

# Project management in broadcasting

BY MICHAEL MARTIN

**M**any of us in the broadcasting industry are familiar with working on projects. But, do we approach projects in the correct manner? Are we working with the best practices, and do we leverage the knowledge learned from our previous efforts to our true benefit?

Projects are different from ongoing operations. Projects are unique scopes of work. They have a defined beginning and end. Projects are work that we do just one time, rather than over and over again. Projects are temporary. Every project produces a unique outcome or a specific result, whereas ongoing business operations are made up of continuous, repeatable functions and tasks. Ongoing operations also produce results, but they are not usually unique.

Yes, there are similarities between projects and ongoing operations. Both are performed by people, are constrained by limited resources, and are planned, executed, and controlled. But, the contrasts remain significant enough that it is valid to consider alternate strategies when dealing with projects.

All projects, by definition, have life cycles. There are many names and terms applied to the various phases of a project, some are simple and others complex. But, they all are composed of the same higher-level approach. They have an Initial Phase, Intermediate Phases (typically more than one), and a Final Phase.

So, does that mean that everyone who works on projects is a project manager? Should we all change our titles to be called project manager? Are we all equipped to be triumphant at managing projects? Sadly, the answer is a definite “no”.

Project Management is an emerging career track that has evolved primarily out of the government, military, and advanced sciences sectors. From past experience, it became evident that projects required a different approach. They needed new knowledge, skills, tools, processes, and techniques in order to succeed. Industries such as information technology, telecommunications, and pharmaceuticals all embraced the world of project management in short order. Now, the broadcasting industry is jumping onto the bandwagon, too.

So, why do we do it? Why do we follow project management approaches when building new facilities, renovating an old studio, adding to a satellite antenna farm, upgrading to HDTV, relocating a newsroom, or merging and automating distant locations? What is the value proposition?

Return on Investment (ROI), of course! Effective project management means ROI for your business. It means saving money, optimizing schedules, utilizing available resources better, building to the right standards and quality levels, winning, succeeding, communicating, reporting, and, most of all, achieving your stated goals and objectives.

So, where do you go to learn the ways of professional project management? Simple, you go to the PMI, the Project Manage-



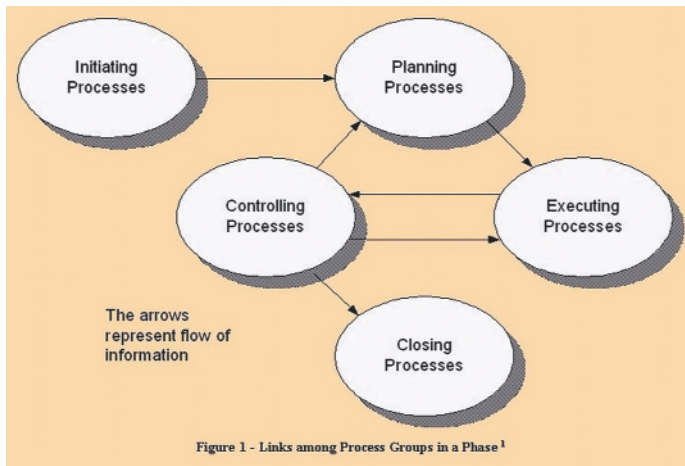
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ment Institute, the world's leading professional association dedicated to project management. Today, the not-for-profit PMI has over 100,000 members in more than 135 countries worldwide. The PMI has certified more than 50,000 Project Management Professionals (PMP) around the globe. Each PMP has met the rigorous educational requirements and high standards for best practices set by the PMI. Every certified PMP is schooled in the PMI's code of conduct. As well, they are trained in performance and measurement management methods of professional project management so they can clearly identify a project's progress versus scope, schedule and resources.

Keeping a sharp eye on the budget is paramount for every project these days, so PMPs are able to track costs and report in a timely manner when things are offside, thereby avoiding the nasty shocks and surprises experienced at the end of projects that are not so well managed.

The following chapter introductions are taken directly from the PMI's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* or the *PMBOK Guide 2000*. These excerpts list the project management knowledge areas required for the advanced project management of your next television or radio undertaking. By learning more about the professional project management processes, you will be more focussed and better equipped to achieve superior ROI for your business.

Project Scope Management includes the processes required to ensure that the project includes all the work required, and



only the work required, to complete the project successfully. It is primarily concerned with defining and controlling what is or is not included in the project.

Project Time Management includes the processes required to ensure timely completion of the project.

Project Cost Control includes the processes required to ensure that the project is completed within the approved budget.

Project Quality Management includes the processes required to ensure that the project will satisfy the needs for which it was undertaken. It includes “all activities of the overall management function that determine the quality policy, objectives, and responsibilities and implements them by means such as quality planning, quality assurance, quality control, and quality improvement, within the quality system”.

Project Human Resource Management includes the processes required to make the most effective use of the people involved with the project. It includes all of the project stakeholders—sponsors, customers, partners, individual contributors, and others.

Project Communications Management includes the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, dissemination, storage, and ultimate disposition of the project information. It provides the critical links among people, ideas, and information that are necessary for success. Everyone involved must understand how the communications, in which they are involved as individuals, affect the project as a whole.

Project Risk Management is the systematic process of identifying, analysing, and responding to project risk. It includes maximizing the probability and consequences of positive events and minimizing the probability and consequences of adverse events to project objectives.

Project Procurement Management includes the processes required to acquire goods and services, to obtain project scope, from outside the performing organization.

Project Integration Management includes the processes required to ensure that the various elements of the project are properly coordinated. It involves making tradeoffs among competing objectives and alternatives to meet or exceed stakeholder needs and expectations.

So, do you want to make your life easier on your next project? Then, proactively engage in the unsurpassed approach to success. Make use of the best practices and knowledge available to help you improve your ROI by following the PMI's strategy to effective project management!