



SOEN 6841

Software Project Management

Fall 2023

**TOPIC ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS
(TAS)**

Instructor

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Chapter 1

Topic: What are good practices for ending a canceled project?

1.1 Introduction

Terminating projects can be discouraging, yet it is a frequent occurrence in the business realm. It is crucial to approach these circumstances with sensitivity and professionalism to mitigate adverse effects. The cancellation of a project impacts multiple stakeholders, encompassing team members, investors, and customers, necessitating careful consideration throughout the cessation process. This report delves into essential practices for concluding a discontinued project, underscoring their significance and furnishing well-supported arguments.

1.2 Why projects get canceled?

Projects can get canceled for various reasons, and understanding these factors is crucial for improving project management practices. Some common reasons for project cancellations include:

Changing Business Priorities: Shifting organizational strategies or priorities may lead to the reevaluation and cancellation of projects that no longer align with the company's goals.

Financial Constraints: Budgetary constraints, cost overruns, or unexpected financial challenges can force organizations to halt projects to mitigate losses or reallocate resources.

Technological Challenges: Unforeseen technical difficulties or advancements in technology that render the project obsolete may result in its cancellation.

Market Dynamics: Changes in market conditions, such as shifts in consumer preferences, emerging competitors, or economic downturns, can prompt organizations to abandon projects.

Poor Planning and Execution: Inadequate project planning, unrealistic timelines, or inefficient execution may lead to project failures, prompting organizations to cancel them to cut losses.

Inadequate Stakeholder Support: Lack of support from key stakeholders, including investors, customers, or internal teams, can contribute to the decision to cancel a project.

Legal or Regulatory Issues: Legal challenges, regulatory changes, or compliance issues that arise during a project can lead to its cancellation to avoid legal repercussions.

Resource Constraints: Shortages of essential resources, including skilled personnel, materials, or technology, can hinder project progress and contribute to its cancellation.

Scope Creep: Expanding project scope beyond the initially defined parameters can lead to increased costs, timelines, and complexity, prompting organizations to reconsider and cancel the project.

Lack of Clear Objectives: Projects without well-defined goals, objectives, or measurable outcomes may face challenges in demonstrating their value, leading to cancellation.

Poor Communication: Inadequate communication among team members, stakeholders, or project managers can result in misunderstandings, conflicts, and project failures.

Strategic Reevaluation: Organizations may periodically reassess their strategic direction, leading to the cancellation of projects that no longer align with the updated vision or mission.

External Events: Unforeseen external events, such as natural disasters, political instability, or global crises, can impact project feasibility and necessitate cancellation.

Insufficient Risk Management: Failure to identify, assess, and manage risks effectively can result in unforeseen challenges that may lead to project cancellation.

Lack of Customer Demand: Projects that do not meet or generate sufficient demand from customers may be canceled to avoid investing in initiatives with limited market appeal.

1.3 Key Practices for handling canceled project

As per the case study, Canceled projects are a rich source of experience. Dealing with a canceled project is important for several reasons. Handling a canceled project professionally and thoughtfully not only mitigates immediate challenges but also sets the stage for future successes by leveraging the experiences gained. Handling a canceled project requires careful attention to various aspects to ensure a smooth and constructive conclusion. Here are key practices for handling a canceled project:

1.3.1 Documentation

- Assessment of Deliverable:

The evaluation of the state of deliverables and the subsequent turnover to stakeholders with acknowledgment is a crucial aspect of project closure, especially in the context of a canceled project. This involves a systematic review of all project deliverables, which can include completed work, documents, software components, or any tangible outcomes. The evaluation assesses the quality, completeness, and relevance of these deliverables. Once the assessment is complete, we need to communicate the status of deliverables to relevant stakeholders. We can clearly articulate which deliverables are finished and can be used without further effort and which ones could be enhanced with minimal additional work. Thus we can take the time to facilitate a clear understanding between the project team and stakeholders regarding the state and potential use of the deliverables. This minimizes misunderstandings and ensures that stakeholders are aware of the value they can derive from the project work, even in its current state.

- Final Project Report:

Creating a comprehensive final project report is a crucial step in the project closure process. It involves summarizing accomplishments, stating reasons for project termination, providing a final status summary, and archiving project data for future reference. The report must have a concise and objective overview of the project's objectives, goals, and scope. It should clearly state what the project aimed to achieve. The report then should provide a transparent and clear explanation for why the project is being terminated. This could include the factors that led to this decision, whether they are related

to budget constraints, changes in organizational priorities, external factors, or any other valid reasons. Reflection of challenges faced, decisions made, and the overall project management process. These lessons can be valuable for future projects.

Providing a Final Status Summary may include the Status of Deliverables, Financial Summary, Timeline, and Milestones. Including a financial summary detailing the project's budget, expenditures, and any remaining funds is essential for stakeholders and can influence future resource allocation decisions. Present a timeline summary, highlighting key milestones and their statuses. This helps stakeholders understand the project's progression and where it stood in relation to the initial schedule. As a part of the final report, we can Archive Project Data. Establishing a centralized repository for all project-related data, including documentation, reports, code repositories, and any other relevant materials will work excellently. This can be a physical or digital archive accessible to authorized personnel. Last but not least we should acknowledge the Team Contributions. We can highlight the contributions of team members and recognize individual and collective efforts that played a role in the project's accomplishments.

- **Post-Project Retrospective:**

A post-project retrospective is an opportunity for the project team to reflect on their collective experiences, celebrate successes, and collaboratively identify areas for improvement. By creating a positive and open environment, teams can learn from their past endeavors and enhance their effectiveness in future projects. We can hold a meeting involving all contributors where we can emphasize Successful Processes and Achievements and identify changes that could have improved project outcomes. Starting the retrospective by emphasizing successful processes, achievements, and positive outcomes of the project creates a positive atmosphere and acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the team. Encouraging open and honest discussions about challenges, setbacks, and areas where the project fell short will create an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing their perspectives without fear of blame. We can view challenges as learning opportunities and discuss what could have been done differently to mitigate risks, address issues proactively, or improve decision-making for future projects.

1.3.2 Recognising Individual Accomplishments

- Individual Appreciation Meetings
- Communication with Managers:

1.4 Reconsidering Project Cancellations: Exploring Counterarguments

1.5 Empirical evidence

1.6 Conclusion

1.7 References

[1] Identify reasons to terminate a project:

<http://www.todolistsoft.com/solutions/checklist/project-cancellation-checklist.php>

[2] What To Say To Your Team When A Project Is Cancelled and What To Do.

<https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/projects/leadership-team-management/what-to-say-do-when-project-ca>