



So, what is project management? Try project based working, it will help!

Synopsis:

Why does our company get so many questions which are all the same? What is and what is not a project? The definitions given by professional bodies are not enough - we know we have tried them all! People want clarity.

However, the problem is how can they have some clarity over such a complex topic? The key is to give people a simple approach which will help them *not only* in project working, *but in day to day work*.

Look around any organisation - large, medium and small. You have people, professional staff engaged in projects. These can include:

1. service improvements
2. costs reduction
3. product development
4. staff development
5. improved sales

Where someone or a team are engaged in delivering a change, then you have a clear project and need to apply project management principles. But as we will show below, many people fail to recognise that the application to day-to-day work of some of the tools within project management can help them enormously and answer a key question!

So, what is that question? By far the most popular question asked on any of our project management events is....what is a project and what is not as project? There are many book definitions which have failed to satisfy people on our courses. I am not of course criticising the project management definitions, simply saying that people who come our courses want much more clarity - what is and what is not a project?

They want answers that will put work (project management work or non project management work) into neat boxes, project work here and non project work there. However, work is not like this. So, how can we help them, and we hope help you?

To answer this we have developed a process called PROJECT BASED WORKING. The process is simple; we take some of the component parts of project management, for example:

- a) developing an effective business case
- b) having clear objectives for your project
- c) carrying out risk assessment
- d) managing stakeholders

We suggest taking the tools and processes within the above areas and apply them to day to day work (business as usual). Here are some examples;

- why do that report? (*having a business case*)
- are you clear what the objective is with that day to day task? (*developing project objectives*)
- organising the meeting - what can go wrong (*risk assessment*)
- who do you need to involve to ensure a satisfactory delivery of the task - *managing stakeholders*.

These are some simple examples of what we mean by project based working - applying some of the tools of project management to day to day work.

So, why worry about what is and what is not a project? Use these tools on all types of work, everyday!

Many people who have come on project management events have argued over this issue and it only when we explain about project based working they understand.

So the next time someone asks the questions 'what is a project?' tell them about project based working. Explain what it is and how helps others and, how it can help them!

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