**Africa Center For Project Management (ACPM)**

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**DIPLOMA IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT COURSE**

**Assignment: Module 1**

1. Four functions that comprise management process

It is difficult to give management one precise definition however it’s process consist of the following

Activities:

Planning

Organizing

Leading

Coordinating and

Controlling

The efforts of Organization members and of using all other organizational resources thus

Human Resource

Buildings

Machineries and Equipments and

Time

To achieve the planned organizational objectives or goals, using a given budget of resources within a stipulated period of time, on the other hand, process is a series of interwoven actions or functions that brings an organizational projected results predetermined by the strategic management plan.

The four basic functions of management process are as listed below:

1. Planning
2. Organizing
3. Leading
4. Coordination and
5. Controlling

**Planning** is the projection of scheduled course of actions intended to reach or achieve specific goals within a given period of time. It is deciding in the present about the future objectives and the courses of actions for their achievements.

Planning is done at all levels of management respectively, at the top most level of management, the mission or purpose of the organization is strategically planned. Objectives or goals that the organization is working towards achieve is established and the resources to be used are decided. At middle level of management one of the plans is to execute on the mission statement set by the top management to achieve the organizations objectives. At the operational level one of the plans is to manage the actual work being done, the personnel involved, equipments installed to meet the performance plan as mapped out by the top management.

**Organizing** involves identification of activities required for the achievement of organization objectives and implementation of plans. Grouping of activities in to jobs, assignment of these jobs and activities to departments or functional units, delegation of responsibilities and authority for performance and provision of both vertical and horizontal coordination of activities

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**Leading** or directing is the function of leading the organization staff to perform their services effectively and efficiently thus contribute optimally to the achievement of the organization’s objectives. Jobs assigned to subordinates have to be explained and clarified; they need to be provided with guidance on how to execute their responsibilities and they need to be motivated to contribute their optimum performance with enthusiasm. Therefore communication is very interchangeably used and is very important for clear understanding and efficient performance thus improvement in the overall organization goals.

**Coordination** is the function of establishing such relationships among various parts of the organization that they all together pull in the same direction of organizational objectives. Management should ensure organization is coupled with her all effective parts coordinated, so moving together in their closely knit and adjusting activities, so linking that they make a working unit which is not a congeries of separate pieces but what is referred to as a functional whole.

For organization to achieve her goals, all her departments must work together. It is like players in the football field, for a team to win all the players must work equally hard.

For example sales department must do thorough marketing which would result into high demand for products to be sold on the other hand production department must produce enough to meet the sales demand.

**Controlling** is the function of ensuring that departmental, sectional and individual performances are consistent with the predetermined objectives of the organization at large and any deviations from the planned objectives are identified, promptly investigated and corrective actions taken to enable the organization to achieve her mapped objectives.

As can be seen the above mentioned management process functions are so interwoven that they are not performed in a sequential order but in a simultaneous way, for example Peter a marketing manager is discussing low sales challenges with his subordinate it is somehow difficult to know which function is he applying as for sales to improve all the functions must work in liaison simultaneously to achieve the organization objectives

2**.** Kinds of managers

In any organization small or big there are generally three levels of managers, thus top level managers, middle level managers and operational level managers as can be shown below using hierarchical pyramid. The volume of the organizations operations and her complexities can determine the number and qualifications of managers to be posted at each level of the organization to ensure smooth flow of operations that will lead into achieving the organizations objectives.

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**Levels of managers**

Top Level Management/Managers

Middle Level Management/Managers

Operational Level Management/Managers

**Top Level Managers**

These are the final determinants of an organization’s success or failure. They design how the entire organization should operate, establish objectives or goals and policies that can enable the organization to achieve her objectives. The managers at this level consists of the Chairman, Managing Director, CEOs etc. their main responsibilities includes the following:

Establishing objectives that the overall organization wants to achieve in future.

Set up policies which should be followed to achieve the objectives

Avail resources thus human, machineries, supplies and determine time frame within which a given activity is supposed to finish.

**Middle Level Managers**

These are the managers between the top level of management and the operational level of management. Their main mandate is to ensure the policies and plans written by the top level managers are implemented. Since success of an organization is realized when all the departments work in coordination, it is the sole responsibility of middle level or departmental heads to ensure that the different departments work in liaison to achieve the objectives of the organization. For example Sales department help to come up with projected sales, the production department should produce adequately to meet this sales demand on the other the financial controller should avail adequate funds to enable all the other departments to perform as expected effectively and efficiently. These managers also reports to the top most managers to assess if there is any variance between the actual performance and the planned course of action, where upon corrective measures to be taken promptly to mitigate any quantifiable damage.

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**Operational Level** **Managers**

These managers are found at the bottom of the pyramid. They are entrusted with the actual operations of their respective departments. Example of managers here include: supervisors and foreman. They are in direct touch with the subordinates who work under them and perform the actual work, however they have powers bestowed upon them to manage the work force under them but such powers are limited as they are supposed to report to the middle managers for any decision taking. It is the mandate of these managers to ensure work is effectively and efficiently done using the organization’s budget and work is accomplished within the planned time frame.

They delegate work responsibilities to workers under them, evaluate their performance and report to the middle managers. Managers at this level can be very instrumental to the higher managers as they are close to work stations, depending with the business activity of the organization, they can get direct feedback from the clients which can be used to review some policies to improve the wealth maximization of the entire organization.

3. A skill is an individual’s ability to translate knowledge into action. Hence it is manifested in an individual’s performance. Managers are expected to enable an organization realize their mission, vision and objectives. With only academic qualifications they can not easily achieve the above, they need to have adequate skills that match their level and area of service which is very crucial. Three different important skills which help managers to succeed in their services includes:-

1. **Conceptual skills** which gives managers ability to deal with ideas. It couples a manager with the ability to take broad and farsighted view of the organization, ability to think in abstract, ability to analyze the forces working in a situation, his creative and innovative ability and his ability to discern the environment and the changes taking place around it.
2. **Technical skills** give the manager ability to understand the nature of jobs his subordinates perform. It also refers to a person’s knowledge and proficiency in any type of process. For example in production department it denotes the ability of production manager to understand the types of machines used, whether they are manual or automatic, their nature of service requirements, their usage pattern, shifts arrangements and raw materials to be processed. Availability of storage facilities, Nature of products in regard to storage duration. Nature of products in regard to handling techniques etc.
3. **Human relation skills** is the ability to interact effectively with people at all levels of management, this ability develops in a manager sufficient ability to recognize feelings and sentiments of others, judge the possible outcomes to be taken and the outcome of various courses of action he may undertake and the ability to examine his own concepts and values which may enable him to develop more friendly attitude towards others within and outside the organization.

For the organization to achieve her objectives the persons involved in the operations of the organization need to be treated well to motivate them to offer the best quality of their services

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4. Planning is the projection of scheduled course of actions intended to reach or achieve specific goals within a given period of time. It is a systematic thinking about ways and means for accomplishment of pre-determined goals of an organization. Planning involves visualizing a future course of action and putting it in a logical way. Whatever the resources you have in the absence of systematic planning, the resources may not help you in achieving your objectives.

Planning is necessary to ensure proper utilization of human and non-human resources in an organization, it is all pervasive; it assists to avoid confusion, uncertainties, risks and wastages.

The following are some of the objectives for planning:

1. Planning indicates the results that an organization expects to achieve.
2. It is the destination that an organization aims for and tries to attain
3. It is that future state of affairs which the organization is collectively trying to achieve.
4. It acts as a reference for the performance of management process since its during planning that an organization define what, when and by who to do what to achieve the pre-determined goals
5. It provides a roadmap that guides the management team to fulfill the organization’s objectives within a given span of time.
6. Plan make things happen, effective manager anticipate the future and prepare themselves to meet the challenges of the future. They influence the outcome of the events is a significant way. In any business interests of many people are involved thus employees, customers, creditors, shareholders and the government, are the main interest parties in any organization. In the light of uncertainties in the environment, it is a manager’s role to foresee the future and predict the consequences of actions. A manager has to look down the road into future and prepare himself to meet the uncertainties ahead. A strategic plan is a cushion for many problems associated with the future.

Systematic planning is essential for the success of any organization. Sometimes businesses fail not because they do not plan but because they do not plan in a systematic and effective way. Understanding of the following principles helps to achieve effective planning which can enable the organization to meet their objectives:

1. Comprehensive - for planning to be effective it should consider all important options and choose the best alternative possible.
2. Integrated - it should be designed in a way that individual short term decisions support to support strategic long term goals of the whole organization
3. Transparent – this means that the planning process should involved everyone and those involved should understand how the process operates from the beginning to the end
4. Informative – planning results should be understood by all stakeholders thus employees, customers, creditors and the shareholders of the organization.
5. Take time to plan, for any activity to produce quality result there should be time spent on it. Planning involved commitment of organizations resources in a particular way therefore the plan need to be well conceived to avoid committing the limited resources to wrongful purposes which would be a wasteful exercise resulting into agony and frustrations to all the parties of interest involved. Therefore take time to gather comprehensive information, make sound assumptions and analyze adequately the environment.

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1. Involve and communicate with all parties concerned, organization are complex that most of their operations are interrelated, such interrelations require the involvement of all the concerned with the achievement of goals. Example plan to improve sales will need people in sales department to work in coordination with their counterparts in production department and even human resource. It also helps to involve people in the plan because by nature human tend to oppose new ideas where they did not form part in its initiation but if they form part they would accept it willingly and purposefully.
2. Plans need to be flexible and dynamic, most problems in businesses are caused by unexpected events in the environment, if the plan is rigid with less scope for modifications as required by the changes in the environment, the organization would ultimately sink. Adequate flexibility need to be coupled in the plan to cater for such unexpected changes in the environment.

5 Planning process

Since planning is an activity and not an event and might not only affect one project, there could be

one main project and other small dependent or contingent ones, whether the project is one whole, or

Involves other small projects it goes through several steps to come up with a result – plan. The steps

are briefly discussed as follows:

1. The first step is to Survey the environment and know of what impact it has over the planning processes to follow.
2. Identify major activities to be undertaken, this should include activities for all projects involved.
3. Set up objectives, goals and standards of performance which the organization desire to achieve.
4. The next stage is to identify and quantify problems and challenges and how they can be mitigated not to interfere with the planning work.
5. Calculate resource requirements both human and machines and their related costs
6. After knowing the challenges that the planning team can go through then they can compare solution alternatives and decide on a favorable one to apply
7. At this stage the planners will implement on the best solution that has been chosen.
8. The moment implementation work has kicked off there will be need to evaluate and check if there is any variance from the targeted objectives if any then solution should be found as early as possible.
9. Determine overall costs and benefits of the project and determine it’s viability.
10. Once all the above has been done then document the project plan

6 Types of plans

Planning can be categorized into the following:

1. Strategic Plan is the long term planning done at the top most level of management where mostly members consist of Executives, CEOs, Directors, and Shareholders. Planning at this level is done for the entire organization on long term basis. It is at this level where the plans establish mission or purpose of an organization and devise policies on how they can be achieved. Clear definition of what the organization wants to achieve and how are well scrutinized in this planning. Decision on resources to be used in the planning process both human, Capital and time is made. Indeed it is the planning at this level that determines success or failure of the organizations.

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1. Tactical Plan this is where planning take place between strategic planning level and operational planning level in an organization. Tactical planning is concerned with the execution of the strategic plans made at the strategic level to enable the organization to achieve it’s set goals. The policies governing the activities of the organization at different departments are executed to enable the entire organization to achieve it’s objectives.
2. Budget Planning, this entails the resources required to enable the execution of the mission to achieve the organization’s objectives. This budget includes all resources human, machineries and equipments, supplies and time. For an activity to succeed, it should be able to accomplish it’s mandate by incurring minimum costs on it’s operations and finishing the job within a stipulated period of time. This can only be achieved where there is thorough budgeting plan and all the organs of the organization coordinate together for a common overall objective.
3. Organizations activities should take some order thus it is important to have procedural plan which explain, order of how a given activity is to be conducted. For example, how sales should be carried out, the way inventories should be arranged to make it easy for the adopted procedure to be executed. Like it can be decided that First in First out method can be used. This procedure in important as it will help to avoid or reduce chances of inventories expiring on the shelves.
4. Businesses operate in a very competitive and innovative environment that to survive needs a planning which is also creative and innovative that can discern this situation and have the ability to discover products which can enable them to out beat their competitors and serve the ever advancing interests of their customers.

7 Failure to plan is planning to fail

Right from the very beginning at the creation of the world, it is very clear God had a perfect plan, it was predetermined accurately as to what work was to happen day one, two up to the end and the overall time frame to be taken by the project was well predetermined and as we can vividly see the overall result was a pure success. On the other hand we can see how Adam and Eve, because they did not plan for any contingency made them very vulnerable when the devil got the opportunity on them he easily succeeded.

When a farmer want to do farming there is dire need to plan, one of the external determinants of his success is weather therefore his time planning is very crucial and failure to do this will just leave him to regret of all resources he would incur on the project as the ultimate result will fail. There are a number of other plans that he need to put in place like fencing the farm, soil test, market for the projected products, time it will take for the farm products to mature, farming skills and even the political atmosphere in the environment. All these need to be checked critically if he expects the activity to be viable. Failure to do these planning will leave him with no coats in the rains.

Many a time we fail in our endeavors not because we lack the inputs but because we lack strategic and effective plan and somehow we are not even able to quantify our failure because we do not predetermine the objectives that we are working towards achieving.

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Since resources are limited from the beginning it is important to plan well in advance on how we want to utilize the little resources within our reach for what purpose and for what gain, this would help to cushion any loss we are to suffer if any but failing to plan puts us in an awkward situation that we do not even know whom to blame, how to quantify any loss suffered, any remedies etc. Some persons ague that it is needless to plan as you can still fail, though this is true but quite different in context, a person who has a plan but unfortunately fail can certainly quantify how much he has failed, can devise an alternative way of doing things which can turn round his pattern of doing things and even level of success. In ordinary life there is a notion that life start at 40 years, assume seriousness in life come your way by 40th year, just try to quantify how much losses you have suffered before simply because you never had any plans on you doings. If we are to go by this measure then I would we have all burnt our finger, however this is not an excuse for not planning.

8 International companies that have succeeded or failed, due to poor strategic planning

It has been discussed extensively that, planning is good and important in businesses whether such businesses are small medium or big, local or international.

Below I have examined two international companies whose businesses have closed down due to poor strategic planning:

1. Nokia

Nokia was one of the first international companies to create cellular networks, at some time in the history Nokia was the global leader in the mobile phone service industry, which was an indication that they had a good and effective strategic plan at the beginning, however with the arrival of the internet, other mobile phone companies discovered how data not voice was the future of communication and they adopted this innovation very fast, Nokia on the other hand failed to be creative in this regard in their strategic plan, they failed to master the concept of software and remained focused on the hardware because the strategic managers feared to alienate their end users if they change.

In strategic planning, managers should be creative to discern the market and its vulnerability to innovation. As if they were running after the rain, they devised some operating systems with less user experience which were rendered unfit in the then highly competitive market. They thought because they were giant in the field none could shake them which cost them a lot of business to their competitors like Android , little did they know that success does not depend on quantity but quality.

As has been discussed that good plan is success similarly poor plan is for failure, it was unfortunate on Nokia that because they failed to factor in innovation in their strategic plan left them in the business cold weather as they gave their competitors a lee way to conquer them in business.

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2 Tie Rack

Tie Rack was a British family owned retailer shop selling men ties, scarves and cufflinks. In

their Strategic planning, they failed to study the market dynamic thoroughly like the buying

pattern of men, though they were able to produce very high quality products but still they missed

something on marketing for organization to succeed all the functional departments must work

in synergy. Success of a business depends on the overall acuteness of all the facets or functional

units of planning, product can be good but if there is loop hole on marketing still the company is

doomed to fail. Sectional or

Departmental success, do not necessarily guarantee the overall success of the whole enterprise.

Like in this case, there was no problem recorded at all on products the only problem was

marketing the sales manager did not factor in the fact that most men would like to buy their ties

together with the shirt from the same source at the same time. This made the shareholders to

sell over the business to an enterprise which was also selling the other components of men’s

wear, something that would have been avoided it there was a thorough strategic plan in the

line of marketing.

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