

What is project organization?

Project organization refers to the style of coordination, communication and management a team uses throughout a project's life cycle. Project organization encourages participation by each team member and embraces diverse talents and skills.

Team involvement is laid out in an organizational structure chart that graphically shows where each person is placed in the project structure. Project organizational charts are useful tools for clarifying who does what, securing buy-in and setting expectations for the group.

By applying project organization, a project team optimizes resources, provides clear communication about roles and responsibilities and reduces potential roadblocks. To maintain a strong project organization, the team needs proper direction and training from colleagues and supervisors. Each company has its own approach to project organization, depending on how many employees they have and what the project entails.

Types of project organization

There are many kinds of organizational strategies to implement for project success, including:

Functional: Functional project organization is structured around traditionally functioning departments with managers who report to an executive. It is the most commonly used project organization. There are no project managers. Instead, the managers coordinate projects and select team members from each department to support the project.

Project-oriented: Also known as projectized organization, the project-oriented approach has dedicated project divisions within the company. Each division focuses on a specific project and what is necessary to complete its tasks. Project division managers make significant decisions regarding goals, schedules and responsibilities for their team members.

Organic: Organic project organization focuses on a project's natural progression. This type of organization is flexible with a more relaxed workflow approach. This approach is also known as "laissez-faire," meaning the company allows each employee to have a unique approach to work and the ability to make their own decisions. They work side by side to communicate quickly to resolve unexpected issues.

Matrix: Matrix project organization focuses on both functional and project-oriented approaches. This approach means the team considers both the project and team member roles equally. Project leaders and those higher up in the structure make the decisions.

There are three subtypes of matrix organizational structures:

Balanced: Both project managers and functional managers have equal (or similar) levels of authority.

Strong: Project managers have more authority than functional managers.

Weak: Functional managers have more authority than project managers.

Multidivision: When a team uses a multidivision project organization, they do not have functional roles. Instead, several individual groups share the same goal and skills. These groups might work on distinct tasks but progress toward the overall team objective.

Virtual: Virtual project organization involves team members from across the country or around the world who work on the same project together. This team does not focus on functional roles but rather on overall contribution to project objectives. The project manager organizes the team and goals to keep everyone informed and progressing effectively.

Democratic: Democratic project organization is when a company makes decisions based on the majority's opinion and feedback. A team uses the democratic approach to enforce structures, rules and expectations that most employees agree on. As a result, implementing regulations and outlining goals is easier because of the general consensus among team members.

How to structure a project

Project organization requires the deliberate integration of team strategy. Consider the following steps when structuring a project:

1. Identify project members

When starting a project, identify each member that participates in its development. Think about people you want to invite to join the team and any additional roles needed. When you recognize each member of the project, you acknowledge the individual talents and

perspectives they add. Identifying members make it easier to assign responsibilities to each individual.

2. Set goals

Goals focus team members on particular tasks that help contribute to the project. Teams that have goals share a similar purpose and work toward achieving mutual tasks. Consider using a SMART framework to help plan out goals.

3. Create a timeline

Timelines are a good way to track progress and stay punctual as a team. They outline project milestones and provide due dates as to when the team wants to achieve each goal. Timelines can focus on a week, a month or a year depending on how specific the team wants to be.

4. Train project members

An effective team is adequately trained and well-educated in their roles. When working on a project, make sure each team member is thoroughly trained and feels confident in their work. Initial training provides a great foundation for a project. Meanwhile, ongoing training provides team members with the opportunity to continue learning and expanding on their expertise.

5. Assign responsibilities and roles

When you begin your project, assign obligations and roles to each team member. With predetermined duties and functions, members know how to participate in the project and what work to produce. Roles might develop over time and some team members might gain additional responsibilities.