

The Discipline of Project Management in Today's Global Economy

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Project management is a rapidly evolving application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques that specializes in strategic approaches to project activities. These approaches generally promote planning and control of time, cost, and quality efficiency and effectiveness through organization, coordination, communication, and collaboration. According to the PMBOK Guide, effective project management helps organizations:

Meet business objectives; Satisfy stakeholder expectations; Be more predictable; Increase chances of success; Deliver the right products at the right time; Resolve problems and issues; Respond to risks in a timely manner; Optimize the use of organizational resources; Identify, recover, or terminate failing projects; Manage constraints (e.g. scope, quality, schedule, costs, resources); Balance the influence of constraints on the project (e.g., increased scope may increase cost or schedule); and Manage chance in a better manner. (PMI, 2017, p. 10)

Project management is becoming the primary means of accomplishing work in the global market. Project management provides stakeholders and team members with a centralized entity that is responsible for accomplishing goals cost efficiently and in a timely manner. This prevents confusion as to how projects should be lead and directed, how stakeholders interact, how project activities will be completed, and who is responsible for the success or failure of a project.

Effective project management is essential for high performing organizations that strive to remain competitive in the world economy. Currently, project success rates remain stubbornly low: “19% of organisations deliver successful projects, at least most of the time” (AIPM, IPMA,

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KPMH, 2019). The lack of successful projects suggests widespread poor management of projects. However, “58% of organisations feel that project success rates, in relation to achieving stakeholder satisfaction, have improved over the past two years”. Additionally, “74% of respondents think that, in the future, PM skills will be more important than today”. These numbers suggest that the role of project management has improved in recent years and people acknowledge the growing importance of project management, despite most organizations delivering unsuccessful projects.

Project management has plenty of contemporary developments. Meredith and Shafer write:

Developments in project management are being driven by quickly changing global markets, technology, and education. Global competition is putting pressure on prices, response times, and product/service innovation. Computer and telecommunication technology, along with rapidly expanding higher education across the world, allows the use of project management for types of projects and in regions where these sophisticated tools had never been considered before. (Meredith & Shafer, 2021, p. 2)

These significant changes are making project management more sophisticated and more valuable. The tremendous pace of innovation in global markets are forcing modern organizations to adapt effectively to pressure on prices and response times to remain competitive. Furthermore, through review and repetition, these projects will become ever so effective and efficient.

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Improvements within project management technology and education are allowing project managers to have a more flexible and adaptive approach to catering to today's complex projects (Nicholls, 2019) (Totah, 2021). AI and advances in predictive analytics will allow project managers to have more accurate estimates (Brownless, 2019). With the future of project management becoming increasingly strategic, project management frameworks are becoming expansive, which will allow project managers to blend frameworks and create approaches tailor-made for their projects.

There are more traditional approaches, like Waterfall, that focus on planning and the successive completion of tasks to achieve a set goal. There are also other new frameworks, such as Agile, with branches: Scrum, Kanban, and Lean, Critical Chain Management, Extreme Programming, and more. Arguably, the two most popular methods are Waterfall and Agile. Waterfall focusses on upfront requirement gathering and easily measurable progress where work is completed in phases. This works great for projects with remote workers, a fixed scope, time, and budget, smaller, well-defined project, and projects with an absent client. Whereas Agile, focusses on the communication of self-organizing, cross-functional teams working with software to collaborate to respond to change in sprints. Agile projects are projects with scope changing requirements, larger undefined, complex projects, projects with an involved client, and projects where your organization is responsible for the whole process.

Despite my focus on project management on the global market, any organization that has projects must have project management. For smaller organizations, employees oftentimes take on the role of an informal project manager. For example, I was formerly a floor manager at a bar and restaurant. I handled day-to-day operations, as well as engaged in project management.

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Promoting a new special, hiring new employees, and holidays were all projects and our organization had methods for each type of project. However, despite being a popular bar and restaurant that had numerous successful projects while I worked there, we lacked the formalities and complexity of larger organizations who have project manager roles. This is because our organization did not require this. Our competitors were local. We dealt with competition within the Columbia, South Carolina service industry, specifically within Five Points. The purpose of mentioning is to broaden the role of project management.

Despite our need for project management, we did not have the resources to designate someone as a project manager. Project management is very interesting, in that project management is so abundant, yet, becoming a project manager is quite challenging. People are initiating, planning, executing, managing, and reviewing projects all the time, but obtaining a project manager position requires extensive studying and experience.

Different organizational structures affect the roles of project managers and how their projects are executed. The PMBOK Guide lists ten different organizational structure types: organic or simple, functional, multi-divisional, matrix (strong), matrix (weak), matrix (balanced), project-oriented (composite, hybrid), virtual, hybrid, and PMO (PMI, 2017, p. 47). These structure types vary in arrangement of work groups, authority, roles, resource availability, who manages the budget, and the composition of the project management administration staff. For example, an organic structure type is flexible and capable of adapting well to market changes because of its few rules, regulations, and management complications. Here, the project manager has little or no authority and works side-by-side with team members, while communicating quickly and solving unforeseen issues together. On the other hand, a functional organization

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type groups workers based on their area of specialization, i.e. HR, finance, sales, etc., and enforces directives within a clearly defined scope of authority. This type of organization is beneficial to manufacturing companies by supporting ongoing operations and practices for producing standard products.

Projects may be managed in three scenarios: alone (outside of a program or portfolio), within a program, or within a portfolio.

Multiple projects may be needed to accomplish a set of goals and objectives [...]

Program management and portfolio management differ from project management in their life cycles, activities, objectives, focus, and benefits. However, portfolios, programs, projects, and operations often engage with the same stakeholders and may need to use the same resources [...] which may result in conflict in the organization. This type of situation increases the need for coordination within the organization. (PMI, 2017, p. 11)

The purpose of having project, programs, and portfolios is to group together goals and objectives to simplify the management of labor and resources. The linkage between the three is that they all hope to accomplish organizational goals and these goals are achieved through this hierarchy. Portfolio management may be more directly to an organization's goals where the impact of a single project may be less significant.

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