

Project Management

LCBB5005

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Introduction.

Like any system, the project plan can get out of balance. To be able to rebuild it, we need to create a plan for its recovery. It is important to note that the longer a project manager waits with the fix, the longer it will take to restore the system. Therefore, it relies on the controls that help to uncover problems earlier and balance the situation in time. (Vysotsky) It can say that the work on managing and monitoring includes all aspects of the project (Project Management Institute, 2013).

Different reports can be used as control tools. For most, a tabular or numerical form can be used, but graphics recommended. We can say that a well-presented representation is intuitive. It does not require too many explanations, but at the same time, it is easy to read. We must not forget that most senior managers do not have much time to read extensive reports, only to understand that our plan is going according to schedule. As much as they enjoy that things are fine with our project, they probably have other duties. On the other hand, if something is wrong, they would like to know as quickly as possible about this and see what action we prepared to take (Wysocki, 2009)

How to create a successful Progress Reporting System.

When work is already underway, we usually want to know that everything is going according to plan. In this case, we need to develop a reporting system to inform us about the many possibilities on which the project can change. A reporting system could have the following characteristics:

- Provides accurate, timely, and complete information about the state of the project.
- It is understandable for those who will use it.
- Warn in time of the problems to take the necessary action.
- It does not take too long to make it counterproductive.
- The project team and general management easily perceive it.

We can take advantage of the hundreds of offers in the software market for project management to create this system. When we decide what we want to track, these tools can offer us standard reports and a few suggestions to suit our needs. Many software project management programs allow us to tailor their standard messages to meet our most specific needs (Wysocki, 2009).

We need to note that to create a truly successful Progress Reporting System, we need an expert assessment. It serves the project management team to

correctly interpret the information provided to it during control and monitoring. Together with his team, the project manager takes the necessary actions to ensure that the implementation of the site will meet expectations. (Project Management Institute, 2013).

Current Period Reports

In general, these projects cover only the current period that we have completed. They, therefore, report on activities that have been started or planned for work during the period. If there are activities that have not progressed according to the plan, the reasons for the deviation, and the relevant measures that will correct, it should be included in the report.

Cumulative reports.

They shall consider the work on the project from its beginning to the end of the current reporting period. It should be noted that they are more informative, as they show us what the trends for the project's progress are. In this case, several projects can be tracked by a variation of the graph and thus establish the project's progress and whether there is an improvement.

Exception reports.

These reports we use to show us if there are any deviations from the plan. They are usually intended for senior management and are adapted for quick reading and interpretation. Understandably, the reports designed for the company's top managers to require special attention. Typically, senior management does not have enough time for reports saying that everything is fine, and there are not enough serious problems that deserve their attention. In that case, usually a one-page, a high-level summary report is enough, telling us that everything is fine. For those who want more information, it is possible to attach a file with more detailed information. Thus, on the one hand, we provide short and clear information to the company's senior executives through the exception reports. On the other hand, through an attachment, we can give more detailed information to the interested person.

Stop-lights reports.

Stop-lights reports can be used in all other stories we've reviewed so far. We can try the following technique: if our project goes according to schedule and everything is as planned, we can put a green sticker on the top right corner of the project status report's first page. This will signal to senior managers that everything on the project is fine, and they do not need to read the information.

If the project encounters a problem during its implementation, we can put a yellow sticker on the first page's upper right corner. This is a signal to management that the project is not on schedule, and we have a plan for its recovery. A summary of the problem can be placed on the first page, but general managers may also want to refer to the attached report's details. These details usually describe the problem, the corrective steps that we intend to introduce, and the time frame for which the situation will be corrected.

With a red sticker placed in the top right corner, we signal that the project is out of control. We should avoid such reports at all costs because this shows that we do not have a plan to fix the problem that we have encountered or even recommendations to the company's management. These reports will undoubtedly be examined in detail as they show severe issues with the project. From a positive point of view for us may be the fact that sometimes the problems that arise with the project are due not to us, but so-called force majeure circumstances, such as natural elements or epidemics (Newton, 2013). As an example, we can give the current situation with COVID-19. In the company's case, we examined in the first assignment, "Morning Smile," if the opening date of the company's new store for healthy snacks was scheduled in April or May this year (2020), we had nothing to do since all restaurants. Catering establishments were closed by order of the government. There was also a period when there was no information on when they would reopen. In that case, it's not the manager's fault to get the project out of control.

Deviation reports.

Deviation reports serve precisely what their name suggests. They take into account the differences between what we have planned and what happened. Usually, the report contains the following three columns: what we have planned, what we have, and the difference between them. The information can also be presented in two different formats:

The first format is the number format, and it contains the rows that show the planned and actual values, as well as the deviation values for the variables that need such calculations. Schedule and price are typical variables that are tracked in deviation reports. Activities open for work during the reporting period can be recorded on the lines and the planned and actual costs to date and the difference between them in the columns, respectively.

In the second format, we present numerical data graphically. It may be formed that a curve indicates the information for each period of the plan in one color, and the actual data are presented with an angle in another. In this case, we do not need to have a graph of deviations, as we observe them through both curves. The difference between the two formats is that we can follow each trend of variation during different reporting periods in graphics. In the numerical form, we can only monitor the data for the specified period of the report.

Typical reports can also be viewed as snapshots overtime or the current status period of the tracking entity. With most deviation reports, we have no information on how the project got to this status. At the same time, we can use these reports for both business deviations and project reporting. It is recommended that regardless of the variable such format of the project be used, as this would facilitate the work of the company's senior echelon, as well as our position as project managers (Kerzner, 2003).

Five reasons why we should measure variations in duration and cost.

To capture the deviations from the curve early.

Actual costs and actual duration can be mapped to the planned cost and planned duration. When the two curves start to show differences between themselves, the project manager may take measures in time to reunite them.

To reduce the fluctuations.

There must be a similar pattern in time between planned and actual implementation. If we have sharp fluctuations between the two performances, it shows us that the project has got out of hand. We can receive a timely warning through the deviation report, which will enable the site manager to correct the anomaly before the problem becomes more serious. In this case, it is understandable that smaller fluctuations are more comfortable to repair than larger ones.

Early corrective action.

As mentioned above, a project manager would prefer to be notified of fluctuations in the schedule or budget as early as possible. This gives us more options for responding than with later detection of the problem.

Determine the weekly variation of the schedule.

A good option for progress is to report schedules weekly. This represents a reasonable compromise on the frequency of reports and gives the manager an

excellent opportunity for a timely response if a project problem arises and a short enough time frame to prevent things from escalating to the point where it will be complicated to recover.

Determination of the weekly deviation of the effort.

The difference between the planned and actual efforts, person-hours a day, directly impacts both the schedule and the planned costs. If the measure does not meet what is designed and accordingly, employees could not catch up, increasing their activity in the coming days, this would lead to a potential slip from the schedule. On the other hand, if efforts exceed the plan, this could lead to cost overruns.

From all of the above, it is clear that early detection of a situation out of control is essential. The longer we wait to discover a problem, the longer, and sometimes impossible, the return of the project to its stable state will be. It is important to note that all monitoring and control processes, and many of the executing techniques, provide requests for change as an outcome. These change requests may include various preventive and corrective actions, as well as corrections of defects. However, these actions do not change the baselines of the project, but only its violations (Project Management Institute, 2013).

PRINCE2.

One of the methods of management that are very widely distributed around the world is PRINCE2. It is used by different people, sectors, and organizations. Regardless of the type and scale, using its flexibility helps us create successful projects irrespective of their kind and scale. The method is aimed at achieving results, not just planning. The business case is an integral part of PRINCE2, and it needs to be re-implemented regularly to ensure that business objectives are adequately met, especially in cases where they can be amended.

Seven principles sit at the heart of PRINCE2, and they cannot be adapted. These principles can be defined as a way of thinking or methodology that supports the project. If a project team does not adhere to these principles, we can assume that it is not managed with THE PRINCE2 (Tso, 2017).

The seven principles.

Business rationale: The most important document on the project is the business case, and it is updated at every stage of the project, ensuring that it is viable. If it ceases to be so, the project may be terminated.

Learning from experience: Each project maintains a journal of lessons, and we must always rely on this knowledge and our own experience.

Define roles and responsibilities: Here, we have a distribution of functions among individuals who can accept multiple roles or share one. It is important to note that we have a four-level role structure in this method of management, such as a program or corporate governance, project board, project manager level, and team level. All stakeholders, such as suppliers, users, and businesses, make up the project management team.

Project management by stages: Here, we include step-by-step planning and coordination of the project. The transition between the different stages consists of updating risks, the general plan, and the business case.

Exceptional management: The method has strictly defined permissible infringements to determine the limit of delegated powers. If a level finds that these powers have been breached, the next level decides how to act.

Product focus: Using PRINCE2, we focus on the delivery and definition of products, and more precisely, on the requirements for their quality.

Adaptation to the project environment: The method is tailored to the size, importance, setting of the project, complexity, and risk (Tso, 2017).

Conclusion.

In the project we examined in the first assignment, we can use different project management methods, but it should be noted that PRINCE2 is the method established in the UK. Although a small project in size, let's not forget that even making tea is a project, observance of a technique can lead us to complete a task or, more correctly, correctly said until its delivery.

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