

Documenting Lessons Learned

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WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson provides an overview of documenting lessons learned including:

1. Documenting Lessons Learned

Lessons learned are documented during the closing process of a project. It is a shorthand description of the information gained from a current project that can assist future projects and improve the quality of the project management and deliverable creation.

It is a formal document that is archived and accessed by the organization and should be available to all project managers. The information documented as lessons learned should be relevant and topical to the organization.



TERM TO KNOW

Lessons Learned

Information gained from a current project that can be used in future projects to improve overall quality of project management.

2. Elements of Lessons Learned

Elements of a lessons learned document include:

- **Red flags.** Any events or issues that created stress in the project or any events that were not predicted by the management team. For lessons learned, describe these issues and note how the issues were resolved so future projects can learn from the experience and hopefully prevent the same issues from occurring.
- **Innovative approaches.** Any innovation that was used in the project and could be used in a future project. This might include innovations with the development of deliverables or innovations with project management.
- **Critical success factors.** Include factors that were critical and necessary for the project's completion.
- **Key risks.** Only the risks that might impact future projects are documented. Document the contingencies used for these risks as well.

- *Project deliverables*: Document performance or quality issues with the deliverables and why they occurred. Suggest how it might be avoided in the future.
- *External resources*: Include external resources that were an issue for the project. Recommendations can be provided on future projects.
- *Project failure*: If a project failed, document why this occurred. Be thorough because even a failed project has value if it helps avoid failure for future projects.

To obtain these lessons learned, a project manager must cooperate with the team and the stakeholders. Interviews, surveys, and questionnaires are all excellent methods to gather the necessary details. When documenting the list of lessons learned, a project manager must use discretion. Often internal or confidential information is expressed in these lessons. A project manager should also be sensitive when noting individuals in the lessons learned document.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned how to **document lessons learned** and now understand that it should include **elements** such as red flags and innovative approaches. While red flags are included, it should not include every risk - only those key to future projects.



TERMS TO KNOW

Lessons Learned

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