

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

Google's new headquarters, a one billion pound building, is planned to be created in London, near King's Cross Station. The project will encompass more than 60,400 sq.m., yielding Class A office space with 11 floors for 4,500 employees tentatively. Some of the facilities envisaged as part of the design include cafes, a gym, a swimming pool, and play areas as well as a garden. This work is even more important as it is the first Google building that is fully owned and built according to the company's design outside of the United States. This will make a significant positive impact on the Knowledge Quarter, thus effectively supporting the King's Cross area knowledge-based economy.

In the context of this essay, some of the fundamental elements of the Google Headquarters project will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed more on areas such as financial and time control, set quality, and the involvement of the stakeholders, the control and analysis of risk factors. A check will be made as to the extent to which management has effectively handled these project elements. Some areas that may need improvement, especially to increase the general success of projects will be targeted. As indicated above, this evaluation will provide recommendations that will enable the project to achieve its aims and objectives effectively in future.

Main Body

Budget

The cost of The Google Headquarters project is pegged at one billion pounds and therefore the notion of scale and project is lofty. This significant and ongoing spending money demonstrates Google's plan to erect a large and modern head office that will be the focal point of the company in the United Kingdom. Since this is a huge investment, it is usually important to control the costs in order to keep the project within the right financial docket (Flyvbjerg *et al.*, 2018). For this purpose, the project team has effectively put into operation strict budgetary controls which would ensure the reporting and monitoring of expenses on the project till it comes to fruition. Measures include careful identification of financial requirements, prediction of costs with considerable accuracy, and control of expenditures. Financial reviews are exercised on a routine basis to ensure that the project team is in a position to check on the budget frequently and control deviations which may lead to extra expenses.

Nonetheless, some of the following comprehensive financial challenges have remained evident. Construction costs are also considerably higher in London which is due to factors such as the cost of the workforce, regulatory measures, and cost of materials (Myers, 2022). Also, it is also affected by issues to do with the price of the materials which may change due to some reasons such as the market forces, or shortage of materials. Projections of this nature are quite fluid and can easily blow up the costs due to other factors, thus making the project go over the set budget. Furthermore, various problems may arise during the construction phase including the technical problems which can delay the construction period and add to these costs, more design changes, or site-specific challenges.

To manage these risks and to ensure that the project remains viable the project team has wisely established the contingency amount. This reserve is specifically set aside to cater for the costs that may be incurred in the course of construction and which were not previously foreseen (Thomas and Wright, 2020). The existence of this fund serves as insurance in the event that this project has to cope with some unseen and unavoidable expenditures. Besides, the project team regards risks and constantly monitors its financial plan in regard to its goals and timeframes on the project. However, it is known that the major cause of project failure relates to financial issues and through careful monitoring, timely intervention, and the use of contingency funds, the project team is in a better position to handle any financial hurdle that may come along to delay the project.

Time

The construction of the Google Headquarters in London is an aggressive one with the construction expected to be completed next year. Considering the extent of this undertaking, construction to the set time must be done in the right manner and sequences of construction properly planned for (El-Sayegh and Mansour, 2015). In this regard, the project team has developed a detailed project plan that has divided the whole project into several phases, with specific goals to be achieved at each of these phases. These milestones act as markers to help the team monitor progress at specified intervals and make any changes that are needed to ensure the project stays on course. There is a systematic review of the work progress to assess whether the work is going on as planned so that any variance can be corrected immediately.

All the same, several risks may affect the project's timeline even with such elaborate planning. Such projects are often affected by factors that are beyond the control of the project team such

as weather-related factors that may lead to work stoppage and subsequent delays (Marzoughi, Arthanari and Askarany, 2018). Other risks may include supply chain risks such as the delay in the supply of materials and labor risks whereby there may be a lack of adequate labor force which may slow down the construction process. In order to address these risks the project team has come up with a sound risk management strategy (Cagliano, Grimaldi and Rafele, 2015). This plan has measures that can be put into place in case of a certain eventuality for instance making sure that other suppliers can be sourced for in order to ensure that there are no supply chain interruptions and also coming up with flexible working hours to be able to cater for any changes that may occur.

Nevertheless, there may still be problems that the project cannot prevent and which may jeopardise its schedule. Thus, it is important to have some free time during the day and, therefore, flexibility in the schedule. It is advisable to schedule some more time for high-priority activities and to have some buffer time for potential problems in the schedule so that the schedule is not completely impacted by setbacks (Khan, 2023). Also, it is crucial constantly to be in touch with all the parties involved to be able to recognize problems and their solutions immediately. Thus, involving all the parties in the process and making sure everyone knows what they are doing can help the project team avoid the pitfalls and keep the project moving in the right direction and on track to be finished on time.

Quality

Something that seems very important in the construction project of the Google Headquarters in London is the preservation of the high quality. The building is to be constructed to high standards of quality, and the goal set is to create a safe, comfortable environment for the employees of the organisation to be occupying the building. Ever since its inception, it has ensured that quality control measures are inserted in the early stage of construction. Such measures include conducting physical assessments at several intervals of the construction process, conducting tests on some construction materials and compliance with the laid down construction laws and policies (Okoye and Ezeokonkwo, 2016). Every process that is undertaken during construction is supervised in order to achieve the company's standards of a flagship Google facility.

To launch these activities more effectively and ensure the high quality of the outcome, the project team incorporates the Quality Management System (QMS). This system gives a definite

method of how quality is to be maintained across all the facets of the project. The QMS also has set out procedures and processes, starting with the choice of materials, through to the assessment of the final product, which is the building (Patel and Pitroda, 2021). With the delineation of these processes, the QMS implements checks where any quality problem that may exist is detected in order to be rectified before it influences the quality of the project. This is a very proactive approach to managing quality which goes beyond simply responding to issues that may manifest themselves in the system.

However, quality risks can be realised during the construction phase even though they have not been identified during the design phase. For instance, defects in materials or substandard workmanship could have negative implications on the quality of the building (Allen and Iano, 2019). To minimise these risks, the project team embarks on quality audits from time to time. These audits also offer extra control so that the team gets an opportunity to evaluate the quality of work delivered and its standards. Another crucial aspect is also the cooperation with materials vendors and contractors to ensure, that all the participants know about the necessary quality level, obligatory for the project. This approach to the management of a project means that the suppliers and contractors know what is expected from them in terms of quality by the project team.

Keeping up the quality and regularly enhancing is critical to maintaining the level of quality as seen before throughout the duration of the project (Kerzner, 2018). It brings the team up to speed with interferences and changes that may interfere with the production process while also ensuring that the final product goes over and above the quality requirements for Google Headquarters.

Stakeholders

The key stakeholders in the Google Headquarters project are the Google company and the project management team, contractors, suppliers, and local government. This means that there is a need to manage stakeholders in the correct way to ensure that the entire project fulfils the expectations of all the users (Eskerod, Huemann and Ringhofer, 2015). Concerning stakeholders, the project team has created a stakeholder management plan as to how to handle stakeholders. This plan also has provisions for sending weekly progress reports, timely updates on the project and feedback from corresponding stakeholders.

In terms of stakeholder management, one of the focal issues is the balancing of stakeholders' power and claims. For instance, Google may have a certain project to be delivered on time, but contractors may be more concerned with quality and safety measures to be followed (Zidane and Andersen, 2018). To overcome this, the team working on this project has been arranging meetings with all the stakeholders in a bid to address their concerns to come up with the best solutions. This way all the stakeholders are in harmony and everyone is working according to a common plan and objective.

Another part of stakeholder management is the interaction with the community, with which the organisation is associated. Everybody who wishes to have some concerns about the construction has been consulted through the project team from the residents and business operators (Di Maddaloni and Davis, 2018). This involves the public and other stakeholders in the project hence they will support the project and even if they have any contrary opinion they will not oppose the project.

Risk Factors

Since the Google Headquarters project is a large-scale development it is important to take a closer look at the risk management aspect of the project. The project has several potential risks as it aims to achieve its target and they are; cost, time, quality and people (Zwikaël, Chih and Meredith, 2018). Managing these risks is crucial to prevent a slip in the project schedule and to ensure that the project goal is achieved within the laid down time frame and cost constraint.

These are challenges that the project team has well anticipated through an effective risk management plan. The plan entails a process of risk evaluation intending to evaluate the probability of risk occurrence and the effects that could occur, including ways of addressing the risks (Ostrom and Wilhelmsen, 2019). For example, cost control issues such as excessive budgeting have been appreciated as a threat and a contingency fund has been provided. This reserve is designed to help out should there be hard severities which one does not anticipate and this way; the project will be in a position to cover for such shocks in as much as it has set its overall budgets.

In maintaining individual and overall project goals, the project team has also looked at the disposal of the financial risks and identified ways to deal with delays and quality concerns. Disruptions can be caused by delay by either party, arising out of circumstances beyond the scope of the contract like unfavorable weather conditions, or by the supply chain, or by

conditions encountered on site that are not immediately apparent (Ali, Aibinu and Vidal Paton-Cole, 2023). To mitigate these risks, the team has developed elaborate contingency measures such as; flexible working hours, shifts in supply companies and buffer time on the project calendar. These measures offer the project the kind of flexibility required in dealing with different situations hence reducing the time delay.

Another factor that can be considered as a threat to the project is the construction risks. These may include such factors of the project environment as unfavourable geological conditions or adverse weather conditions permissions and approvals that are yet to be granted or design modifications made at the final minute (Zidane and Andersen, 2018). To assess the risk inherent in each problem area, the problem areas have been evaluated by the project team and backup plans formulated where necessary. It proposes measures that have to be implemented once a risk happens, allowing the team to act most efficiently. All these measures are beneficial in preventing the effects of the situation from becoming so bad that they would compromise the progress of the project entirely.

These broad risk management plans put the Google Headquarters project in a good place to address the issues likely to be encountered once the project is underway. Due to the project team's effort in identifying, evaluating, and managing risks early within the project life cycle, the project stays on track and can effectively deliver on the goals and objectives it has set for itself.

Conclusion

When looking at the feasibility of the Google Headquarters, one is forced to realise that planning and organisation are crucial to the project's implementation. The project has large funding and the planned time frame has to be tight, that's why the management is crucial. Requirements are very strict regarding quality of work, and this involves close cooperation and communication with stakeholders to guarantee the needs and desires of all will be met. Risk management is also crucial to avoid or control arising problems that might have a negative impact on the progression of the project.

From the analysis conducted on the project, it can be suggested that the project team should remain vigilant on the budget aspect of the project and adapt when necessary. The possibility of meeting certain set deadlines should be factored by the existence of a certain amount of

flexibility and the process of quality control should be scrutinised and optimised. It is still pivotal to keep stakeholders engaged and in touch and achieve more synergy. Lastly, it is important to make changes to the risk management plan and integrate other risks that can occur during the construction period.

Altogether, the Google Headquarters project may become an exemplary project of reinventing the urban landscape for both the company and the King's Cross district. In particular, it is possible to state that effective project management remains the key to the success of the project team.

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