Managing a successful project with PRINCE2®
The role of the project manager

Introduction

As project manager your prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the required products within the specified tolerances of time, cost, quality, scope, risk and benefits. You are also responsible that the produces a result that is capable of achieving the expected benefits as defined in a Business Case.
A secure, consistent and well-proven approach to project management is a must.
This quick reference card describes the role of the project manager in projects.

PRINCE2® Principles

- Continued Business Justification
- Learn from experience
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Manage by stages
- Manage by exception
- Focus on products
- Tailor to suit the project environment

The Project Lifecycle

Processes and the Project Lifecycle

During the life of the project the Project Manager uses a number of processes. For ease of explanation, this reference card explains the role of the project manager through these processes. The following image shows which processes are executed in which part of the project lifecycle.
Note: the process Directing a Project falls within the responsibility of the Project Board, the process Managing Product Delivery falls within the responsiblity of the Team Manager(s). Therefore these processes are not covered in this quick reference card.

SB = Managing a Stage Boundary | CP = Closing a Project
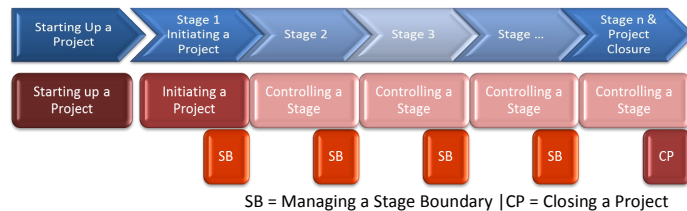
Starting Up a Project

Purpose

- Answer the question "Do we have a viable & worthwhile project?"
- Prevent poorly conceived project from being initiated
- Do the minimum necessary in order to decide the project is worthwhile to initiate

Project Manager undertakes...

Once appointed by the Executive:

- Create the Daily Log as a repository for project information that is not yet being captured elsewhere
- Create the Lessons Log and start filling it with lessons from similar previous projects, from corporate and programme management, from external organizations, or from individuals or teams with previous experience of similar projects
- Design the project management team structure and develop the role descriptions
- Support the Executive with the development of the Outline Business Case
- Consult with the Senior User and Executive to define the what the project is to deliver, and create the Project Product Description. Ensure you capture the customer's quality expectations and the project's acceptance criteria
- Add any identified risks to the Daily Log
- Evaluate possible delivery solutions and decide upon the project approach appropriate to deliver the products by considering cany relevant corporate or programme strategies, standards or practices, and current thinking within the involved industry sectors and specialist skill areas
- Assemble the Project Brief by incorporating all collected information so far and by confirming the project objectives, scope and exclusions, constraints and assumptions, tolerances, users and other interested parties, and the interfaces the project must maintain
- Plan the initiation stage. Define the reporting and control arrangements for the initiation stage, and identify any constraints on time and costs

Note: as Project Manager you should be strongly assisted and advised by the Project Board in preparing the project approach, assembling the project brief, and planning the initiation stage!

Project Manager requests authorization...

- To initiate the project based on the Project Brief and the Initiation Stage plan

Note: clearly indicate the required resources for Intiating a Project!

Initiating a Project

Purpose

- Establish solid foundations for the project, enabling the organization to understand the work that needs to be done *before* committing to a significant spend.

Project Manager undertakes...

- Review the Project Brief, Project Product Description, Lessons Log, Daily Log and Risk Register
- Identify stakeholders and consult them for their information needs
- Define the Risk, Configuration, Quality, and Communication Management Strategy
- Create the Risk Register
- Create inital Configuration Item Records
- Create the Issue Register and tranfer issues that must be managed formally and that are already in the Daily Log
- Create the Quality Register
- Keep the risk register, issue register, and daily log up to date
- Confirm and document the management stages
- Allocate required decision making levels to the appropriate management level and establish decision-making procedures
- Confirm the project tolerances and the escalation procedures
- Create the product breakdown structure, product flow diagram, and product descriptions for the major products in the project plan
- Identify and confirm required resources
- Identify activities, resources, and timing for the project controls
- Create the detailed Business Case, including costs, timescale, major risks, and benefits to be gained
- Create the Benefits Review Plan
- Prepare for the next stage (see Managing a Stage Boundary!)

Note: Consult frequently with Project Assurance when information becomes availble to check that all aspects meet the needs of the Project Board (and corporate or programme management)
Also seek at regular intervals Project Board approval for the above mentioned information so that there are no surprises when asking authorization to continue.

Project Manager requests authorization...

- To start the project based on the Project Initiation Documentation

Note: Combine this with the request for authorization to start the first delivery stage of the project (see Managing a Stage Boundary)

Controlling a Stage

⊠ Purpose

- Assign the work to be done, monitor such work, deal with issues, report progress, and take corrective actions to ensure the stage remains within tolerance.

Note: this process can also be used in the Initiation part of the the lifecycle

⊠ Project Manager undertakes...

- Review work package with the Team Manager; ensure they accept the work package; authorize to begin the work
- Review the Team Manager's team plan
- Update the Issue, Risk, and Quality Register, and the Lessons Log
- Update the Stage Plan to reflect the timing of the work package, with actuals to date, with forecasts and adjustments, and when a Work Package is completed
- Update Configuration Item Records when work is authorized, with progress information, and when approved
- Collect and review progress information from Checkpoint Reports for the Work Packages
- Ensure the Team Manager has completed the work defined by the Work Package; incl. check that the Quality Register entries are complete and that required approvals have been gained
- Review progress of the stage using Checkpoint Reports, current Stage Plan forecast and actuals, Product Status Accounts, entries in the Quality, Risk, and Issue registers
- Check the Benefits review plan for benefits reviews that are due and execute them as necessary
- Report Highlights according the Communication Management Strategy by assembling information from Checkpoint Reports, Risk, Issue and Quality Register, Lessons Log and Product Status Accounts and report highlights, and by assembling a list of corrective actions.
- Capture and examine issues and risks
- Escalate issues and risks if the Stage or Project Plan is forecasted to go outside one or more tolerances
- Take corrective action via Work Package authorizations
- Seek Project Board advise if necessary
- In case of phased handover, transfer products to the customer if these are approved and the operation and maintenance organizations are ready to take this responsibility
- Initiate Managing a Stage Boundary when the end of the current stage is approaching; if this is the last stage, initiate Closing a Project

Managing a Stage Boundary

⊠ Purpose

- Provide the Project Board with sufficient information so that it can review the success of the currrent stage, approve the next Stage Plan, review the updated Project Plan, and confirm continued business justification.

⊠ Project Manager undertakes...

- Review and if necessary update the Project Initiation Documentation

In case of a normal stage boundary approaching

- Create a Stage Plan for the next stage

In case of an exception plan request

- Examine the Exception Report and Produce an Exception Plan

In both cases (normal stage boundary approaching and exception plan request)

- Create or update Configuration Item Records for the products of the next stage
- Ensure the current stage plan is up to date (with actual progress)
- Update the Project Plan (with actuals and forecasts)
- Update the Issue, Risk, and Quality Register
- Assess the aggregated risk exposure
- Update the Benefits Review Plan with results of benefits reviews already undertaken
- Update the Business Case if necessary
- Review the status of the updated Business Case, specifically the achievement of any benefits anticipated for the stage
- Review the stage plan to ensure the stage objectives have been met
- Review the Project Plan to ensure the project objectives are still achievable
- Review the team performance
- Review the product performance (quality activities, all products for the stage complete and approved, user acceptance and operational and maintenance accpetance in case of phased handover)
- Create a Lessons Report

Note: in case this is the but last management stage, ensure the products for Closing a Project are included in the stage plan

⊠ Project manager requests authorization...

- To continue with the next stage based on the End Stage Report and the Next Stage or Exception Plan

Note: clearly indicate the required resources for this next stage!

Closing a Project

⊠ Purpose

- To verify user acceptance of the project's products
- To review the performance of the project against its baselines

⊠ Project Manager undertakes...

In case of a planned closure:

- Ensure all products are approved by the identified authorities and meet all quality criteria (or are covered by approved concessions)
- Confirm the project has delivered the Project Product Description, including meeting the acceptance criteria

In case of a premature closure:

- Record the premature closure request received from the Project Board
- Determine the products that have been approved, those that are currently in development, those that are covered by approved concessions, those that have yet to be started, those that need to be made safe and those that may be useful to other projects
- Seek approval to release resources early

In both cases (planned and premature closure)

- Update the project plan with actuals from the final stage
- Prepare follow-on action recommendations to address uncompleted work, issues and risks
- Check the benefits review plan for benefit confirmation activities
- Confirm the correct operational and maintenance environment is in place
- Ensure the suitable service agreement has been drawn up
- Confirm acceptance from operations and maintenance organizations
- Request and obtain acceptance records
- Transfer the responsibility for the projects to the operations and maintenance organizations
- Review the initially baselined Project Initiation Docuemntation
- Review the approved changes in the current Project Initiation Documentation
- Prepare an End Project Report
- Prepare a Lessons Report and send it to corporate or programme management (after Project Board's approval)
- Close the project's registers and logs
- Secure and archive all project information

⊠ Project Manager requests authorization...

- To close the project based on the End Project Report and using a draft project closure notification