

Messenger

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Evaluating the Project

When working on a project, it is vitally important to continually evaluate and monitor it to ensure that you are staying on track and on budget. This can be very time consuming and difficult if you do not have the proper training.

Evaluating a project is collecting and analyzing data to determine whether the objectives have been achieved. It measures the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of the project. Monitoring the project provides information that an evaluator can use to aid in decisions about improving, continuing, or discontinuing a project. It includes tracking various aspects of the project.

In order to track the various sections, a scorecard may be used. Scorecards are categories of key measures that evaluate the effectiveness of organizations, divisions within organizations, programs, projects, and sometimes multiple projects. They can often include customer/employee satisfaction, operational efficiency, revenue measures, and milestone measures for goals.

There are, however, some common objectives to using scorecard measures.



- It costs too much.
- It takes too much time.
- I do not understand this.
- What happens when the results are negative?
- How can we be consistent with this?
- It is too subjective.
- Our managers will not support this.
- This is not practical.

You must be prepared to counter these objections as soon as they arise. The book The Project Management Scorecard by Jack Phillips lists some ways in which to do that.

Develop roles and responsibilities

Create clear and precise roles for each team member. Everyone must know for what he/she is responsible.

Establish goals and plans

Before the project even begins, establish the project plan. Determine what you need to do and how. Having a project plan from the very beginning will eliminate many headaches and frustrations along the way.

Revise policies and procedures

If a policy hasn't worked in the past, change it. If a better technique has been developed, use it. Don't live in the past of what used to work.

Prepare the project and management team

Everyone should have the skills needed to complete the project. Give training and instruction as necessary before the project begins. Make sure that everyone is on the same page.

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***Just as there are no little people or
unimportant lives, there is no
insignificant work.***

***Elena Bonner
Human rights activist***

The Mathis Group's Messenger

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Initiate the scorecard project

Determine which areas of the project you will closely monitor and evaluate. Watch them closely to make sure the project is staying on track.

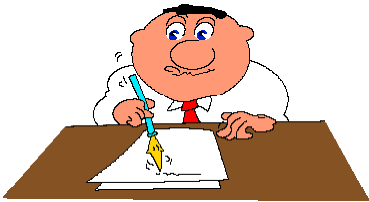
Remove obstacles

Plan for obstacles and remove the ones you can as soon as possible. Eliminating as many risks and hindrances as you can will save your project valuable time and money.

Once you have developed ways in which to monitor and evaluate the project, you must audit it to ensure you are staying within the approved scope. Auditing will identify the efficiencies, qualities, and values associated with the project. It will also examine business and technical aspects of the project.

When having an audit conducted, make sure that the individual(s) performing it have audit training and experience, technical competency, and project management competency.

There are four resources that can be used to conduct audits: project managers and project team members, internal auditors, external collaborative auditors, and external regulatory auditors.



Once the audit has been conducted, you will need to prepare a project audit report. This report will contain four elements:

1. Executive summary--an overview of the audit type and purpose. This gives a general description and cause of the project's condition. It also gives a summary of recommendations.
2. Audit approach--an overview of the activity steps performed by the auditor/audit team. This gives a synopsis of the audit methods used. It also identifies the auditor/audit team members and any other participants.

3. Audit findings--a specific statements of fact resulting from the audit examination. It details the impact or influence of each finding to project performance.

4. Audit recommendation--recommended actions and activities to remove or reduce findings and their cause. It gives suggested points of leadership and responsibility for each recommendation. In addition, it declares the likelihood of project success after considering the recommendations.

Next month we will examine specific ways in which to conduct an audit.



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