Unit 17: IT Project

Project Management Issues (P3)

Objectives

- Examining some of the project management issues

What Does Project Management Issues Refer to?

- Project management issues are any of the many ways a project can be disrupted or delayed

Project Management Issues

- Changing external factors
- Monitoring progress
- Corrective action
- Communications
- Guidelines and legislation
- Dealing with conflict
- Impact on other systems

Changing External Factors

- External factors, such as the nature of the business may change during the life of the project.

- Or a supplier bankruptcy may happen during the life of a project

- While you cannot know about or anticipate such changes when you write the project specification, they may mean that you need to change the specification once the project is underway.

Changing External Factors

- Examples of external factors that could affect a project are:

  - The chief executive announces a change in business strategy
  - There is a take over or merger
  - There is a radical reorganisation of the structure of the business
  - The senior manager who is the driving force behind the project moves on
  - A change in legislation
  - A prominent news story such as a safety scare
  - Significant changes in product prices
  - Supplier problems
  - A new rival business starting up
  - A recession (affecting the economy of the country)

Monitoring progress

- You need to monitor progress on your project. To do this, you should ask for reports from the people doing the work. They will tell you what they have done, what they still have left to do and any problems or delays they have had or are facing. In a formal project they may report to you in the terms of 'man hours'.

- These reports may be produces daily, weekly or fortnightly.

- The stakeholders will also want to know how things are going.

How does this affect your project?

- In order to achieve P6/M3 you need to be able to show that you have continued to monitor the progress of your project over the year

- To do this you must provide updated versions of your initial project plan (the one you have done for P5)

- Each updated version of your project plan will provide evidence for the **P6** criteria in the assignment

- If you then describe how you have altered the project plan, showing reasons why the project has had to change then you will provide evidence for **M3**

- If you then describe how you have met deadlines and key review dates, showing reasons for why these have been achieved you will provide evidence for **M3**

Taking corrective actions

- When you find that things are not going to plan, you should immediately take corrective action to bring the project back towards the plan.

- Sometimes, the chosen action is within your control, such as changing who will do which task in the future.

- More often, you may need one or more of the stakeholders to take action or make decisions.

- You may even need to persuade senior management to accept a delay in the project or to reduce the scope of the project

How does this affect your project?

- In order to achieve P6/M3 you need to be able to show that you have continued to monitor the progress of your project over the year

- To do this you must provide updated versions of your initial project plan (the one you have done for P5)

- If you have to take corrective action during your project you should ensure that you document, what action you have taken, why you have taken it and what impact it will have on the project. You should update your project plan

- If you do all of this you will provide evidence for **P6** & **M3**

Communications

- One of your responsibilities as a project manager is to make sure there is good communication between everyone involved.

- This does not mean that all communication must go through you.

- However, you should organise meetings or reports to make sure everyone knows what is going on in those areas of the project that affect them. You should consider your audience when you communicate.

How does this affect your project?

- In order to achieve __D1__ you need to be able to show that you have communicated with the stakeholders of your project over the year

- You need to provide evidence of communications that you have carried out over the life time of your project, this could take the form of:-
  - Client feedback forms
  - Screenshots of emails between yourself and your stakeholders
  - Notes of any meetings you have held with stakeholders (using the notes facility in MS Project)
  - Meeting Agendas/Notes of any meeting, reviews or interim reviews held with your stakeholders

Internal & External Guidelines & Legislation

- Although this may not be mentioned in the specification, your project should comply with legislation and the relevant guidelines.

- The pieces of legislation most likely to affect your project are the Data Protection Act and various Health & Safety laws. Your staff may be subject to laws such as the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act.

- See *"Information Systems"* notes for additional information regarding the Types of Legislation

Internal & External Guidelines & Legislation

- Most large ICT organisations have internal guidelines stating how they go about developing projects.
- They may for example, use standardised formats for applications and documentation.
- Or describe a common look and feel (home style) for applications/web sites
- Or where particular documents should be stored or named (naming conventions in programming)
- Smaller companies who do not have their own guidelines can use external guidelines for good development practice, which are available on the Internet

Dealing with conflict

- As project manager, you will need to manage conflict between stakeholders in order to make the project happen. There may be different causes of conflict.

- While, in some cases, you will be able to make an executive decision to resolve the conflict, in others, you will have to use your persuasive skills to get the stakeholders to agree.

Common causes of conflict

Different priorities
A stakeholder is late in delivering his contribution to your project as he has other things to do that he feels have a higher priority

Money
Either the available money has been cut back or your project is overspending. Different stakeholders will have different views on whether to reduce the scope or increase the spend.

Common causes of Conflict

Deliverable quality
Stakeholders will have different views about the quality of some deliverables and whether or not it is good enough.

Impact of Project Outputs

- The project outputs will probably impact on other systems inside the organisation, which can affect existing staff roles and organisational structures

- If the project is to implement a new computer system then it will probably be more than simply automating some existing manual processes

- When designing a new system, a good designer takes the opportunity to exploit the strengths of a computer compared with a clerk doing a similar task

Impact of Project Outputs

- The designer should also integrate the new system with other existing computer systems

- The management will often take the opportunity to change organisational structures and existing working practices with the introduction of a new computer system

Impact of Project Outputs

- This could affect staff in these ways:

  - The work becomes harder and therefore too difficult
  - The work becomes easier and hence there is pressure to reduce pay
  - Skills built up over the years become redundant
  - Staff need training to learn how to use the new system

- In extreme cases, the new system may reduce the workload so much that some staff are no longer required. This may mean redundancy, retraining or redeployment

Task...

- Amend you Initial Project Plan so that it includes (P5)
  - Milestones after key tasks
  - Resources against tasks
  - No completed tasks
  - The project plan should last the full year (finish in May 2013)
  - Reviews at different points during the project
  - An Interim Review in the middle of your project
- Print off and Save your completed Initial Project Plan (P5)

- Copy this Initial Project Plan and call it Version 2, to this version (P6)
  - Complete those tasks on this project plan that you have already completed and include notes saying what you have done to complete each task

Task…

- **Produce** a **brochure** to **describe** the issues that can affect project management. The issues should be taken from the following list:-

    - Effects of changing external factors
    - Monitoring progress
    - Taking corrective actions where necessary
    - Communications
    - Working with relevant guidelines (internal & external)
    - Legislation
    - Dealing with conflict
    - Impact of project outputs on other systems e.g. staff, organisational structures