



UNIT 9 IT PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Assignment 3

Learning Aim D

Undertake the closure of a project by reflecting on the success of personal performance and the project outcome

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Contents

Introduction	3
Project Overview	3
Project Management Skills Applied	4
Delegation of Work	4
Resource Management	4
Understanding and Defining Roles.....	4
Use of Management Documentation	4
Progress Management	4
Relevant Behaviours Applied	5
Time Planning and Management	5
Communication and Literacy Skills	5
Problem-Solving Skills	5
Professionalism	5
Etiquette.....	5
Leadership	5
Responsibility	6
Summary	6
Examples of skills and behaviours being used in different Agile project management phases	6
Concept/Iteration 1 phase	6
Planning/Iteration 0 phase	6
Iteration/Construction Iterations phase	7
Release/Transition and release phase	7
Maintenance/Production phase	8
Retirement phase.....	8
Evaluation of Effectiveness	8
Strengths	8
Weaknesses.....	9
Further evaluation	9
Recommendations for Improvement.....	10
Skills.....	10
Delegation of Work	10
Resource Management	10

Understanding and Defining Roles.....	10
Use of Management Documentation	10
Progress Management	11
Behaviours.....	11
Time Planning and Management	11
Communication and Literacy Skills	11
Problem-Solving Skills	11
Professionalism	11
Etiquette.....	12
Leadership.....	12
Responsibility	12
Summary	12
Conclusion.....	12

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to examine the project management skills and behaviours applied during the completion of an IT project. The project in focus is Strays Meet Holland, a charity website designed to raise awareness and support for strays. This project was executed using the Agile project management methodology, a non-traditional approach for website development that involved completing work in sprints.

The project's significance lies in its aim to make a difference in society by raising awareness about strays, a problem that often goes unnoticed. Furthermore, the use of Agile methodology in this scenario offered unique opportunities.

This report will delve into the specifics of the project, discussing the project management skills used and relevant behaviours demonstrated throughout its execution. I will evaluate the effectiveness of these skills and behaviours, their impact on the project outcomes, and the overall success of the project.

Project Overview

The project 'Strays Meet Holland', a charity website development project, was undertaken with the aim to raise awareness for the charity. Spanning from 3rd February to 27th March 2023, the project was executed over a period of roughly eight weeks, following Agile project management methodology, featuring work done in sprints.

From the beginning, the project was planned, with assigned tasks separated into different sections, such as development, testing, project meetings, and stakeholder meetings. Tasks were then delegated to various team members and external agency workers, each bringing their skills to the project. The delegation of tasks ensured that each aspect of the project was handled by those best skillset to do so, therefore optimising efficiency and productivity.

With a budget of £5000 per month, efficient resource management was vital. Resources were carefully allocated to different aspects of the project to ensure that all needs were met without exceeding the set budget. Despite encountering challenges such as technical issues and personnel disagreements, the project's contingency plans were activated to avoid any potential disruptions to the project's progress.

Throughout the project, series of meetings were conducted with stakeholders and team members to review progress, address concerns, and make necessary adjustments. Stakeholders were kept in the loop and their feedback was incorporated into the project at various stages. Despite a few personnel and technical challenges encountered along the way, these were addressed and did not impact the project's progress.

By the 20th of March, the project had progressed smoothly, with all identified bugs resolved and the final product ready for review. In the final meeting on 27th March, the team manager gave a rundown of the project, including a review and evaluation of the tasks completed. The stakeholders were satisfied with the final product, thereby marking the successful completion of the project.

The project concluded within its specified timescale, having successfully developed a functioning, bug-free website for the charity 'Strays Meet Holland'. The planning, resource management, and communication among team members contributed significantly to this success.

Project Management Skills Applied

Delegation of Work

One of the key project management skills applied during the Strays Meet Holland project was the delegation of work. With various team members assigned to specific tasks - such as development, testing, and stakeholder meetings - it was crucial to distribute tasks effectively. Each member was selected for tasks based on their individual expertise, contributing to the efficient and successful execution of the project. This not only sped-up the project timeline but also ensured high-quality work, as each task was handled by the team member best suited for it.

Resource Management

Another vital skill used during the project was resource management. With a budget of £5000 per month, we had to carefully allocate resources to ensure all aspects of the project were adequately funded without exceeding the budget. This involved making critical decisions regarding how resources were divided between development, testing, and other project needs. Proper resource management allowed the project to be completed successfully without any budget overrun, showcasing the effective use of this skill.

Understanding and Defining Roles

The project also demanded a clear understanding and definition of roles. Each team member was given a specific role based on their skills and experience. This clear delegation of responsibilities led to a smooth project flow as everyone was aware of their specific duties and expectations. This ensured accountability and productivity, further contributing to the project's overall success.

Use of Management Documentation

The project involved the use of management documentation for progress management. This served as a roadmap for the project, helping track progress, identify potential issues, and make necessary adjustments in real-time. This active approach ensured that the project stayed on track and within budget, providing a clear view of the project status at all times.

Progress Management

Progress management was another crucial skill used throughout the project. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the project's progress against the set timeline and objectives ensured that any potential issues were quickly resolved. This allowed us to make real-time adjustments, ensuring that the project stayed on course and met its objectives within the set timeframe.

Relevant Behaviours Applied

To ensure the project's successful execution, a set of relevant behaviours were adhered to throughout the course of the project. These behaviours allowed the project management process, ensuring interaction among the team and optimal progress towards the objectives.

Time Planning and Management

Time management played a critical role in the success of the project. Each activity was scheduled to ensure that tasks were completed. The project team made sure to leave space within the time plan to adjust for any unexpected changes or contingencies, allowing the project to stay on track despite many challenges. This planning was particularly beneficial when addressing issues such as unexpected sickness among developers, as extra time had been allocated, allowing for the integration of agency workers.

Communication and Literacy Skills

Effective communication was at the core of the project's success. The team ensured that instructions were clearly communicated, that documentation was maintained, and feedback was incorporated. Regular team and stakeholder meetings provided a place for dialogue, allowing issues to be discussed and resolved quickly. This ensured everyone stayed informed and on the same page, promoting an updated work environment.

Problem-Solving Skills

Throughout the project, the team demonstrated problem-solving skills. Challenges such as bugs in the website, personnel issues, and sick leaves were addressed logically and systematically. Problems were broken down into smaller chunks, allowing for easier implementation of solutions. This approach proved invaluable during testing and refinement phases when bugs were identified and resolved, ensuring a smooth development process.

Professionalism

Professionalism was a key behaviour that the team showed throughout the project. Each team member showed an understanding of their roles. Even when faced with unexpected challenges, such as technical bugs or staff shortages, the team maintained their composure and professionalism. This professionalism ensured that the project continued to move forward without compromise on the quality of work produced.

Etiquette

The team also demonstrated the correct etiquette throughout the course of the project. Mutual respect was promoted among team members, ensuring a conducive working environment. This was evident during mediated discussions to resolve personnel issues and regular team meetings. This culture also extended to meetings with stakeholders, with regular and transparent communication about the project.

Leadership

Leadership played an important role in the execution of the project. The team manager demonstrated leadership by providing clear directions and making strategic decisions. The leadership was also instrumental in resolving conflict. For instance, when faced with personnel issues, the team manager acted as a mediator, allowing constructive

conversations help find a solution. This approach contributed significantly to team morale and cohesion.

Responsibility

Responsibility was another behaviour constantly displayed during the project. Each team member took ownership of their roles, with everyone from the developers to the project managers understanding and performing their tasks to the best of their ability. When faced with challenges, the team did not shy away from taking responsibility, instead stepping up to find solutions and keep the project moving forward.

Summary

In conclusion, the relevance and effectiveness of these behaviours significantly contributed to the success of the project. Their impact was not just limited to the project's outcome, but also extended to team collaboration, promoting a positive work environment, and ensuring the successful execution of the project.

Examples of skills and behaviours being used in different Agile project management phases

Concept/Iteration 1 phase

In the Concept or Iteration 1 phase, project management skills and behaviours are crucial in analysing potential projects, funding, and making technology and business roadmaps.

The skill of **delegation of work** becomes crucial as certain team members are assigned the task of analysing potential projects and others focus on negotiating for funding. A balanced delegation ensures that tasks are distributed according to experience, increasing the efficiency of this phase.

The behaviour of **professionalism** is crucial in this phase, as the team interacts with potential investors or stakeholders. This goes hand in hand with **leadership**, which is essential in this phase as well. Effective leaders can drive the team towards creating a project analysis and a feasible roadmap, increasing the chances of the project getting the green light.

Finally, **time planning and management** skills are also utilised in this phase to ensure that project analysis, funding negotiations, and roadmap development all occur within the planned timeframe.

Planning/Iteration 0 phase

In this phase, **understanding and defining roles** becomes crucial in the planning phase. Each team member needs to understand their responsibilities and what is expected from them in their assigned roles. This understanding minimises confusion and enhances productivity, and this can be seen in the project when different roles were assigned to different team members throughout the development of the website.

Effective **resource management** also ensures the project's resources, like time, manpower, and finances, are used efficiently during the planning of the project.

One of the key tools used in this phase for **time planning and management** is a Gantt chart. A Gantt chart is a visual representation of a project schedule that shows the start and finish dates of the elements of the project. In other words, it gives a clear view of all the tasks required to complete the project, the sequence they need to occur in, and how long each task is to take.

Finally, the use of **management documentation** and **problem-solving skills** are paramount during the planning phase, helping to keep track of the project's progress, record initial requirements, and create the release plan, while also enabling proactive approaches to resolving any unexpected hurdles.

Iteration/Construction Iterations phase

The Iteration or Construction Iterations phase is where the majority of the development work takes place. This phase is made up of a series of time-constrained iterations or "sprints," working to make adequate progress on the website.

Etiquette in the Iteration/Construction Iterations phase is important, especially considering the amount of meetings that happen during this phase of the project. Members need to adhere to meeting rules and avoid interrupting others. In case of disagreements, it is essential to address issues professionally, focusing on the problem rather than personal aspects. Additionally, given the amount of meetings with stakeholders, etiquette is essential in securing a satisfactory response from the stakeholders.

Communication and Literacy Skills become even more crucial during this phase, alongside **Professionalism**, also due to the number of meetings that are ongoing, both within the team and the meetings including the project stakeholders. **Literacy skills** are critical when documenting the progress of iterations, writing reports about each sprint, or when conveying complex ideas and feedback during meetings, and **professionalism** helps to ensure the steady progress of the project and can significantly contribute to a positive team culture and successful project outcomes.

Release/Transition and release phase

During the Release/Transition and Release phase, **progress management** becomes particularly critical. This is a stage marked by a high volume of tasks and activities, each with its own dependencies and timelines that need to be coordinated. Efficient progress management ensures that all tasks are being carried out as planned, all while ensuring any issues that arise are addressed promptly to prevent delays. **Monitoring and controlling** the progress of individual tasks, as well as the overall project, is crucial. The project manager must be vigilant in tracking progress against the plan, identifying any deviations, and implementing corrective actions when necessary.

Leadership is paramount in this stage. A strong leader is needed to guide the team through the transition. This is alongside **Communication**, which plays a significant role in this phase. The project team needs to effectively communicate with various stakeholders to inform them about the progress, address any issues, and manage their expectations during the transition.

Maintenance/Production phase

During the Maintenance/Production phase, the **delegation of work** continues to be a pivotal aspect. The project manager has to assign maintenance and update tasks to the relevant teams or individuals. This process includes making sure that the right people are available to handle any possible scenarios such as bugs, glitches, or crashes,

Strong communication and literacy skills are still essential. Ensuring the feedback loop remains open and therefore allows users to report any issues. It is the responsibility of the project manager to make sure this feedback is acknowledged and responded to accordingly.

The maintenance phase also requires **strong leadership skills**. Keeping the team motivated and adapting to the new challenges of maintaining and updating the website rather than developing it, meant that there was a strong leader for each team to ensure that the maintenance of the website went smoothly.

Retirement phase

During the Retirement phase, several key skills and behaviours are needed, some of which directly tie to the final tasks like writing reports and holding meetings.

Strong communication and literacy skills are crucial at this part. As the project is ending, detailed reports need to be written to document the lifecycle of the project, its successes, lessons learned, and potential areas for improvement.

Furthermore, **professionalism** remains a vital during this phase. It is important to maintain a high level of **professionalism** when interacting with stakeholders in the final meetings, presenting the report, and discussing the project's closure. This ensures that the project closes on a high note, leaving a positive impression on all parties involved.

Time planning and management skills are also essential during this period. Timely preparation of reports, scheduling, and managing any final tasks before the project is officially closed, all require careful planning and **efficient time management**.

Lastly, the demonstration of **responsibility** is key during the Retirement phase. All team members need to ensure they have completed their tasks, provided their input for the final report, and prepared for the final meetings. This responsibility ensures a smooth project closure.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

The Strays Meet Holland project, from initiation to completion, was guided by project management skills and behaviours. However, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices, outlining strengths and weaknesses while offering a balanced view of the actions taken.

Strengths

- Time Management - One of the project's notable strengths was the effective time management displayed throughout the duration. All work was completed on time, even when unexpected obstacles arose, such as team members falling ill. This was

partly due to the contingency time included in the planning stage, which proved to be a successful strategy.

- **Communication** - Excellent communication was a defining strength of the project. The team ensured that stakeholders and project members were regularly updated, contributing to transparency and efficient decision-making. This was essential in maintaining stakeholder satisfaction and promoting a team working environment.
- **Problem-Solving** - The project demonstrated strong problem-solving skills, especially when addressing technical bugs and personnel issues. Quick resolution of these challenges ensured the project stayed on course and eventually led to a high-quality final website.
- **Leadership and Teamwork** - Effective leadership and teamwork were the driving forces behind the project's success. The team leader's ability to resolve conflicts and provide clear direction, combined with the team's respect for professionalism and etiquette, resulted in a positive work environment and efficient task completion.

Weaknesses

- **Resource Management** - While the project was successfully completed within the assigned budget, there were instances where resource management could have been improved. The need to hire agency workers due to unexpected absences shows that the initial allocation of human resources might not have considered for potential setbacks.
- **Risk Mitigation** - Despite having contingency plans for various risks, the team faced a few challenges like staff sickness and technical bugs. These occurrences underline the need for more robust risk assessment and mitigation strategies in future projects.

Further evaluation

The project successfully demonstrated effective project management skills and relevant behaviours throughout the project's lifespan, from initiation to execution, and monitoring and control. The activities were well-planned in advance, and any problems encountered were solved. The technical understanding and analysis of the project were consistently good, contributing to the project's overall success.

However, improvements can be made in resource allocation and risk mitigation to improve project efficiency.

In terms of accessibility, the project report was designed to be easy to understand by a third party, with consistent use of technical IT language. It provided a balanced view of the actions taken and project management processes applied, and therefore offering valuable insights into the project's execution and effectiveness.

In conclusion, the overall effectiveness of the project management skills and behaviours used was positive, and the successful completion of the project is proof of this.

Nevertheless, the identified weaknesses and suggested improvements provide valuable lessons for future projects.

Recommendations for Improvement

Skills

Delegation of Work

Although work was effectively delegated throughout the project, implementing a more detailed approach to assigning tasks can further improve the process. Team members should be delegated tasks that align with their skill sets, and their roles should be clarified from the project's outset. This could include developing a detailed project plan with specific tasks and responsibilities assigned to each team member.

An example of an improvement for delegation of work would be implementing an online task management system. This could help to visualise task distribution, therefore ensuring a clear responsibilities for each team member.

Resource Management

Despite adequate resource management throughout the project, maintaining a contingency plan for unexpected absences and employing software to manage resources effectively can help improve this process. In the future we will consider using digital tools to track resource allocation, enabling a smoother workflow and better budget control.

An example of an improvement for resource management would be implementing system for tracking how resources are used. For example, if project resources are going to be used, then approval has to be signed off by different members to ensure that the important figures are aware, and the resources used are actually needed.

Understanding and Defining Roles

While roles were understood and defined, there could be more clarity in their initial outline. Regular discussions or workshops can be held to clarify individual roles and responsibilities, enhancing team members' understanding of their tasks and accountability.

An example of an improvement for understanding and defining roles would be ensuring job descriptions and responsibilities are not only clearly communicated at the start of the project but are regularly clarified during team meetings throughout the project lifecycle.

Use of Management Documentation

Although management documentation was used efficiently, a centralised repository for all project-related documents could improve information access and increase efficiency. This could be achieved through collaborative software where all project documents are stored, edited, and updated.

An example of an improvement for use of management documentations would be implementing a cloud-based project management software, i.e., Asana, where all task assignments, deadlines, and progress updates can be easily tracked by team members.

Progress Management

Progress was effectively managed during the project. However, for more accuracy and efficiency, in the future it is recommended that we employ project management tools that offer a visual representation of project progression, helping team members and stakeholders to stay informed about the project status at all times.

An example of an improvement for progress management would be the introduction of consistent stand-up meetings where each member can speak about updates on their tasks. This would allow the project manager to identify any issues and correct as necessary.

Behaviours

Time Planning and Management

Time was well managed throughout the project. However, incorporating a larger buffer in the schedule for unexpected delays or issues can help ensure that the project remains on track even in the face of unforeseen challenges, like staff calling in sick.

An example of an improvement for time planning and management would be including time tracking tools. This would allow a precise understanding of how long tasks take, enhancing the accuracy of future project timelines, similar to how Gantt charts work.

Communication and Literacy Skills

While effective communication was maintained, the use of collaborative communication tools could further enhance this aspect. Additionally, providing team members with professional development opportunities to refine their literacy skills can improve project documentation and overall communication.

An example of an improvement for communication and literacy skills would be regular workshops or trainings on effective communication strategies. This would improve collaboration and information flow within the team, allowing for smoother communication between team members.

Problem-Solving Skills

Problem-solving was a strength in the project, but it could be further improved by introducing structured problem-solving methodologies, such as Six Sigma or root cause analysis. Regular workshops or training on these methodologies could enhance the team's ability to resolve any future issues quickly and effectively.

An example of an improvement for problem-solving skills could involve implementing routine brainstorming sessions, where all team members are to bring different challenges and work together on solutions.

Professionalism

Maintaining professionalism was a significant aspect of the project. To build upon this, regular workshops or training programs on professional standards and expectations can be offered to team members.

An example of an improvement for professionalism would be to establish a clear code of conduct within the team, detailing expected behaviours and the consequences for not

following these standards. This would ensure that the team members are expected to follow the code of conduct, therefore maintaining professionalism.

Etiquette

Etiquette was well maintained during the project. Regular reinforcement of workplace ethics and etiquette through workshops can further foster a harmonious and respectful work environment.

An example of an improvement for etiquette could be including team-building activities aimed at promoting respect and understanding among team members, improving the overall working environment.

Leadership

Leadership was strong throughout the project. However, leaders can benefit from continuous leadership development training. This could include improving emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and team management skills.

An example of an improvement for leadership could be to provide opportunities for junior team members to lead smaller project segments, allowing a culture of shared leadership and skill development.

Responsibility

The team showed high levels of responsibility. To further improve this, a system of accountability can be set in place. Regular performance assessments can help ensure team members are fulfilling their responsibilities and offer an opportunity to address any concerns.

An example of an improvement for responsibility could involve implementing a system of accountability members within the team, making an environment where team members can hold each other accountable for their assigned tasks, and give each other support when necessary.

Summary

In summary, while the Strays Meet Holland project was successfully executed, these recommendations can serve to refine future project executions. The continuous development of project management skills, communication, problem-solving strategies, and professional standards, coupled with the effective use of digital tools, can significantly enhance project execution and team collaboration.

Conclusion

The Strays Meet Holland project, a web development project, was successfully accomplished within the specified timeline and budget constraints. The project team showed project management skills, applying a range of effective strategies. Throughout the project, the team displayed relevant behaviours like time planning, communication, problem-solving skills, professionalism, etiquette, leadership, and responsibility.

However, even with the successful completion and the high degree of professionalism, the project highlighted several areas where improvements could be beneficial in future projects. These areas include more accurate delegation of work, better resource management tools, improved clarity in defining roles, enhanced management documentation, and more advanced progress management strategies.

The project also underlined the need for enhanced time management planning, improved communication and literacy skills, more structured problem-solving methodologies, and the ongoing development of leadership skills and a professional attitude. Further, it showcased the importance of regular reinforcement of workplace ethics and etiquette, and the need for robust systems of accountability.

By acknowledging these areas for improvement and actively working on these aspects, future projects can be managed more effectively and efficiently. Implementing these recommendations can provide an excellent platform for the continual growth and development of the project team.

In conclusion, the Strays Meet Holland project was a well-executed initiative that demonstrated strong project management skills and relevant behaviours. The lessons learned and the areas identified for improvement provide valuable insights for the future, promising even greater success for upcoming projects.