Project Scope Management in Information Technology

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Introduction

Despite the fact that project management has been a grounded field for decades, managing information technology needs designs and information which are beyond the conventional project management. Therefore, Project Scope Management is used instead when it comes to information technology. The focus of the latter is to include all the processes which define and control the work in the project and any other factor which has an impact on the project as well (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 178).

The importance of good project scope management in information technology

Project scope management entails all the processes and activities which defines what kinds of work should be included in a project or not. These processes include the descriptions of all deliverables with regards to the project. First, there is a definition of the documenting features of the products of the projects and how these products will be created. Secondly, the scope of the project is defined in terms of having the project scope statement as well as the updates on the prevailing project documents. Thirdly, a work breakdown structure is created (WBS) where the project workload is broken down into manageable work portions (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 179). The scopes are then verified where the key players in the project such as the sponsors and the customers formally accept or change the project deliverables. Finally, controlling the changes in the project scope to ensure that the project runs as expected so as to meet the set objectives within the specified time frames.

Looking at the real-life scenario, for example in hospitals, medical practitioners are expected to manage the medical records independently despite the existence of an information technology department. Therefore, this calls for the players to be very literate in the field which

is normally not the case, considering the massive information breaches reported. Project scope management is very important to the information technology industry because it compels the project stakeholders to be deliberate on the specific products of the project at the very initial phases of the project. Furthermore, the means of coming up with the specified project products are also agreed upon at the very initial stages of the project. As a result, such deliberations creates an atmosphere of the unity of purpose among the project stakeholders and team. Incorporating all the key players in the information technology through project scope management in a hospital ensures that the major outputs of the project are realized. Besides, the definition of specific needs or requirements for the end user saves on the massive costs which can be incurred in the information technology field should there be the need to change (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 179).

Processes for further defining the project scope

An in-depth definition of the project scope is very crucial in project scope management. The importance of further defining the project scope includes improved accuracy in terms of time, cost and other resource estimations. Furthermore, baseline performance dimensions and project controls are outlaid together with the work responsibilities of all players in the project. The major contributions for preparing the project scope statement include the project charter, requirements documentation, and organizational process assets such as policies and procedures which relate to scope statements as well as project files and lessons learned from previous though similar projects (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 183).

The information from the project charter aids further definition of the project scope in many ways. First, it describes the high-level scope, time, and cost goals for the project objectives and success criteria, a general approach to accomplishing the project's goals. It also outlays the

main roles and responsibilities of important project stakeholders. Generally, project scope statement entails product scope description, product user acceptance criteria, and detailed information on all project deliverables. Documentation of other scope-related information, such as the project boundaries, constraints, and assumptions is also helpful. Referencing supporting documents is also important on product specifications with potential impacts on the produced or purchased products, or corporate policies, which might affect how products or services are produced (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 183). Furthermore, most of the information technology projects also require detailed functional and design specifications for developing software, which also should be referenced in the detailed scope statement. Looking at the significance of further defining the scope of the project, it is very relevant in the day to day operations in real life scenarios.

You find that most of the time, the sponsors of the information technology are not information technology experts and yet they expect to understand the most complex aspect of the project just by looking at a document. The in-depth description of the project scope provides that information which a layman can relate to when interacting with the project in the field of information technology. Considering the case of sponsors involved in the information technology project, the application of the work breakdown structure is very vital. This is because, as much as they may not fully understand the facets of the whole project, they do not mind knowing the kind of inputs expected from them in relation to other parties involved. The logical breakdown of responsibilities through work breakdown structure enables such provisions.

The Importance of Scope and Time Management during the project lifecycle

Managing scope works like a checklist in the project life cycle. Scope control in project life cycle serves to influence the factors that cause scope changes as well as assure changes are

processed according to procedures developed as part of integrated change control. Through the use of variance analysis, monitoring tool, the project planned is measured against the project implemented throughout the lifecycle of the project.

The concept of monitoring the implementation of the project is utilized in many other project activities just to ensure that there is progress and that any features of the project that had been misestimated are addressed with an immediate effect. In a nutshell, managing scope of a project ensures the following: Adoption of the process put in place, a balance in competing stakeholder priorities, a collaboration across teams, demonstration value iteratively, elevation of the level of abstraction and developing a continuous focus on quality (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 197).

The fact that time is consistent and easily measured is good in that projects can easily have timelines. However, this fact also renders most projects in the information technology field unsuccessful due to the fact that sometimes time factor is underestimated. Changes that occur during the project implementation force other factors to be flexible which does not happen with time. Time moves regardless of what is happening in the project lifecycle. Therefore, in order to manage time, a systematic approach, based on time and all project activities should be taken into account. The first step towards time management is defining project activities versus the persons responsible for executing them. Secondly, project activities should be sequenced in terms of how they are related or interlinked and how they can be synchronized (Schwalbe, 2011, p. 205). Thirdly, the associated resources such as people, equipment and finance should be estimated in a quantified form. The specific activity durations should be estimated too so as to aid in the accuracy of the estimated resources. Finally, project schedules should be developed and controlled to ensure that the project is on the right timelines.

Conclusion

Failing to manage scope and time in the project lifestyle in the information technology industry spells doom to the entire project. This is evident by the fact that due to many activities that need to be synchronized in information technology projects, the failure of one party makes the process to recover very expensive. Furthermore, whenever one part lags behind, the whole project stagnates.

References

Schwalbe, K. (2011). *Information Technology Project Management* (6th ed.). New York: Course technology: CENGAGE Learning.