

Project Life Cycle Review

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you'll learn about the project life cycle and the role of the project manager in each phase of the project. Specifically, you will focus on:

1. Project Life Cycle Review

A project manager must always keep the final goals of the project in mind, and each phase of a project is a necessary step in a project's progress.

The sequence of phases is known as the project life cycle; the end result of this life cycle will be the project deliverables, which are the goal of the project.

The project manager will lead the project through four phases:

- Phase 1: Beginning a Project
- Phase 2: Planning a Project
- Phase 3: Managing a Project
- Phase 4: Closing a Project

You'll take a closer look at these phases and the steps they involve.

2. Project Life Cycle Phases

2a. Phase One: Beginning a Project

In this phase, it's the project manager's responsibility to identify the stakeholders and gather their expectations. This is a critical part of the project manager's role, as all future work on a project will be defined by the expectation set in this phase.

Once these expectations have been gathered, they will be used to define the project scope. The scope of the project will include:

Phase 1 Documents	Description

Goals and objectives	Consider what the project hopes to accomplish and what problem will the project solve
Deliverables	The project manager must clearly identify all deliverables, or costly changes will occur later in the project.
Requirements	This is where the details about the deliverables and how they will perform are documented in the requirements.
Assumptions	Every project makes assumptions about future work, and these should be documented
Estimates	The project manager creates rough estimates for the schedule, budget, and the resources needed to accomplish the work.
Risks	Risk management begins in this phase; any risks that may impact the project in a negative way should be documented.
Project governance	With each project, there are organizational structures, levels of authority, and methods for approval of work stages and deliverables. The project manager must document this governance during phase one so future team members understand each process.

2b. Phase Two: Planning a Project

In this phase, the project manager will use the material and information from Phase One to create the documents that describe how work will proceed, who will do the work, and how much it will cost.

The project manager should create the following documents:

Phase 2 Documents	Description
Work breakdown structure (WBS)	This describes the activities and tasks and the sequence in which they must occur to finally create the project deliverables.
Project schedule	Using the work breakdown structure, the project manager constructs a detailed schedule that outlines the tasks, assigns team members to the tasks, and shows the effort and time needed to complete the work. If tasks must be completed in a specific sequence, then they are documented as dependencies in the schedule. The project manager must cooperate with the team members to establish estimates for every task.
Resource plan	This includes both the person and non-person resources needed to create the project deliverables.
Project budget	This should include all the materials and personnel needed to complete the project successfully. The project manager is responsible for completing the project within this budget.
Risk management plan	If a risk has a high enough impact or a high enough probability of occurring, the project manager should define and document contingencies to address the risk.

Communication plan	This defines how the information will flow between different members of the project team, and how stakeholders can provide the necessary feedback on the project's activity.
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The team is also assembled during this phase. Based on the requirements and the needs of the schedule, the project manager should confirm that all necessary skills are provided by the team.

If skill gaps exist, then the project manager should plan to fill those gaps with different team members, new hires, or outside resources.

2c. Phase Three: Managing a Project

In this phase, the project manager oversees the activities and tasks as outlined in the schedule.

A project manager will:

Phase 3 Activities	Description
Monitor and manage tasks	Monitors the completion of those tasks and the quality of the results.
Communicating progress	While work progresses, the project manager must constantly communicate the status of the work with stakeholders and team members. Status reports will help provide stakeholders with this information, but all available methods of communication can be used by a project manager.
Change management	This is when schedules, budgets, or the quality of work deviates from the plan baselines, and the project manager must create plans to resolve the issue. If changes to the schedule, budget, or scope are required by this work, the project manager must also create and receive approval for change requests from the key stakeholders.
Risk management	This occurs throughout the project, but a majority of the issues arise during this phase. Risks must be documented and classified according to the risk matrix, and contingencies must be in place for any high impact or a high probability risk. The project manager is responsible for overseeing the mitigations of any issues that occur.
Individual/team management	People are the key to a successful project, so the project manager must continually manage individual and team performance. Communication is key, and a project manager should confirm all team members know the goals of their work and the consequences if those goals are not met. The project manager should always remember to praise people for the high quality work that they produce.

2d. Phase Four: Closing a Project

Once all scheduled tasks are complete and all deliverables are created or acquired, the project manager will begin closing the project.

This involves the following steps:

Phase 4 Steps	Description
Decision to close	All deliverables must be verified against the requirements and quality standards determined in the planning phase and the project scope.

Document lessons learned	The lessons learned throughout the project must be documented; the project manager compiles both positive and negative experiences. These reports are archived so future projects and their managers can learn from the successes and the difficulties.
Transfer ownership/knowledge	The ownership of the project's deliverables and any knowledge needed for their operation is then transferred to the individual who will handle their implementation.
Warehouse project information	All project information necessary for future reference should be warehoused. The history of other projects is a powerful tool when defining a new project, so a project manager should help preserve this information.



THINK ABOUT IT

Have you had experience with any of these phases, from either the perspective of a project manager or a team member?

If so:

- What challenges, if any, arose during this phase?
- What did you or the team do to overcome these challenges?

If not:

- What challenges do you think could occur during one of these phases?
- What are some possible solutions?



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you reviewed the four basic **phases of a project**: beginning the project, planning the project, managing the project, and closing the project. **Phase 1** involves identifying the stakeholders and **Phase 2** is when the WBS is brought in. Change and risk management is the focus of **Phase 3**, and the transfer of ownership/knowledge is **Phase 4**.