In this issue:

PM Premium Services
Development of Online Courses

Training your staff can be quite expensive, especially if your projects are geographically dispersed. The cost of airfare and lodging can be at times higher than the cost of the actual training and with the need to keep cost down organizations are in a difficult position to reduce these opportunities. Online training is now becoming a valid option to provide new knowledge and skills to teams independent of where they are located. PM4DEV can help you organization develop a customized online training course on any area or topic of project management.

From synchronous courses that use live online web meetings and chat features, to asynchronous courses that allow participants take the lessons at their own pace. Visit or own online learning environment to see examples of our training courses. Once we build the course we can help in the delivery and in building the capacity of your organization to teach these courses.

Contact us for more information at info@pm4dev.com

1. Managerial Styles

Organization culture is a strong influence on the type of management styles that can be used on projects. The local culture, customs and social dynamics also influence the management style; along with the nature of the project, the nature of the team and the personality and skills of the project managers. There are four distinct organizational management styles that have a strong influence on how projects are managed:

- Autocratic
- Paternalistic
- Democratic
- Laissez-faire

Autocratic or authoritarian, the manager makes all the decisions, keeping the information and decision making among the senior management. Objectives and tasks are set and the workforce is expected to do exactly as required. The communication involved with this method is mainly downward, from the leader to the subordinate; this method can lead to a decrease in motivation

2. Adaptive Project Management

The fundamental concept underlying adaptive project management is that scope is variable, and within specified schedule and budget constraints, this approach maximizes project results value by adjusting scope at each iteration. In the adaptive approach, projects are not just a collection of activities that need to be completed on time. Instead, projects are results driven processes that must deliver benefits.

In adaptive project management the beneficiary is the central figure in deciding what constitutes project value. At the completion of an iteration or cycle, the beneficiary has an opportunity to adapt the project based on what was learned from all previous iterations. This constant adjustment means that an adaptive project's course is constantly corrected to ensure the delivery of maximum project value to the beneficiaries.

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from the employee's point of view. The main advantage of this style is that the direction of the organization will remain constant, and the decisions will all be similar, this in turn can project an image of a confident, well managed organization. On the other hand, team members may become highly dependent upon the project manager's and supervision may be needed.

Paternalistic form is where the manager makes decisions in the best interests of the employees rather than the organization. The manager explains most decisions to the team members and ensures that their social and leisure needs are always met. This can help balance out the lack of staff motivation caused by an autocratic management style. Feedback is again generally downward; however feedback to the management will occur in order for the employees to be kept happy. This style can be highly advantageous, and can engender loyalty from the employees, leading to a lower staff turnover, thanks to the emphasis on social needs. It shares similar disadvantages to an authoritarian style; employees becoming highly dependent on the leader, and if the wrong decisions are made, then employees may become dissatisfied with the leader.

Democratic style is one where the manager allows the employees to take part in decision-making, where everything is agreed by the majority. This style can be particularly useful when complex decisions need to be made that require a range of specialist skills. From the overall organization's point of view, job satisfaction and quality of work will improve. However, the decision-making process is severely slowed down, and the need for a consensus may avoid taking the best decision for the project.

Laissez-faire style, the manager's role is marginal and the employees manage their own areas within the project; the manager evades the duties of management and uncoordinated delegation occurs. The communication in this style is horizontal, meaning that it is equal in both directions, however very little communication occurs in comparison with other styles. The style brings out the best in highly professional and creative groups of employees, however in many cases it is not deliberate and is simply a result of poor management. This leads to a lack of staff focus and sense of direction, which in turn leads to much dissatisfaction, and a poor organization image.

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The adaptive approach means that projects are results based rather than activity based. On an activity based project the team spends all its energy and focus on delivering all the planned activities and then wait for the project evaluation to see if the project was able to reach the intended goal. A results based project management approach is based on iterations, after the delivery of an activity the team and the beneficiaries review the results and make the required changes and corrections for the next iteration. This approach provides opportunities to apply what the project has learnt to improve the project and maximize the results.

The structured and systematic process of adaptive project management, to continually improve decisions and practices by learning from the outcomes of previous decisions, makes it a powerful framework for development projects. Development projects are built on initial assumptions that the project believes are true at the moment of designing the project; but the reality is that assumptions are always changing and that makes it even more important to adapt the project and make the modifications to the original plan.

Adaptive management is also a structured project management framework. It is not a formalized process that must be strictly followed. The framework can be tailored to different types of development projects. The first rule of adaptive management is simplicity, it's not about developing detailed project plans and having the project team follow them blindly; it's about plans that will be adapted to reflect the changes, learning, and feedback from stakeholders.

Differences between traditional and adaptive project management:

Approach	Traditional project management	Adaptive project management
Success criteria	On schedule, on and budget	Achieving project results.
Project plan	Scheduled activities executed to meet the triple constraint	An organized process to achieve the project goals and results
Planning	Plan once at project initiation	Constant planning at each iteration
Managerial approach	Rigid, inflexible	Flexible, changing, adaptive
Work type	Predictable, certain, linear, simple	Unpredictable, uncertain, nonlinear, complex
Project control	Identify deviations from plan, and put things back on track	Identify changes in the environment, and adjust the plans accordingly
Management style	Autocratic	Democratic

Practical recommendations:

- Do not define a detailed project plan; use an iterative project management approach.
- Use quantitative risk analysis at each phase and iteration of the project.
- Review original assumptions and incorporate new learning when planning the next project iterations.
- Adaptive management is best implemented within a creative environment that has a collaborative structure for beneficiary participation and learning.

3. Project Knowledge Management

One of the methods to make the project team more competent is to let them see the project as a framework for managing project knowledge. The importance of managing project knowledge is that allows the use of knowledge transfer methodologies throughout the project management lifecycle which uses the information collected from previous iterations and make improvements in the next iteration. The use of a project knowledge methodology not only allows sharing of information across the team and key stakeholders, but also means optimizing the use of the information.

The overall goal of project knowledge management (PKM) is to translate the project's information into knowledge that can be communicated, shared, and ultimately reused. It is not about documenting lesson learned at the end of the project or distributing a project report. PKM is about sharing the experiences, practices, insights and know-how across the team, partners and other projects in the organization. Project teams that lack efficient knowledge transfer will result in wasted activities and poor project performance. Without a clear understanding of the project goals, constraints, risks, assumptions, roles and responsibilities, the team will find it hard to do things efficiently. Even if the roles and assignments are distributed the team still needs information on management practices to share and distribute project information.

As a practice project knowledge management aims to find the best way to accumulate and share knowledge between teams in an organization. Managing project knowledge means implementing a series of processes for organizing and distributing knowledge, developing and training teams, and implementing and maintaining technologies to ensure that relevant and filtered information is being properly used by and accurately shared across project teams. By managing project knowledge the organization is aligning the multiple project processes and transferring the knowledge to create a system that helps organize project information and simplifies access and use of project data by the teams. The implementation of project knowledge transfer methodologies can leverage existing knowledge in terms of completed projects and then connect current team with the existing information technology tools of the organization to automatically save time and deliver current projects more efficiently and with better results.

Project knowledge management is a critical component to efficient project planning and implementation. Every project during the initiation and planning phase requires access to all the knowledge the organizations has organized to help improve the quality and accuracy of the project plans. Today's development projects are becoming more complicated and complex and that increases the probability of teams spending too much time reinventing the wheel, testing solutions that other projects have already tested. This results in higher costs, delays, poor performance and wasted efforts. Meanwhile, implementing a system for managing project knowledge transfer will help avoid misleading and focus teams on the right initiatives.

Development organizations have a great base for learning within the project environment, but they have difficulties to pass the learning to future projects. Lesson learned documents get stored and often forgotten and in most cases the information is not structured in a way that can be easily used. The norm is for team members to keep the knowledge that they personally gained during the project, which they may use in the future. In development organizations, there is a growing importance of capturing and sharing knowledge and experience to increase the performance of all projects by reducing the time and cost in the creation of individual experiences. The effective sharing of existing knowledge will make team members more competent and efficient in using knowledge in their day to day activities.

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4. Maturity Level – 2 Understanding

In the Development Project Management Maturity Model, the second levels identifies the understanding stage of an organization as it begins to use a project management methodology. At this level the organization has a better understating of the why, what and how of project management methodologies, this understanding is critical to adopt a formal methodology which will occur on level 3.

The organization is able to identify the basic elements of project management but has limited structured approach to dealing with them across all projects. Most critical processes are still ad hoc. There is an understanding of project management, but the organization hasn't yet taken steps to formalize it. Some project managers have developed their own processes based on their own experience. These practices may be repeated on subsequent projects. However, the process is not routinely shared outside the project and has not been identified as a standard.

Results vary from project to project, the organizations understand the need to standardize the best practices by developing a standard methodology for use across all projects. At this level the organization should actively recognize the importance of project management and promote the sharing of the project management basics and associated terminology. A common methodology also helps develop a common language on project management across the organization that will facilitate the understanding and sharing of best practices

The key characteristic are:

- An understanding of the benefits of project management
- There are some documented guidelines and process in place.
- Project work is activity oriented instead of results oriented
- Teams are weak with little guidance to build team competencies
- Project use some basic computer tools to automate project processes
- Skills and training on formal PM occurs by initiative of projects but without a standard approach
- Some standard tools, mostly created and shared by projects
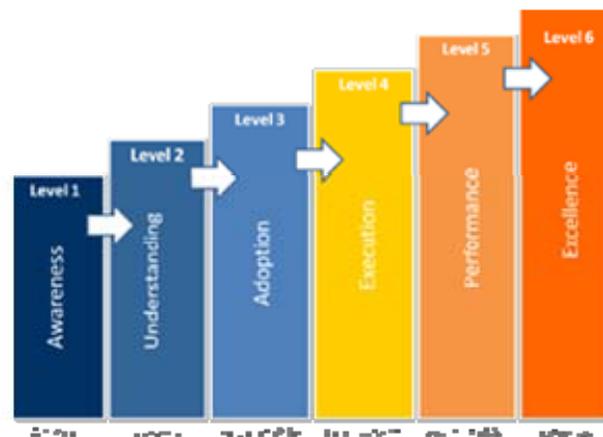
For an organization to move to the next level, it needs to develop a standard methodology with guidelines and training courses. The methodology needs to have standard process and standard forms to help collect uniform data about project performance. Courses include soft skills to help teams and project managers improve their communication and leadership skills. The organization should encourage the use of the methodology by describing their benefits to the project and to the organization as a whole. Specially important is to link the use of the methodology with better project results which leads to increased satisfaction by stakeholder, beneficiary donor or funding agency on the project performance.

(Part three of this article will come in our next Quarterly Journal, Maturity Level 3—Adoption)

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5. Competency Level 2 - Apprentice

The PM4DEV Project Management Competency Proficiency Levels identifies 5 levels of competencies a project manager must have to be successful. Novice:, Apprentice, Practitioner, Knowledgeable, and Expert. (For more information about PM4DEV's Competency Model read our previous Journal PM Connect Q4-10)

The second competency level is the Apprentice. An apprentice is a person who is building his/her skills in project management under the guidance of a mentor or a coach. The apprentice has some formal education or training in project management but has no experience in leading a team or managing a project.

The apprentice works under the direct supervision of a project manager and may be assigned some managerial responsibilities . Typical role at this level is project coordinator. As an apprentice most is the training is done while working in a project under a project manager or mentor who helps the apprentice learn the methods, processes and practices . Usually this training includes specific and measurable competencies. The role of a mentor is a critical factor for this level as it guides and provide continuous feedback to the mentee.

Typical characteristics of this level include:

- A team member, with some project management training
- His/her role in the project is project coordinator.
- Has knowledge of project management techniques and practices
- Requires little supervision in managing assigned project activities.
- Helps organize, analyze and present information.
- Coordinating the activities of the work team
- Takes advanced courses on project management
- Working to obtain a certification in project management

(Part three of this article will come in our next Quarterly Journal, Competency Level 3—Practitioner)