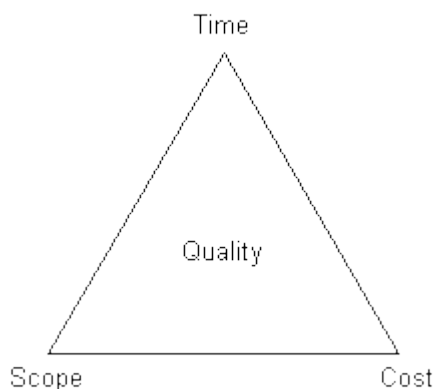


# An Introduction to Project Management

Project management in the modern sense began in the early 1960s, although it has its roots much further back in the latter years of the 19th century. The need for project management was driven by businesses that realised the benefits of organising work around projects and the critical need to communicate and co-ordinate work across departments and professions. One of the first major uses of project management as we know it today was to manage the US space program. The government, military and corporate world have now adopted this practice. Here is the main definition of what project management is:

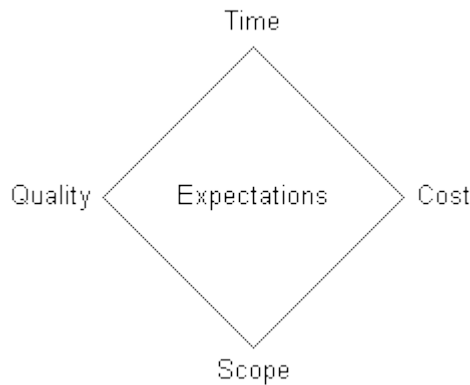
1. Project management is no small task
2. Project management has a definite beginning and end. It is not a continuous process
3. Project management uses various tools to measure accomplishments and track project tasks. These include Gantt charts and PERT charts
4. Projects frequently need resources on an ad-hoc basis as opposed to organisations that have only dedicated full-time positions
5. Project management reduces risk and increases the chance of success

Project management is often summarised in a triangle. The three most important factors are time, cost and scope. These form the vertices with quality as a central theme.



1. Projects must be delivered on time.
2. Projects must be within cost
3. Projects must be within scope
4. Projects must meet customer quality requirements

More recently, this has given way to a project management diamond, with time, cost, scope and quality the four vertices and customer expectations as a central theme. No two customers' expectations are the same so you must ask what their expectations are.



A project goes through four phases during its life:

1. Project Definition: Defining the goals, objectives and critical success factors for the project
2. Project Initiation: Everything that is needed to set-up the project before work can start
3. Project Control: Ensuring that a project stays on track and taking appropriate action to ensure it does
4. Project Closure: Disbanding of all the elements that were required to run the project

The role of the project manager is one of great responsibility. It is the project manager's job to direct, supervise and control the project from beginning to end. Project managers should not carry out project work, managing a project is enough. Here are some the activities that must be undertake:

1. The project manager must define the project, reduce it to a set of manageable tasks, obtain appropriate resources and build a team to perform the project work
2. The project manager must set the final goal for the project and motivate his/her workers to complete the project on time
3. The project manager must inform all stakeholders of progress on a regular basis
4. The project manager must assess risks to the project and mitigate them
5. No project ever goes 100% as planned, so project managers must learn to adapt to change

A project manager must have a range of skills including:

- Leadership
- People management (customers, suppliers, managers and colleagues)
- Communication (verbal and written)
- Negotiating
- Planning
- Contract management
- Problem solving
- Creative thinking

"Project managers bear ultimate responsibility for making things happen. Traditionally, they have carried out this role as mere implementers. To do their jobs they needed to have basic administrative and technical competencies. Today they play a far broader role. In addition to the traditional skills, they need to have business skills, customer relations skills, and political skills. Psychologically, they must be results-oriented self-starters with a high tolerance for ambiguity, because little is clear-cut in today's tumultuous business environment. Shortcomings in any of these areas can lead to project failure

Many things can go wrong in project management. These things are often called barriers. Here are some possible barriers:

1. Poor communication
2. Disagreement
3. Misunderstandings
4. Bad weather
5. Union strikes
6. Personality conflicts
7. Poor management
8. Poorly defined goals and objectives

A good project management discipline will not eliminate all risks, issues and surprises, but will provide standard processes and procedures to deal with them and help prevent the following:

1. Projects finishing late, exceeding budget or not meeting customer expectations
2. Inconsistency between the processes and procedures used by projects managers, leading to some being favoured more than others are
3. Successful projects, despite a lack of planning, achieved through high stress levels, goodwill and significant amounts of overtime
4. Project management seen as not adding value and as a waste of time and money
5. Unforeseen internal or external events impacting the project

Project management is about creating an environment and conditions in which a defined goal or objective can be achieved in a controlled manner by a team of people