Workshop: Project Quality Program

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Ball, Inc. is a management consulting firm with the objectives to locally provide its clients the best services in various fields such as organizational change management assistance; development of coaching skills; and technology, project, and operations management improvements. The company motto is: "Your one-stop management consulting for all your business." Konrad Cerni is one of not so many employees who have been working there since day one. He loves the company environment and enjoys working with his peers and clients. More importantly, he loves his job—project management training. Konrad is well known inside and outside the company. His current position is a senior consultant, and his specialization is in the areas of project management tools and metrics.

Recently, his local client requested Konrad conduct a workshop specifically designed for project management tools. Particularly, the workshop must be done within a very strict timeframe to accommodate the participants' schedules. With more than 50 tools that are available in the practice and literature of project management, Konrad knew he had no time to cover all of them. Thus, he had to pick only the important ones, and cover them in as many areas as possible. One of the tools he included is called the "project quality program."

WHAT IS A PROJECT QUALITY PROGRAM?

A project quality program is an action plan striving to ensure that the actual quality of a project will meet the planned one. Using WBS as a skeleton for integration, the program sets a quality level based entirely on customers' expectations and requirements. With such a strong customer focus, the project quality program translates the requirements into tangible quality standards, for whose accomplishment a set of tasks is defined. Explicitly defined responsibilities and timelines for the performance of the tasks add necessary elements to use the program as a project quality roadmap. In a nutshell, the project quality program states that this is what this project has to do to ensure that the quality of its deliverables is meeting our customers' requirements.
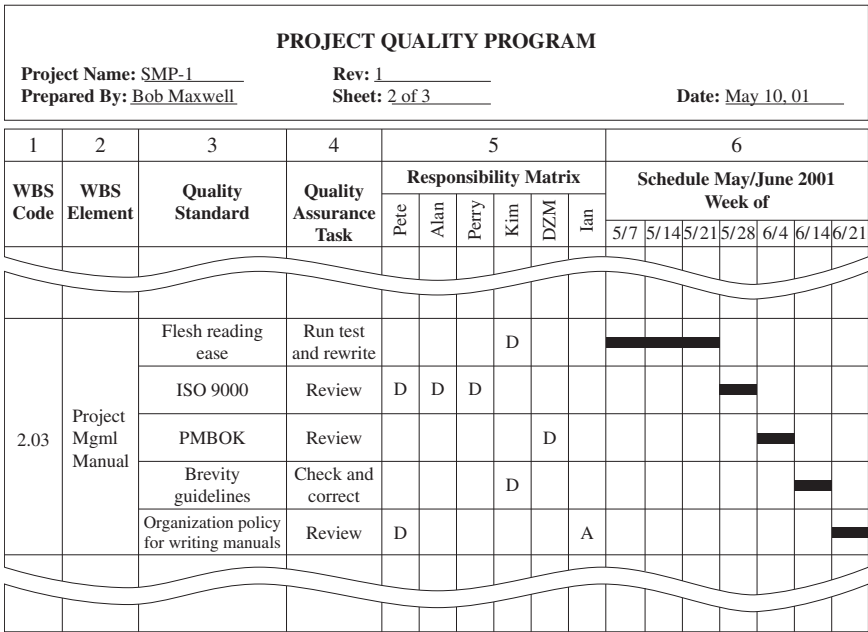
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A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Konrad said, "The quality of the project quality program is heavily dependent on the quality of its inputs. In particular, the following inputs are known for their impact on the program:

- Quality policy and procedures,
- Voice of the customer, and
- Scope statement and WBS."

He continued, "The foundations of how quality is managed in an organization are described in its quality policy. Defined, documented, and supported by management, the policy is a statement of quality principles, beliefs, and key objectives for projects that set a general framework to carry out quality management actions in the organization. This framework is further detailed in quality procedures. Together, the policy and procedures set a direction for the program. For example, if the procedures mandate compliance with ISO 9000 standards, the program will have to comply.

Figure 8.3   An Example of the Project Quality Program

PROJECT QUALITY PROGRAM

Project Name: SMP-1   **Rev:** 1
Prepared By: Bob Maxwell   **Sheet:** 2 of 3   **Date:** May 10, 01

1	2	3	4	5							6						
				Responsibility Matrix							**Schedule May/June 2001 Week of**						
WBS Code	WBS Element	Quality Standard	Quality Assurance Task	Pete	Alan	Perry	Kim	DZM	Ian		5/7	5/14	5/21	5/28	6/4	6/14	6/21
		Flesh reading ease	Run test and rewrite				D				▬	▬	▬				
		ISO 9000	Review	D	D	D								▬			
2.03	Project Mgml Manual	PMBOK	Review					D							▬		
		Brevity guidelines	Check and correct				D									▬	
		Organization policy for writing manuals	Review	D					A								▬

Key: D-Do
        A-Approve

Listening to the voice of the customer will not only help discover customers' needs; it will also help decipher customers' needs and translate them into the recognizable language of the project scope, establish units to measure customers' needs, and express them as quality standards, a crucial piece of the program. For this reason, the project quality program needs to be closely coordinated with the voice of the customer.

Finally, when you are setting project goals, the scope statement also sets a quality goal for the project. Along with this input goes the WBS which defines the project work for which a project quality program is developed. Therefore, both the scope statement and WBS are significant inputs to the quality program preparation."

Figure 8.3 is an example of the project quality program which also shows the responsible parties and the timelines of the WBS elements.

Discussion items

1. What are the pros and cons of the project quality program?
2. When should the project quality program be used?