Keys to Project Management

Agenda

- What is project management?

- The planning process

- Group relations

"It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things"

Machiavelli 1446-1507,
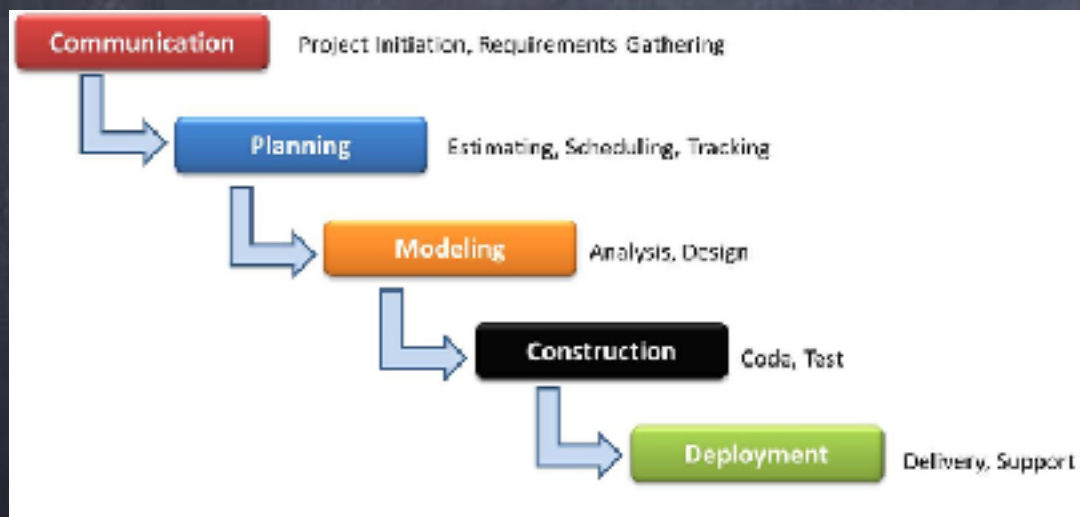Italian statesman and philosopher

Definition

- Project Management Institute defines project management as "the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements."
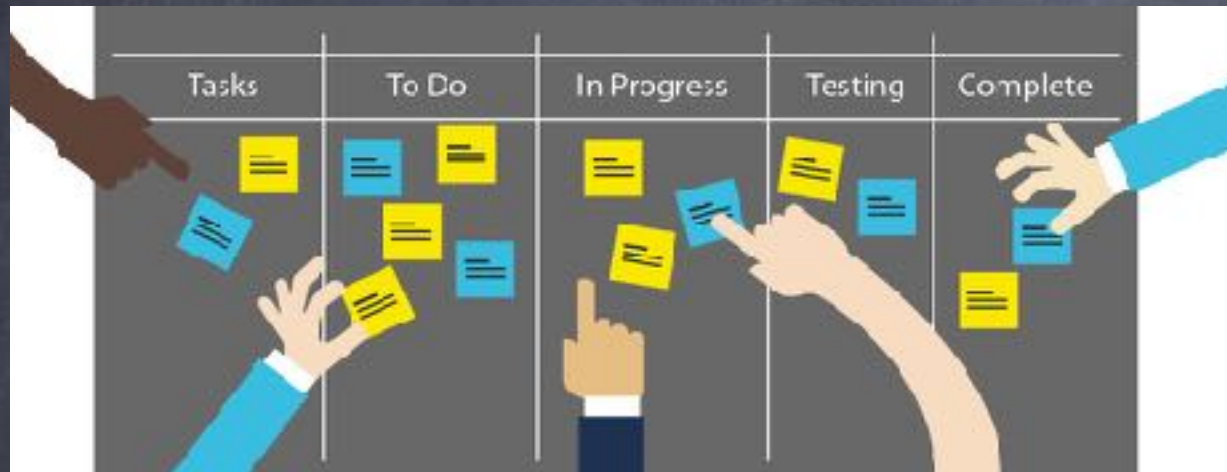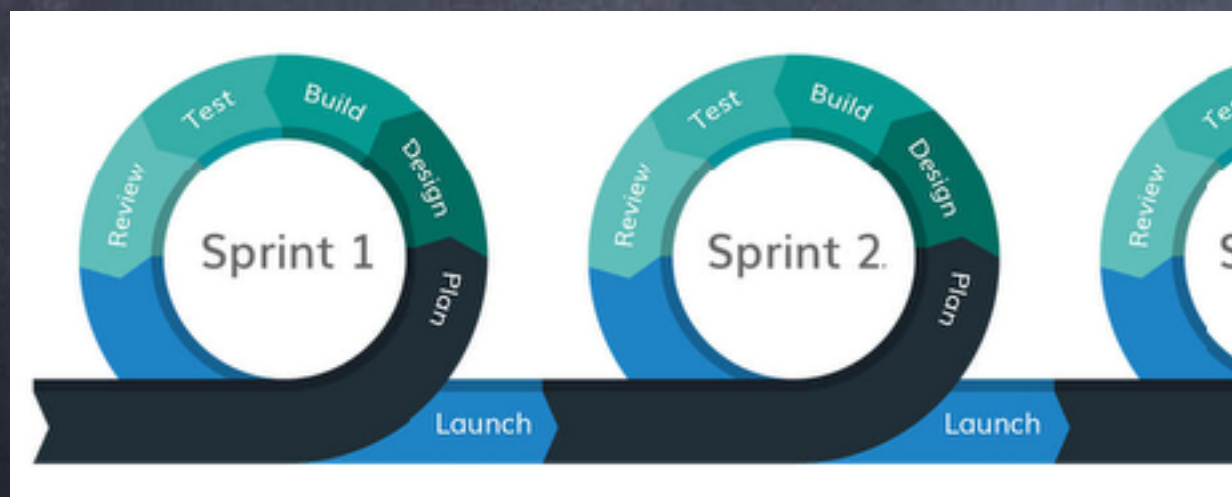
Approaches

Phase Model

Waterfall Model

Lean Model

Approaches

Kanban Model

Agile Model

Approaches

- All these approaches share the common goal of fulfilling requirements and meeting objectives

- Different organizations/teams may have preferences for a particular approach OR sadly no formal approach at all

What is Project Mgmt?

Leadership

Relationship
Maintenance

Planning

Coordinating

Communication

Leadership

- Without a leader, teams flounder

- Leaders set vision, establish goals, and set accountability

- Leaders delegate

- Leaders balance coordinating tasks and people

"Leadership is a combination of strategy and character. If you must be without one, be without the strategy."

Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf

Planning

- Anticipates potential problems
- Allocates resources
- Schedules tasks and milestones
- Good planning avoids crisis

All good plans can quickly be thrashed by unanticipated events ...

Anticipating problems

- The best defense is a good offense

- What can go wrong, will go wrong

- Be prepared with contingency plans

Allocating Resources

- Time, People, and Services

- Sequencing

Scheduling

- Good scheduling buffers for the unexpected

- Backing up from key deadlines

- Importance of accurate time estimates and identifying key tasks

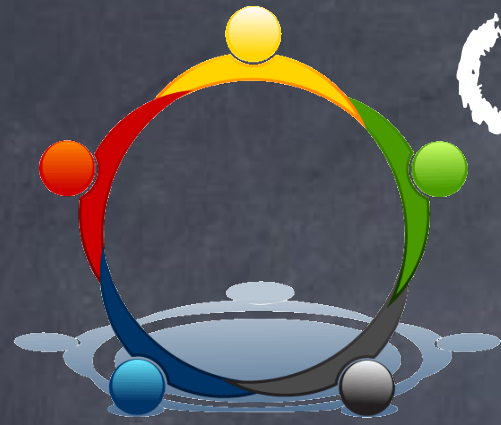- Beware of overtaxing limited resources

Scheduling

- **Estimate task time**
  - Be conservative in your estimates
  - Always allow for extra time
  - Set goals to complete tasks early

- **Forecast Risks**
  - What could go wrong?
  - How will the team deal with unforeseen problems? (Who will take the lead?)
  - Consider appointing a team leader or point person for problems

Coordinating – Resources

- Like a waltz, project management can require intricate choreography depending on the complexity of the project
- Some resources are
    - limited
    - dependent on other resources

- JIT (just in time) adds further complexity for businesses if shipments aren't received on time

List available resources

- Determine subject area expertise
  - e.g. accounting, MIS, international business
- Determine special skills
  - PowerPoint, Excel, research, business experience, etc.
- Determine availability of resources & group members
  - Meeting times, computer equipment

Coordinating - Tasks

- Like resources, some tasks are dependent upon previous tasks or can be completed independently

- Eliminated tasks or rescheduling tasks on a condensed timeline is referred to as "crashing"

- Tasks required periodic status checks, otherwise entire timelines can breakdown

Coordinating – People

- Individuals are inherently more difficulty to coordinate

- Creating the optimal work environment and work flow

- Providing the tools for success

- Reward/Benefits

Communication

- The single biggest project killer is not money or resources but difficulties with communication processes (up,down, and lateral)

- Establishing effective processes (not overwhelming or underwhelming the channel)

- Consider channel selection pros & cons

Relationship Maintenance

- Completing goals can cause conflict within a team

- Project leaders should continually check in with all those involved not just on task completion but how team members are getting along

- Relationship maintenance is especially crucial during periods of intense pressure/demands/stress

Like a delicate flower, project management requires constant attention and care to ensure success

The planning process

First steps

- Analyze the project requirements

- Brainstorm what could go wrong

- Determine milestones from the final delivery date

Who does what?

- Identify required tasks

- Evaluate dependencies and resources

- Assign/Determine the best personnel based on
  - ✓ expertise
  - ✓ availability
  - ✓ resource optimization

So now what?

- Create a shared document of task assignments, milestones, and deadlines

- Choose a tool

- Communicate tasks and get feedback on the document

- Check for dependencies and potential problems

Tools

- **GNATT Charts**

- **Kanban boards**

- **Shared documents**

- **Microsoft Project**

GANTT Charts can be

- Created in a spreadsheet or project management program

- Created on the web

- Simple or very complex

- Useful if constantly updated and monitored

The easiest deadline to miss is the one that isn't on the calendar

Deadlines

- The best project management plans for the unexpected

- Three different "deadline" dates
  - ✓ Goal Date (the optimal early deadline)
  - ✓ Deadline Date (normally 20% before the drop dead deadline (or DDD)
  - ✓ Drop Deadline Date (the latest a possible task can possibly be completed before impacting other tasks)

How will you navigate the seas of change?

Project Tracking

- The fine balance between micro-managing and not managing at all

- Checking in about progress & obstacles

- Purpose should to be aid not punish

- Together for success instead of failure as individuals

Group Relations

- Accountability & Sociability

- Group agendas versus hidden agendas

- Adequate timelines

- Opportunities for stress release