It you don't want to have to start every project from scratch, then it's worthwhile creating your own Project Lifecycle.

How should you do this? What should it look like? And how do you use it? Keep reading to find out how to...

Create your own Project Lifecycle...

A Project Lifecycle is a series of steps that you take to complete a project from start to finish. Of course, it implies that you can complete the same steps for every project— so is this true?

In principle, yes. Every project will have an Initiation phase, a Planning phase, an Execution phase and a Closure phase. However within these phases, the steps you take may vary slightly between projects.

The trick is to create a lifecycle that is generic enough to use for all of your projects, while still being specific enough to add value and save you time on delivery. Here's how to do it...

Map it out

Every project is delivered in some form of lifecycle. You probably usually define your project upfront, then you'll hire your team, you'll plan and complete a set of tasks to create some deliverables and then get your customer to signoff the output. This sequence of steps are what is called a "lifecycle" and chances are that you're using the same generic lifecycle every time you deliver a project!

So start by mapping out your current project lifecycle on a blank sheet of paper and identify the elements that you know work well, and those that don't.

And improve it

Then try and improve your lifecycle by analyzing why certain steps don't work well currently. Analyze the root cause and identify which steps you could take instead, to improve your chance of success. For instance, maybe "scope creep" is an issue for you, so by putting in place better steps for managing changes to scope, it would help.

Once you have identified the sequence of steps that you know will deliver your projects successfully from start to

finish, the next thing you need to do is to "get detailed".

Get detailed

With a clearly defined series of steps, you now need to define the tasks and activities that are needed to perform each step efficiently. For instance, if your first step was to get funding for your project, then do you need to create a Business Case or Financial Plan to do it? What type of person will authorize the funding and what information will they need to do it?

For every step, describe how you intend to do it, the tasks and activities to be taken, and as importantly, who is responsible for doing them (e.g. it is yourself or members of your team)?

Tool up

Great—so you have a crystal clear process for delivering projects. Now how can you do each step quickly and efficiently? Typically project managers use templates, software and examples to help them complete each step faster and more efficiently. With a well documented lifecycle, the right lifecycle steps and good tools, you will be armed and ready to tackle any type of project to succeed.

Get ready

And finally, with all of this collateral, you need to collect it into a single place, ready to use on projects. Many project managers use "MPMM" for this, as you can create a brand new Project Lifecycle and import all of your templates and examples into it, ready for use.

By creating your own project lifecycle or customizing that of another, you can apply a single approach to managing successful projects.

Download a complete Project Lifecycle within MPMM now...

Thanks

A note from our CEO:

"I just wanted to give a special thanks to all of you who completed our recent survey."

"We received loads of great ideas for building a world class project management software application."

"It will be a lot of work, but thanks to you, we now have what we need to be able to create a solution that perfectly meets your needs. So Watch this space :-)"

Jason Westland, CEO Method123 & MPMM

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