**DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT (MODULE 4 ASSIGNMENT)**

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1. **Explain briefly the types of project organization**

Project organisation refers to how project teams will implement their projects. This is structured according to the size of the organisation, their scope of work as well as their function. Project organisation is based on size and strategic requirements of the organisation, as well as budget and time constraints. Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), ), Project Management, The Managerial Process, 7th Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Education,67, state that projects can be organised as follows, functional organisation, dedicated project teams and matrix structure.

Functional organisation is the traditional method of organisation, according to functional specifications. This system is common especially in small organisations. For example, an organisations’ existing functional structure based on departmental activities for example sales, marketing and accounts, is used during a project. This means staff structure is not radically altered and in house expertise can be utilised.

Projects can also be set up as dedicated teams, with recruitment happening even outside the organisation, in order to get the requisite skilled personnel dedicated to the project. This team may or may not interact with the non-project staff at the organisation. These teams usually bring across skills from different areas for one purpose, achieving the goal of the project. Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), state that the advantage of these dedicated teams is that they get the job done faster because they work independently. However they are costly to set up as some may require recruitment of external consultants.

Matrix system is another way of organizing projects. Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), Project Management, The Managerial Process, 7th Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, 75, state, “The matrix system is designed to optimally utilize resources by having individuals work on multiple projects as well as being capable of performing normal functional duties”. Organisations with complex projects prefer the matrix style for organising projects. This creates a strong focus on projects and enables resource sharing across the organisation. It takes a long time for organisations to develop mature matrix structures that are effective.

1. **What are the phases available in project portfolio process?**

Project Portfolio refers to a, “… group of projects that have been selected for implementation balanced by project type, risk, and ranking by selected criteria”. Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), Project Management, The Managerial Process, 7th Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 637. Project portfolio is critical for any project as it helps in the identification of priority projects and ultimately leads to better resource management and better project delivery.

According to Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), there are various project portfolio processes to ensure projects align to the organization’s strategy and mission. The first step in the process involves identification and valuation of the proposed projects, this could be cost benefit valuation, project net value or relevance of project to the strategic operations of the organization. The projects are then ranked and selected on stipulated criteria for example financial and non-financial models. Projects are then scored and balanced so that non performing projects are eliminated or abandoned. The selected projects are then scheduled and the requisite human and financial resources allocated to them so that they are implemented. Ongoing monitoring of the projects is done to ensure they are still on track and are still relevant to the organization’s strategy.

Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), Project Management, The Managerial Process, 7th Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 36, state that, “…the aim of portfolio management is to ensure that projects are aligned with the strategic goals and prioritized accordingly”. The writers further state that project portfolio processes help organizations’ balance risk across projects and create better communication within the project.

1. **Explain the term risk management**

Risk management, “…includes planning for how an organisation will conduct risk management, this includes analysing, prioritising and responding to risks”. Phillips, Jack J. et al (2012). Project Management ROI; A step by step guide for measuring the impact and ROI for Projects. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 4. Risk management is important for any organization because it helps in identifying elements that could impede the project and planning appropriately for them. It is a preventative measure that should be done collectively by all stakeholders to ensure all project processes are assessed for risk.

Phillips, Jack J. et al (2012), state that risk management involves identifying qualitative and quantitative potential risks to the project and then rating or prioritizing risks by their level of seriousness and potential to occur. This is followed up by planning for the risks (mitigation strategy), and making plans to manage the risk, for example by assigning the risk to an individual so that it is monitored throughout the life cycle of the project.

Risk management helps organizations to cope better in ever dynamic environments and risk management can also help the organization identify positive risks, such as introduction of technology that will speed up data collection for example. Negative risks such as a shipment delay should be planned for and if there is a chance of turning around the negative into positive this should be identified in the risk management plan. Another advantage of having a risk management plan means that experiences are documented for learning purposes and institutional memory. Managing risk also means the project schedule, budget and output is also managed, as risks can be costly.

1. **How are projects cushioned from risk?**

Projects are cushioned from risk by developing risk management plans. These plans are the collective effort of project stakeholders. They state the action to be taken to mitigate risks and the personnel to manage the risk.

The risk management plans can either be electronic or manual and shared with the project team to ensure everyone is well prepared and aware. This is similar to an early warning system. Planning for risk is always the best way to cushion your project from risk. Phillips, Jack J. et al (2012). Project Management ROI; A step by step guide for measuring the impact and ROI for Projects. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 4, state that poor project planning results in poor risk management

By prioritising risks, one is able to assign proper resources to mitigate the risk and assigning risks to individuals ensures continual monitoring and managing of the risk. Project teams involved in complex projects can cushion themselves from risk by developing prototypes, or conducting pilot studies in order to see where modifications or adjustments are required. This will also determine the feasibility of the project. According to Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), Project Management, The Managerial Process, 7th Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Education,230, organizations can cushion themselves from risk by coming up with contingency plans as they, “…increase the chance that the project can be completed on time and within budget”.

1. **Why is it important to plan for risk in execution of any project?**

Planning for risks in any project is critical as it saves the organisation time and money that can be lost in recovering from risk. It helps the organisation to focus resources and attention appropriately in order to deal with a risk. This will help the organisation develop a proper proactive and not reactive risk management plan.

As the saying in the world of boxing goes, “the worst blow is the one that you don’t see coming”, planning and preparing for risk helps to mitigate the impact of a risk if it occurs. Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011), Project Management, The Managerial Process, 7th Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 226, state that planning for risks helps organizations, “establish an environment in which participants feel comfortable raising concerns and admitting mistakes”. This will ensure transparency and quicker resolution of issues.

Planning for risk helps the project team develop skills need to cope in the event that a risk becomes a reality. For example, Lawson Erik and Gray F Clifford (2011) state planning for risks helps a project team “quantify” the risk and set aside contingency funds that can be used to mitigate the risk.

1. **What can be a source of conflicts in a team and how can the same be solved**

For any project to be successful, it is critical for the team to work harmoniously in order to achieve project goals. Project management hinges strongly on human resources management. As a result it is imperative that conflicts be resolved as soon as they are identified so that focus remains on the end goal that is project delivery.

“Accept that conflict is normal and suppressing it won’t make you move forward, the disagreements will simply remain simmering beneath the surface” Williams, Merri, (2008) The Principles of Project Management, Victoria: Australia, SitePoint Pty Ltd., 103. This statement is true to project managers and team leads that should have a conflict resolution strategy in place as conflict is normal and inevitable. According to William Merri (2008), cited above, some of the sources of conflict in a team arise from having a team that has unhealthy competition and clashes over personalities. This can be resolved by having an initial kick off meeting where the team meets informally and they get to appreciate and understand each other outside the project environment. This also helps the team develop a bond and in some cases friendship or at least harmony and cohesion.

She further states that team conflict could be as a result of the project scope that keeps changing and unrealistic timelines. This problem can be resolved by joint planning and involving all stakeholders so that communication lines and business requirements are understood and agreed upon. Conflicts can be resolved through confrontation, counselling or establishing a compromise between conflicting parties. Lack of resources and poor planning can further create conflict in teams, as competition for resources arises and frustration due to lack of resources affects deliverables. In my previous work place, we resolved this conflict by having each department draw up their budget and resource requirements for all their activities and then having the appropriate resources allocated as per demand and departmental need.

Some multi-cultural organisations can face conflicts as well due to stereotypes, racism, prejudice and just ignorance. In such cases it is important to learn about other cultures and what is offensive to others. This can be done though a cultural awareness workshop as is done in my current workplace at Baza. According to Williams, Merri, (2008) The Principles of Project Management Victoria: Australia, SitePoint Pty Ltd., 101. “The main things to emphasise are tolerance and patience, help people to respect each other’s’ opinions and to realise that the conflict won’t continue forever!”

7. **Give some ideas citing relevant examples for successful and better project teams**

Successful and better project teams do not come about naturally, but they are a result of intentional effort by the team lead and the project team members. According to Mochal, T et al (2011), Lessons in Project Management, 2nd Edition, New York: Apress, 209. “People don’t always understand what is expected of them when they are left without proper guidance”. This could be as a result of a crisis in planning or apathetic leadership. Successful teams have charismatic and inspired leaders, for example the brand Apple was built under the vision and inspiration of Steve Jobs, whose ingenuity has won many Apple followers today, causing the brand to be instantly recognised worldwide and earning a stake in the technology market share. This is testament to the fact that inspired leaders create inspired teams, who deliver inspired products.

Mochal T et al (2011) state that better teams are as a result of delegation and assigning personal responsibility to individuals for deliverables. This increases productivity, eliminates idleness and pushes the team towards achieving their personal set targets. For example, in a fast food chain, you have someone taking orders, another, flagging orders, others preparing the dishes and others responsible for serving the end product. These individuals have one person, namely a supervisor who is overally responsible for them, pulling the team together and offering guidance towards achieving the end goal. This shows that together each achieves more when assigned an area of focus guided by a “team lead”.

Mochal T et all (2011), further state that successful team are organised teams, with clear reporting and communication structures, for example weekly planning and reporting meetings, and a contact person for grievances. He states that successful teams have a well- planned and detailed work schedule for example a Work Breakdown Schedule (WBS); to guide the team and help them identify the work to be done, the key milestones and sub deliveries along the project life cycle. This aerial view puts into perspective what is expected of the teams and the responsibility that lies ahead.

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