

Defining a Project:

- Project management operates in an environment that has a unique language, context and processes.
- This environment affects the project and the project manager.
- Successful project managers must manage their project within this framework.

Defining a Project:

According to the PMI® Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®):

A project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service or result.

Some examples of a project would be:

- Developing a new product,
- Designing a new vehicle,
- Building a house or a deck or a play structure,
- Running a fund raising campaign,
- Making a movie, and
- Re-engineering a business process.

Defining a Project:

Projects can be large or small, involve one person or many thousands, be long or short in duration, and they may be inexpensive or costly.

They can involve outside contractors, joint ventures, partnerships.

As long as the endeavour is temporary and creates a unique product, service or result it can be considered a project.

Defining a Project:

Temporary means that a project has a definite, well-defined beginning and a definite, well-defined end. While the duration of a project can vary greatly from a few hours or days to multiple years, it is finite. It will end.

If a project seems to go on forever it is most likely because you have not defined the goals clearly enough. The goals of the project are crucial for identifying when the project is done.

Temporary does not necessarily apply to the product or service being created by the project. Usually the product or service is expected to last indefinitely.

For example:

You launch a project to install a hot tub in your back yard. The building and installation project is finite. It starts and ends. The product created, in this case the hot tub, lasts long after the installation project is over.

Defining a Project:

Creating a **unique** product, service or result is an important characteristic of a project.

For example:

Many thousands of people have installed hot tubs in their yards. Each hot tub is unique because it has a different owner, different design, different location, different start and install dates, and many other different characteristics. The hot tub may be the same as thousands of others but the one in your yard is unique.

Defining a Project:

Progressive Elaboration:

When you start a project you may not know all the details of all the things you are delivering in the project. As you progress with the project, however, you must be able to develop a more detailed understanding of the objectives and the deliverables.

As you progress through the project you are therefore able to elaborate on the scope and the significant details of the work required to complete the project.

For example:

When developing a new electronic component for a vehicle the engineering team will know the general function of the component at the beginning of the project. They will determine the technology they will use later on once they have completed the design for the component. The technology, once determined, will allow the project team to develop the manufacturing processes they will use. And so on.

Defining a Project:

Projects versus Operations:

Most work done by organizations can be categorized as either projects or operations. Both types of work are performed by people, are affected by limited resources and need to be planned, executed and controlled.

Projects, as we have seen, are temporary and unique. The purpose of a project is to meet its objectives and then end.

Operations are ongoing and repetitive. The purpose of operations is to keep the business going. Objectives are constantly changing as the needs of the business evolve.