

Project Management Needs Analysis

Introduction

When an organisation or individual perceives a need for *advanced project management* there is sometimes confusion on what *advanced* really means. We often find that although there is a general belief that the usual project management processes are known and in place, in reality this may not be so. Here is a questionnaire that will help to establish key areas for a training course focus. Further discussion will be required to agree a course structure.

The questionnaire is in two parts. The first deals with the project outcomes within the organisation. This helps to establish the culture and is best completed by one or two senior development staff. The second part deals with an individual's competence level. The questionnaires may be used separately.

Questionnaires

Part A The project outcomes in your environment

Please look at your project outcomes over the last year or so and answer the following questions as best as you can.

- 1) How many of the projects have been an unqualified success?
 - a) >80%
 - b) >50%
 - c) >25%
 - d) >10%
 - e) none

- 2) Of those that have failed in some way, have they failed mainly by missing the:
 - a) financial targets
 - b) timescale
 - c) objectives
 - d) all of the above

- 3) Do most of the projects have a major software development element? If not, what is the most common type of project?
 - a) Construction
 - b) Operational
 - c) HR
 - d) Organisational
 - e) Other

- 4) Do you perform project reviews at the completion of projects? (A review of the *conduct* of the project.)
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Never

- 5) Do you perform post-implementation reviews? (A review of the *outcome* of the project.)
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Never
- 6) Is it unclear who is in charge of a project?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always
- 7) Is it unclear whether something should be (or should have been) conducted as a project?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always
- 8) Do projects have project sponsors?
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Never
- 9) Do projects have formal identification and formally-agreed (signed) definitions?
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Never
- 10) Do sponsors and clients complain that they are not aware of project progress?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always
- 11) Do some projects go completely off-track, delivering nothing or the wrong outcome?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often
- 12) Do project team members generally work well with high morale?
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Never
- 13) Do project managers get too involved in the project detail?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Often

- 14) Are 'user requirement changes' cited as the reason for projects missing their deadlines and/or budgets?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always

- 15) Are some projects too dependent on other project results?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always

- 16) Do projects reveal nasty surprises as they progress?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always

- 17) Are project plans made available to management, clients and sponsors in sufficient detail?
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Never

- 18) Are there conflicts between project managers for resources?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Frequently
 - d) Always

- 19) Do projects come under criticism for not delivering the 'bang for the buck'?
 - a) Never
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Always

- 20) Is a cost-benefits analysis performed on each project?
 - a) Always
 - b) Frequently
 - c) Sometimes
 - d) Never

Scoring for Part A

General topics - questions 1, 2 and 3

- Question 1
 - >80% - Come and work for us – you're a rare commodity! Your projects are being well managed or they're very small and simple. In most organisations up to 80% of projects *fail!*
 - >50% - You're doing well, or your projects are small and /or simple. You may require help in certain areas as revealed in subsequent questions.
 - Other scores - you're not doing too well. It's likely that you need to implement basic project management practices.
- Questions 2 and 3 tell us about the organisation.
- For the rest of the questions score as follows:
 - a) 0
 - b) 5
 - c) 10
 - d) 15

Post-project reviews – questions 4, and 5

Score between 10 and 20 and you need to know more about this topic.

Project set-up – questions 6, 7, 8 and 9

Score above 10 and you need to be learning and implementing about this very important topic.

Progress monitoring and reporting – questions 10 and 11

Score 10 or more and this topic needs attention.

Team and delegation – questions 12 and 13

10 and above – needs attention!

Change management – question 14

5 and above – needs attention!

Planning – questions 15, 16, 17 and 18

10 and above and you will benefit from some training and process changes here.

Cost -Benefits Analysis – questions 19 and 20

10 and above – needs attention.

Part B Personal

- How long have you been with your organisation?
- How long in IT?

Please indicate your skills and your assessment of your skill levels, where:
1 = highly skilled, 2 = average skill, 3 = low skill

- Programming designing and coding
- Systems analysis
- Systems design
- Project management
- Team leading
- Interpersonal skills
 1. Do you run your own (one-person) projects?
 2. Do you run projects with other staff as project resources?
 3. Do you have the title or role of project manager?
 4. If so, are you clear what your responsibilities are?
 5. Do your projects have an agreed project definition?
 6. Do your projects have agreed milestones?
 7. Do you formal sign-off at milestones?
 8. Do you produce project plans?
 9. Do you use a project management software package?
 10. Do you understand what a critical path is? Do you generate one?
 11. Do you know what 'float' is?
 12. Do you know the difference between 'resource time' and 'elapsed time'?
 13. Do you always have agreement between yourself and the client regarding delivery time and expected project outcomes?
 14. Do your projects have a structure, with a project sponsor?

15. Do your clients receive regular project progress reports?
16. Do your projects have steering committees (sometimes called 'project boards')?
17. Do you record time spent against tasks within projects?
18. Are you able to say precisely whether you are on-schedule or not?
19. Do you delegate work to others?
20. If yes, does the delegation work successfully generally?
21. Are there disputes with your colleagues over resources and timescales?
22. Are there disputes with your clients or users over the quality or delivery of projects?
23. Do you perceive motivation to be a problem (either with yourself or with colleagues)?
24. When work is delegated to you is it always clear what you have to do and by when?
25. Is it a problem to meet your deadlines?
26. Is the quality of the project work sometimes dubious?
27. Is it always clear what the client requires?
28. Are project reviews performed during the project lifecycle?
29. Are post-implementation reviews performed?