



Avoiding Project Pitfalls at the University of Illinois

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The key objective in project management is to complete your project successfully. That often means steering clear of the potholes in the road.

This interactive presentation of common pitfalls helps you avoid some of the problems that plague unsuccessful projects at the University of Illinois. Come prepared to share pitfalls that you've experienced and if applicable, how you've overcome them.



Agenda

- Definition
- Common project pitfalls
- Group Activity
- Closing





Definition of Pitfall



From <http://yourdictionary.com>

- The definition of a pitfall is a danger, downside or a trap that may be concealed or that you may not be aware of.
- Noun
 - a lightly covered pit used as a trap for animals
 - an unsuspected difficulty, danger, or error that one may fall into



Common Project Pitfalls



- Communication
- Testing
- Underestimation
- Monitoring and Controlling



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Communication



Unclear project communication

- What's going on with the project?
- Who's responsible for what?
- When are my tasks due and how do they relate to what others are working on?
- What does this change or new application/service mean to users?
- What is the priority of this project among my other work?
- Who needs what project information, in what form, how often?



Pitfalls Avoidance



Create a communication plan for each project

- Who needs what communication?
- What form should the communication take?
Active and Passive
- What is the standard cycle for communication?
- Varies with size and complexity of project
- Improves performance and team buy-in

Communication Execution



- Normal project status meetings – weekly/biweekly
 - Standardize schedule and components
 - Schedule and assignments
 - Top issues / risks
 - Current tasks due and overdue
 - Action items
- Sponsor / Management Communication - monthly
 - Project status (reuse team communication) – use the same artifact if possible
 - Discuss internal / external barriers (may be documented as issues)
 - Sponsor expectations / concerns
 - User change management planning
- Ad hoc communication
 - Email / IM
 - Stop, Talk, Stroll.....

Communication Plan Template



[Project Name] Communication Plan

The Project Communication plan is created by the project team early in project to indicate their agreement on how the team will communicate important information during the project - status, meetings, issues, deliverables access, and design/ document reviews. It is recommended that this plan is completed early enough to be included for review at the Project Kick-off Meeting.

What	Who/Target	Purpose	When/Frequency	Type/Method(s)
Discovery Meeting	All stakeholders	The main goal of this meeting is to identify all stakeholders and provide a forum for all project team members to discuss schedule, scope, team, and other issues,	At the start of the Project Initiation phase	Meeting. (A template for the discovery meeting is available in PMLC materials)
Project Kick-off Meeting	All stakeholders	The main goal of the project kick-off meeting is to familiarize the project team with the project, review the project charter and receive buy-in from all project participants. Future meeting schedules will be defined and discussed and meeting minutes will be documented.	At the end of the Project Initiation phase.	Meeting. (A template for the project kick-off meeting is available in PMLC materials)
PMO Status Reports and Review	All stakeholders and PMO	Update stakeholders on progress of the project. Use the PMO Monthly Checklist as a guide. (Available in PMLC materials)	The 1 st and 15 th of each month.	Project plan updated in Clarity for PMO reporting.
Team Status Meetings	Entire Project Team.	To review detailed plans: Tasks, Assignments, Action items, Change Requests	Regularly Scheduled. Weekly is recommended for entire team. Weekly or twice-weekly for sub-teams as appropriate.	Meeting with standardized agenda / minutes. (A template for project status team meetings is available in PMLC materials)
Sub team working meetings or	Individual meetings for sub-teams, technical team, and	To discuss specific topics, resolve issues as a group, or work on shared tasks.	As needed	Meeting with agenda and minutes.

Sample Dashboard



IIPC-0367 SDM Front-End

Objective

- Create a Service Desk user friendly front-end for end users who encounter issues and need assistance
- Create a self-service, open access to knowledge documents without having to log in
- Market and advertise the self-service

Benefit

- Decrease the Service Desk submission tickets
- Increase the Service Desk resource availability to do other tasks
- Increase information to end users
- Improve customer satisfaction

Accomplishments

- Created high-level flows (current and to-be)
- Project kickoff was held on 5/16/14
- The bootcamp for redesigning request area was held on 6/16/14
- Project planning completed; use cases finalized
- Technical requirements completed
- Wireframe design completed

Upcoming Milestones

- Campus skinning – 11/30/14
- Integrating KMS into Service Desk Manager – 11/30/14

Project Status: Green

Issues/Risks

- None

Decisions

- Due to accessibility issues we discovered in SDM Self-service, a "phased approach" design was recommended on 8/11/14 for the project to proceed without further delay.

Project Team

Sponsor: Michael Hites
 Nyle Bolliger
 Help Desk Steering Team
 (Chair: Kathy Lyons)
 Technical SME: John Cowart
 Developer: Vince Wilcy
 Analyst: Beth McCarter
 Design and Accessibility: Michelle DeYoung
 Users Experience: Traci Vaughan
 Service Desk Security: Scott Arnold
 CRM: Mark Pollard
 Project Manager: Noni Ledford
 Help-Desk Representatives: Barb Roche, UIC OSSS
 Ben Hughes, UIC Pharmacy
 George Blackwell, UIC
 Josh Clements, UIC
 Josh Irons, UIC
 Matthew Start, UIC
 Chris Mueller, UIC
 Stephen Kemp, CITES
 Lori Peimonte, ODFS
 Sheila Brown, AITS

Summary Project Schedule

Conduct Project Kick-Off Meeting	05/16/14	complete
Create Project Baseline	09/02/14	complete
Use cases created	09/22/14	complete
Detailed technical requirements complete	10/13/14	complete
Select design option	08/11/14	complete
Campus skinning complete	11/30/14	in-progress
Wireframe design complete	10/6/14	complete
Conduct EAC Review	11/20/14	not started
Bootcamp	6/19/14	complete
All request area changes completed	12/31/14	in-progress
KMS integration complete	11/30/14	not started
AITS forms created in FormBuilder	11/03/14	not started
SDM page design from KB complete	11/10/14	not started
Review mock-up with HDST	11/7/14	not started
UAT Test complete	12/05/14	not started
Functional Test Cases complete	01/22/15	not started
Obtain Customer Sign-Off	03/05/15	not started
Execute Go Live Roll out	03/08/15	not started
Close the project	08/31/15	not started

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Testing



- Is testing estimate included in the proposal?
- Do you invite the QA team to your kickoff?
- During planning, do you engage the QA team?
 - Do you create requirements and use cases that would help your QA team to test?
 - How do you know what kind of testing you need?
- How do you keep QA team in the loop during execution?



Pitfalls Avoidance



- Invite QA (or testers) to project kickoff
- Create a Test Plan
 - Requirements testing
 - Performance testing (load, stress, volume)
 - Web Application Security testing
 - Accessibility testing
 - Configuration testing
- Testing estimates should be provided by QA team



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Underestimation



Common Areas of Underestimation:

- Budget
 - Tools for mitigating the issue:
 - Similar to the communications plan, establish set times for tracking the budget (weekly, bi-weekly, etc.)
 - Include the budget as an agenda item when you meet with your sponsors
 - Create or utilize tools that make tracking easy but also make it easy for others to understand (spreadsheets, burn charts, etc.)

Underestimation



Common Areas of Underestimation:

- Schedule

- Tools for mitigating the issue:

- Similar to the communications plan, establish set times for reviewing the schedule (weekly, bi-weekly, etc.)
 - Communication! Talk to those doing the work to get their input. They will be your best resource for accurate task durations.
 - Include the schedule as an agenda item for your status meetings and meetings with sponsors
 - Create or utilize tools that make tracking easy but also make it easy for others to understand (spreadsheets, burn charts, etc.)



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Project Management Process Groups



- Initiating Process Group (Start)
- Planning Process Group (Plan)
- Executing Process Group (DO)
- Monitoring and Controlling Process Group (Check and act)
- Closing Process Group (End)

Project Management Process Group Interactions

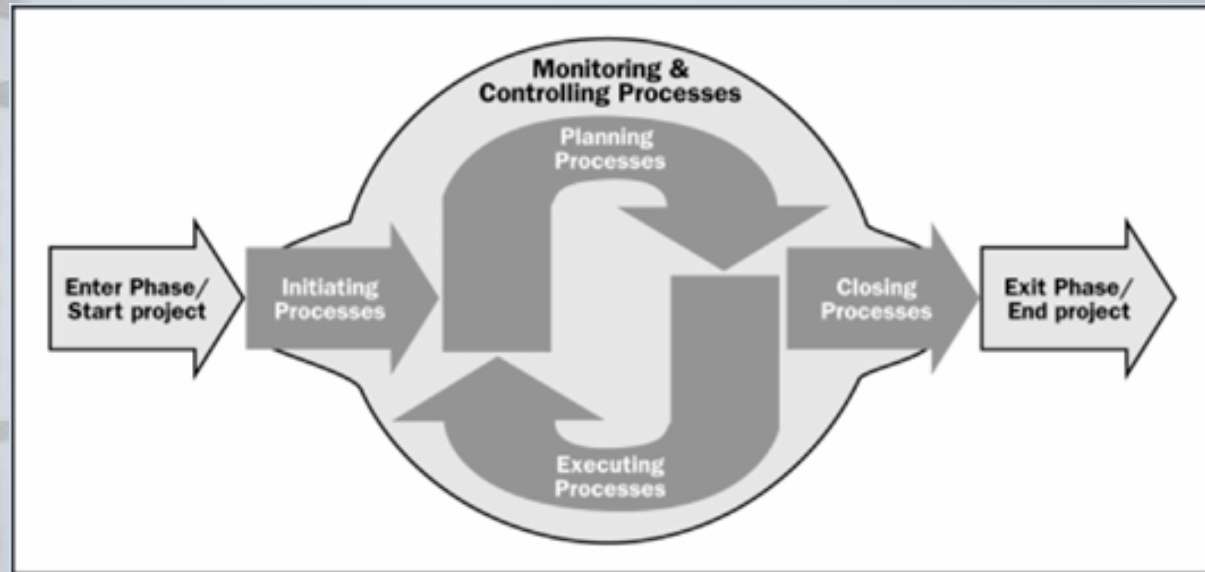


Figure 3-1. Project Management Process Groups

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide) – Fourth Edition. ©2008 Project Management Institute, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Monitoring and Controlling Process Group (Check and Act)



- Control scope, schedule, and cost to their baselines
- New Risks
- Documentation

Your Project Pitfalls Story





Group Activity



- Each table should appoint a scribe and a leader
- Share project pitfalls that you've experienced and if applicable, how you've overcome them.
- Select one pitfall to share with the class by your appointed leader

What Have You Learned Today?





PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER:
HOW DOES **IT** FIT IN?



Thank you for coming!!!



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