

## **Application of Project Management Principles to the IST Alumni Social Event**

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Project Management

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The IST Alumni Social event was organized to bring together the Alumni, current students, and faculty to discuss current industrial trends and advancements thereby strengthening the IST community at the University of Missouri St. Louis. The primary motive of this event is to create interest in at least 200 attendees using various communication methods and strategies while engaging department alumni and event sponsors. The event featured interactive networking sessions, especially between alumni and current students. It also featured various panel discussions and highlighted department achievements in recent years and its commitment to building a strong alumni network. As part of my role, I mainly focused on several marketing strategies to make sure that the objectives of the event were met. This paper clearly explains how I have applied the project management principles that I learned in five different phases. Initiating, planning the event, execution, monitoring and controlling, and conclusion while mentioning my roles and responsibilities during the event and also lessons I learned during the project.

### Management Process Groups [1]

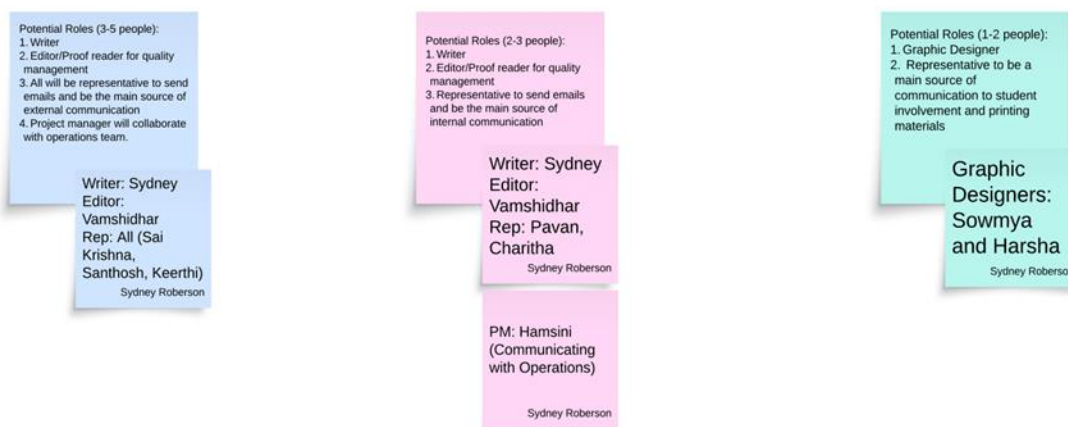
#### 1. Initiating

During the initial phase, the project started with a clear understanding of the objectives: to highlight department achievements in the last few years, create interest in at least 200 people using various marketing methods, and amplify alumni engagement. For this event, we used Agile methodology, which involves dividing tasks into smaller chunks.

To achieve this, our class of 19 people was divided into two teams: Marketing and Operations.

Marketing Team	Sowmya, Hamsini, Harsha, Sydney, Sai Krishna, Pavan, Vamshi, Keerthi, Charitha, Santosh
Operations Team	Moe, Bismah, Jaleah, Yamini Sai, Yamini Kumari, Joseph, Chris, Teo, Jason

Within the Marketing team, we further divided into three groups: Graphic Designers, Internal, and External.



Harsha and I worked together to design the flyers and related materials. My main role during this phase is to explore several marketing strategies and discuss and understand the most effective ones among them. As part of this, I designed various high-level prototypes of flyers like panelist flyers, event schedule flyers, event logos, and event promotion flyers, and prepared a faculty presentation slide deck to ensure we were promoting every section of the event in a professional way.

## 2. Planning the event

During this phase, we developed a project proposal document mentioning every detail including marketing plans. My roles and responsibilities during this phase include:

- While creating a risk management plan, I contributed to it by suspecting potential risks like communication issues and low attendee turnout, which can impact the flow of the event.
- I created flyer prototypes and made sure they matched the branding of the event.

- I worked with the team, helping with the high-level plan and mentioning the low-level details of every task. Once it was done, we all worked together in setting up the priority order to execute these tasks and also setting deadlines for all tasks which we thought would make execution easier.

### **3. Execution**

During this phase, we focused on executing the tasks that we planned in a priority order. I was responsible for marketing and branding the event. My roles and responsibilities are:

- Working with student organizations, faculty, and ITCC members and making sure that the event reaches the target audience and message shared is consistent with our ideas.
- Designing various types of flyers and sharing them on social media pages and also in professional platforms like LinkedIn, etc.
- Also ask student organizations to post on their forums and get a wide reach.

Throughout this executive phase, I constantly keep in touch with several students, faculty, and alumni connect groups to help spread the word. I also collaborated with Dr. Dinesh Mirchandani and Dr. Vivek Singh to help with the promotion, as this will have significantly more impact on the event. I also collaborated with the team to work on the feedback received on any issues regarding promotion and the necessary steps taken to clear up the issue. So, I sent each design to Prof. Damon Walker and Dr. Dinesh Mirchandani to ensure the promotional materials were well aligned with the event's goals.

### **4. Monitoring and Controlling**

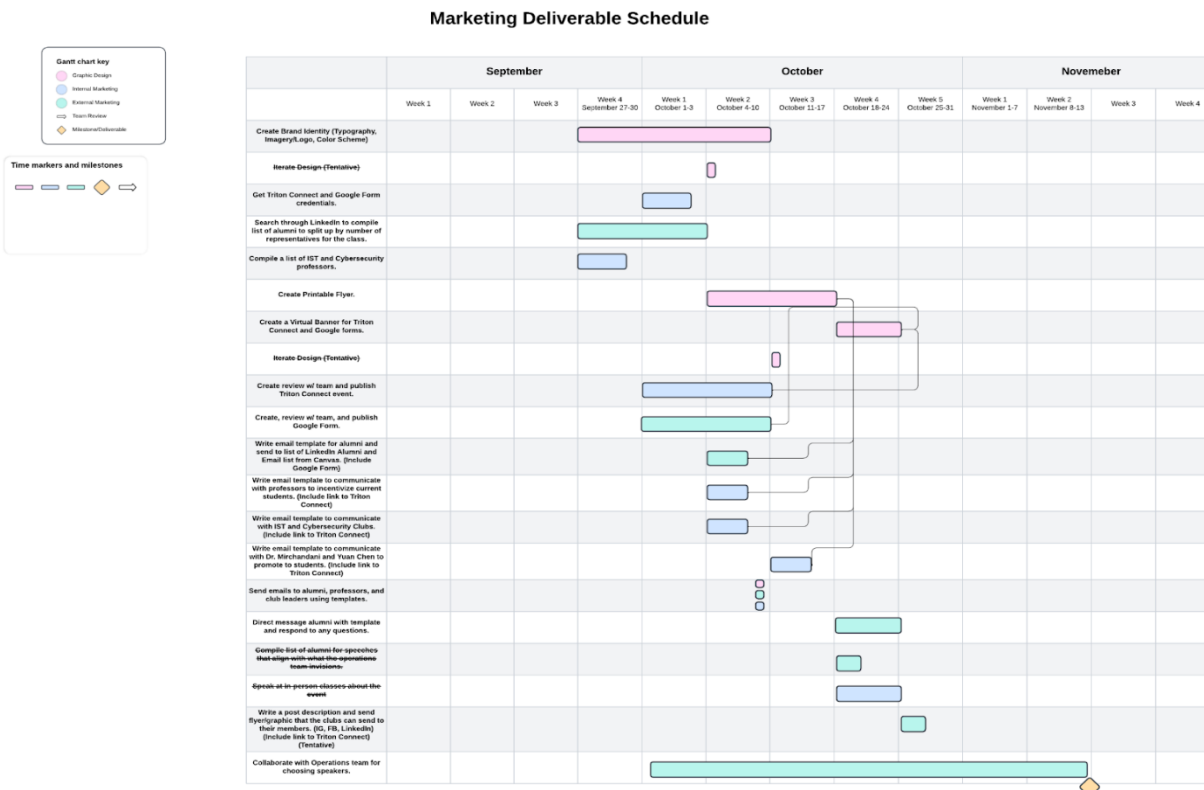
We created Google forms for the registration of event attendees. So, during this phase, I worked on monitoring the number of registrations regularly, and analyzing which form of promotion is the main reason for registrations and working aggressively on such promotional methods to reach the target audience. We also used Triton Connect to track the registrations. Initially, when the number of registrations was low, we sent several personalized messages and encouraged students and alumni to attend. So, some of these workarounds helped in increasing the registrations.

## **Integration Management**

Integration management played a vital role in making sure that all the deliverables aligned with the objectives of the event. I particularly worked closely with the project manager and team members to ensure that the quality of marketing materials was consistent. I was able to make changes according to the feedback provided and ensure there was no delay from my end to provide some time for them to review the changes. To support alignment and strategic decision-making, we conducted a SWOT analysis early in the process. This helped identify the event's strengths and opportunities, as well as address weaknesses and threats. These insights ensured that our efforts were well-integrated and focused on achieving the event's objectives. Additionally, we used a shared Google Drive folder to streamline collaboration, allowing all team members to access, review, and update materials efficiently. This approach contributed significantly to effective integration and tracking of all action items.

## **Project Scope Management**

Scope management is very important in any event to understand what to include and what not to include. Hence, the team can stay focused and move in the right direction without spending time on unnecessary things. To ensure this, we used a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), which helped us organize and complete tasks on time.



My roles and responsibilities are very clearly defined, which are creating marketing strategies and promoting the event through various channels. I stuck to this plan and met my objectives. I worked with the team and scheduled several meetings to finalize the scope of my work. I also spoke to stakeholders at times to make sure I was meeting their expectations and not going in the wrong direction.

### Project Schedule Management

The success of an event or project depends on how disciplined you are in meeting your deadlines. During this event, we planned effectively and prepared a list of tasks in a priority order. To achieve this, we applied the Activity List and Activity Estimation concepts from our project management chapters. For instance, while I was waiting for feedback on the event logo, I switched to other tasks like designing the event flyer and making sure that I didn't waste a single second. This helped me finish all my tasks on time, even if some tasks took more time than expected. Frequent discussions with the team clearly helped me in planning and executing tasks thereby meeting deadlines.

## **Communications and Stakeholder Management**

I strongly believe that my constant communication with faculty, current students, alumni, ITCC student organization, and especially all stakeholders helped me achieve all my targets. For example, after creating the flyer, I checked with faculty and stakeholders every time making sure that the design aligned with the event's objectives. Stakeholder management played a pivotal role as I always updated Professor Damon Walker and Dr. Dinesh Mirchandani and incorporated their feedback regularly.

## **Lessons Learned**

Several lessons were learned during this event which can be key to the success of future events.

- Anticipating risks at a very early stage of the event helped us in improving the number of registrations significantly.
- Understanding team objectives and individual objectives properly and collaboratively helped us work seamlessly.
- Quickly adapting to different strategies helped us ensure the event reached the target audience.
- Proactive communication with stakeholders and personalized engagement helped the success of the event.

## **Conclusion**

The IST Alumni Social event offered me a very good learning curve, allowing me to apply all the project management concepts that I learned to a real-world scenario. My role in designing marketing materials and developing promotional strategies made me understand the impact of team management, communication, and effective planning with various stakeholders. Overall, this was a rewarding experience that deepened my understanding of project management, especially in real-world scenarios.

## References

- [1]. Project Management Institute. (2017). A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® guide) (6th ed.). Chicago (notes-bibliography), 17th ed.