these meetings is simple. You identify what each team member has done so far, what team members will be doing today, and what issues need to be solved in the next week or so.
- **Extreme programming:** This software creation approach calls for rounds of planning, testing, team involvement, and execution. Communication and teamwork are paramount in this approach, which puts a primary focus on customer satisfaction.

Executing the project

- Beginning your procurement activities, if needed
- Working with your organization’s quality assurance programs
- Communicating project information to appropriate stakeholders
- Managing project risk assessments
- Developing the project team
- Managing conflicts among the team and among stakeholders

Controlling the project

- Controlling is all about ensuring the project is done according to plan. You control stuff — quality, scope, budgets, the schedule, risks — and you get to monitor performance.
- Don’t forget to document all these changes in performance so that you can write up a thorough lessons learned document later.
- The reason we relate controlling and executing is that they (more than all the other process groups) depend on each other. As your project team executes the project plan, you control the work by ensuring the quality is present as planned.
- You ensure that the costs are kept in check, and that the schedule is consistent, as planned. And if there’s trouble afoot, you go back to the planning process group

Closing the project

- Tying up loose financial ends: Doing your final math to see where the project stands financially, verifying the procurement documents, verifying the deliverables, and so on.
- Unveiling the product to the customer for final acceptance: When the customer is happy, he or she signs off on the project. Finalizing the project documentation: Final reports on the project team, including time spent on the project, final costs, and so on, need to be completed, as well as the lessons learned documentation.
- Finally, you can archive the project records, and if you've been working on gathering historical documentation all along, this part should go surprisingly smoothly and then the project manager, and the project team go on to other projects.

Living with Stakeholders

- The project manager (that’s you)
- The project sponsor
- The project team
- Functional managers
- Subject matter experts (SMEs) who help you make decisions
- Anyone who can directly influence decisions about the project
- Customers who pay for the project expenses
- End users

Loving your project team

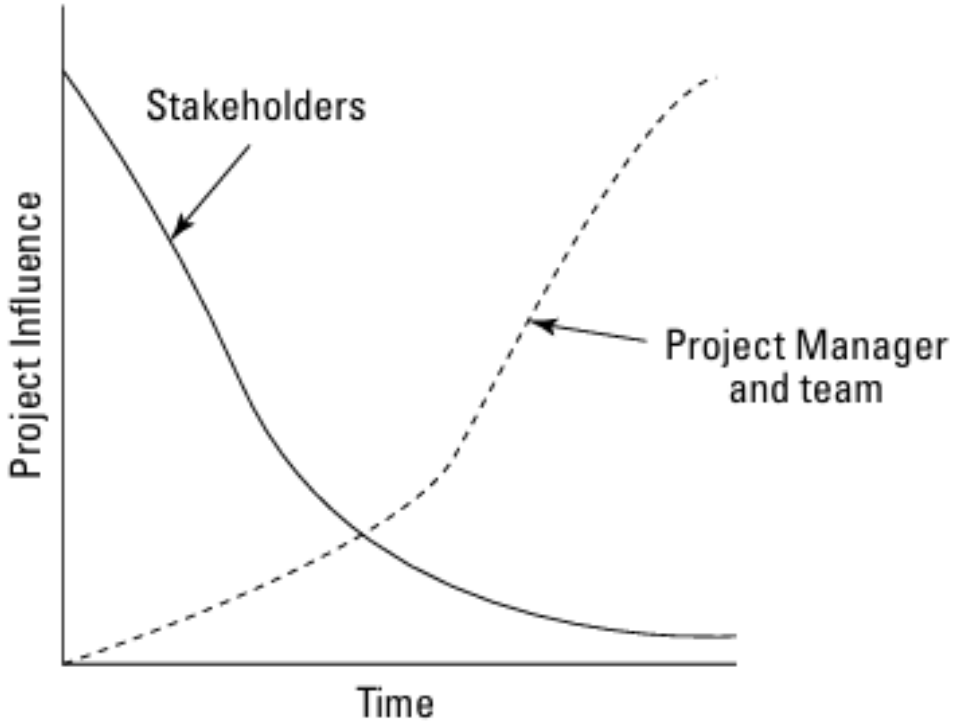
- Your project team is the collection of people you rely on to complete the pro ject work. They have the biggest influence on your project success, so you don’t want to tick them off. There must be a level of respect between the project manager and the project team.
- Most often project team members are professionals just like you. They are usually interested in completing their assignments, doing a good job, and meeting goals so that they can go home. There should not be, unless you like trouble, an us-against-them relationship between the project team and the project manager.

Loving your project sponsor

- The project sponsor is an individual high enough in the organization to have power over the functional managers you'll deal with on your project.
- Avoid playing dirty politics, such as pretending to agree with stakeholders just because they are in a powerful position. In such situations, politics may impede progress.
- The point of the project sponsor is to grant you the authority to act on his or her behalf to make sure the project gets the care and feeding it needs.

Balancing stakeholder expectations

- One of the trickiest parts of the project manager's job is balancing stake holder expectations.
- The bottom line is that you can take in all the input in the world, but you may not be able to build super software that will meet every user's most minute need.
- You and all the stakeholders must be in agreement about the purpose of the project and then work backwards to their wish lists from there.
- The goal of negotiation in project management is not to get the best deal for a particular party. The goal is to find the best solution for the project.
- Through rounds of give and take, compromise, and negotiations, you must reach a consensus with the stakeholders on why the project is going to occur and what the project will accomplish.



Completing a Project Feasibility Study

What feasibility studies do (and don’t do)

DO

- Can save time and money. Some project managers consider the time and initial capital invested in a feasibility study a waste. They are wrong. When you consider the amount of time and money needed to take a project from concept to completion, and the high likelihood of project failure, spending the time and money at the front end can protect larger amounts of time and capital in the long run. Feasibility studies just make good financial sense.
- Can give you and the stakeholders an opportunity to do a risk assessment. Sure, you’ll assess risks in more detail when you’re planning the project, but an initial risk assessment at this stage can help the organization determine whether a marginal project should move forward.

DONT

- Serve as a research paper. It’s a factual exploration of the project’s likelihood for success.
- Cheerlead the project manager’s point of view. For that matter, it’s neutral all the way around and shouldn’t promote anyone’s point of view.
- Present alternate ideas. Your focus is on the merits and pitfalls of the project as it’s been articulated at this point. You shouldn’t be tweaking the ideas.
- Campaign for additional time or funds. When the project is chartered and you and the project team move into planning, you can determine time and cost estimates in detail. And if management won’t budge on the budget or schedule? You must consider the lack of time and money a risk and document the problem in a risk statement.
- Offer advice on the project’s initiation. A feasibility study just presents the facts; it doesn’t make a recommendation for the project to be launched or squelched.

Finding a feasibility consultant

- Experience: The consultant should be experienced, not just with creating studies for other organizations, but with the technology you're considering for your project.
- Effective communication: Someone who is able and willing to listen to your project team, stakeholders, management, and you, the project manager, is more likely to be listened to when the time comes to deliver the results of the study.
- Willingness to participate: A consultant who participates in interviews, meetings, and analysis of the problems or opportunities of the project is always better than one who keeps a distance. Your SME needs to be involved to understand the proposed project.
- Willingness to adhere to a contractual agreement and timeline: In order to complete the project on schedule and within a given budget, you need to consider these factors even at this early stage.
- Ability to provide useful information on an ongoing basis: The SME must continue to provide useful, accurate, information as the study progresses. (There's nothing worse than paying for a feasibility study that's fluff.)

Understanding How Executives Select Projects

- Constrained optimization: This is a complex approach that considers multiple variables, factors, and likelihood of project success. Selection committees use dynamic algorithms and linear and nonlinear program ming to choose their projects.
- Benefit comparison methods: Most organizations use this approach. Benefit comparison methods use accessible formulas, comparison models, and systems to choose which projects should be launched and which should not. Because these are the most common, we focus on giving you details on several models.

Using the benefit comparison selection model

- Using a scoring model
- A scoring model establishes a foundation of desired attributes such as profitability, cost, timeline, return on investment.

Table 2-1 Sample Scoring Model

Project	*Experience*	*Schedule*	*Cost*	*Portfolio*	*Final Score*
Project ABC	10	5	3	8	26
Code and Code Project	4	9	4	6	23
Web App Project	7	2	9	7	25
Patch and Fix Project	7	6	5	2	20

Facing a murder board

- A murder board is a committee of people (well, they claim to be people) who play the devil's advocate against the project.
- Their job is to ask all sorts of questions to look for the project's weaknesses.
- This method of assessing a project attempts to get a feel for the likelihood of the project's success.
- Before facing one of these committees, be sure to prepare by coming up with a list of questions you think will be asked. Then prepare and practice your answer to each proposed question.