Elective 4 (Information System Development and Management)

INITIATION AND PLANNING SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

IT 415

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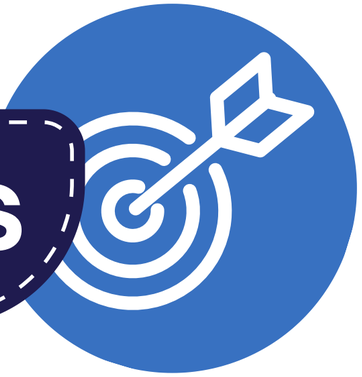
LEARNING OBJECTIVES



1. Understand and implement the steps involved in the project initiation and planning process.
2. Understand the various methods for assessing project feasibility.
3. Understand the activities needed to build and review the baseline project plan.
4. Understand the activities and participant roles within a structured walkthrough.

Project Initiation

- is the first step in starting a new project. During the project initiation phase, you establish why you're doing the project and what business value it will deliver—then use that information to secure buy-in from key stakeholders.

The Project Initiation Process: 4 Steps to Get Started

1. Create a project charter or business case

- In the first step of a project, you create a project charter or business case to justify the need for the project and its benefits. A **project charter** is used for smaller initiatives, while a **business case** is for larger projects requiring significant resources. Both documents outline key project details and help pitch the initiative to stakeholders. For example, a project charter might be used for a website redesign, while a business case would be used for a company-wide rebranding.

1.1 Project Charter

A project charter demonstrates why your project is important, what it will entail, and who will work on it—all through the following elements:

- **Why:** The project's goals and purpose
- **What:** The scope of the project, including an outline of your project budget
- **Who:** Key stakeholders, project sponsors, and project team members

1.2 Business Case

A business case includes all the components of a project charter, along with these additional elements:

- A comprehensive financial analysis, including an estimate of the return on investment (ROI) your project will bring
- An analysis of project risks and a risk management plan
- An action plan that includes how decisions will be made (such as a RACI chart), a **communication plan**, and next steps you'll take if your business case is approved

The Project Initiation Process: 4 Steps to Get Started

2. Identify key stakeholders and pitch your project

- After creating a project charter or business case, identify key stakeholders who need to approve the project, such as executive leaders, project sponsors, or teams providing resources. To determine stakeholders, ask who needs to approve, provide resources, or influence the project. Conduct a stakeholder analysis by categorizing them based on their level of influence and interest. Additionally, notify individuals who might be impacted by the project, even if they don't need to approve it. Securing stakeholder buy-in early helps gain approval, support, resources, and avoids roadblocks later in the project.

The Project Initiation Process: 4 Steps to Get Started

3. Run a feasibility study

- After pitching your project and aligning it with your company’s strategic plan, the next step is to conduct a feasibility study. This study evaluates whether the project is viable by answering two key questions:

1. ***Does the team have the necessary resources to complete the project?***
2. ***Will the return on investment (ROI) justify pursuing the project?***

If the answer to both is yes, you can confidently move forward. If not, the study provides data to request more resources from stakeholders or adjust the project plan.

NOTE: Feasibility studies are mainly for large projects with significant resource needs and may not be needed for smaller or previously studied projects. They take time and resources, so ensure they're necessary before starting.

The Project Initiation Process: 4 Steps to Get Started

4. Assemble your team and tools

- Once your project is approved and its feasibility confirmed, it's time to assemble your team, workspace, and tools. Start early to find the right people and follow company procedures for assigning employees. Plan your team structure, whether hierarchical or region-based. Ensure the workspace fits the project's needs, especially for remote or onsite work, and choose the right tools for collaboration, such as email or project management software.

Project Planning

- outline the scope of the problem and identify solutions. Resources, costs, time, and other aspects should be considered here. The planning phase of the SDLC is also when the project plan is developed that identifies, prioritizes, and assigns the tasks and resources required to build the structure for a project.

What is a software project plan?

- is a collection of documents that outline the tasks and timeline of your software development. Software project plans typically include projected start and end dates, launch plans, requirements, configurations, installation procedures, databases and training standards.

Importance of software project plans

- **Defining role and responsibilities:** When planning your software project, you include information about which team members can address each aspect of the software development. By assigning roles early and documenting those assignments, you can ensure accountability for each task.
- **Determining client requirements:** By creating a software project plan, you determine the exact parameters of the client requirements. When creating your plan, ask for constant feedback from clients and other interested parties to ensure the software meets their needs.
- **Meeting project deadlines:** Planning for software projects can help you meet project deadlines by providing a clear time frame for completing each aspect of the project. Including time-based objectives in your plan allows every team member to understand project milestones.

Importance of software project plans

- **Adhering to the project budget:** Detailed project plans include budgetary information, including the allocation of funds for each facet of the project. Creating a software project plan can help your team stay within the project budget.
- **Ensuring high-quality work**: Software project plans are important because they allow you to implement quality assurance and find potential viruses or defects in the code before delivering it to the client. You can ensure you deliver high-quality software to clients by defining quality and delegating quality assurance duties.

How to create a software project plan?

1. **Define the scope of your software project:** Outline the project's goals, including outcomes, tasks, budget, timeframe, and deliverables, either in a written format or bullet points.
2. **Isolate tasks within the project:** Break down the project into smaller tasks to help determine the budget and assign specific teams, like creating a team for quality assurance on beta code.
3. **Design time-based objectives:** Set deadlines and milestones for each task, considering expected delivery times and potential delays, to ensure the project stays on track.
4. **Delegate tasks to teams or individuals:** Assign tasks based on complexity and expertise, such as having different teams work on design, coding sprints, and quality assurance.

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How to create a software project plan?

5. **Establish schedules for your team:** Create schedules for each task and communicate labor needs to help your team meet deadlines. For example, a six-month project may have monthly schedules outlining specific tasks.
6. **Perform risk assessments:** Identify potential risks that could affect the project, such as internet outages, and create contingency plans to minimize delays if issues arise.
7. **Gather and analyze project data:** Regularly collect and review data (e.g., budget and progress) to ensure your project remains on track. Use intervals, like weekly updates, to assess the project's status and make informed adjustments.
8. **Make adjustments to ensure success:** Based on data and feedback, adjust the project scope, timeline, or task delegation as needed. Flexibility is crucial for accommodating client changes and ensuring successful project completion.

Tips for Creating Software Project Plan

Use software tools: Software tools can streamline the creation of software project plans by providing templates and making it easy to share with team members, ensuring that all key details are included.

Create accessible guide documents: Ensure that your project plan documents are easy to access, well-organized, and readable. Before sharing with your team, improve clarity and format, and ask for feedback to confirm accessibility.

Review the plan at the end of the project: After project completion, review the software project plan for effectiveness. Identify areas for improvement and gather feedback from the team to refine future plans.

References

- https://asana.com/resources/project-initiation
- https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/software-project-plan#:~:text=A%20software%20project%20plan%20is%20a%20collection%20of%20documents%20that,procedures%2C%20databases%20and%20training%20standards.

QUESTIONS?