
THE KEY COMPONENTS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The People

Ideally, the group involved in a project becomes a team working together. The team includes, at a minimum, in-house design firm staff and the client. It is also likely to include specialty consultants and, as the project progresses, contractors and vendors. The project manager must therefore understand the relationship of the work of each group to each other group and to the accomplishment of the total project. Everyone, directly or indirectly, looks to the project manager to guide the effort. A successful project manager has developed the skills to work with many different kinds of people, and to orchestrate those individuals into a strong, cohesive team working toward shared goals.

The in-house staff encompasses not only design professionals, such as programmers, interior designers, architects, and engineers, but firm management, administrative support, accounting staff, and technology (information systems) support staff. The client may include representatives from different levels of the client organization, or from different business units, departments, or agencies within the client organization.

It is most common for the team to include specialty consultants whose expertise does not reside within the design firm. Examples of such expertise include lighting, acoustic, audio-visual, security, food service, and information technology design. Depending on either the resources of the design firm or the way the team has been put together for a specific client project, another design or consulting firm may provide basic design services such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection engineering, and building code consulting. It is increasingly common for the team to include relocation consultants whose responsibility it is to plan and manage every aspect of the client's move to the new facility. Design firms frequently form associations or joint ventures for the purpose of providing all or most of the services required for a specific project.

Teams sometimes include the real estate brokers responsible for acquisition of space, either through lease or purchase. When a client engages a broker to provide oversight, the client relies on the broker to protect the client's interests. Brokers frequently offer oversight services such as selection of the design firm(s), project scheduling, and cost management. These oversight services

are in addition to the traditional project management responsibilities in these areas provided by the design firm.

No matter what its size at the inception of the project, the team will expand over the course of the project. The team's size will depend largely on the size and complexity of the project. At a minimum the team will grow to include the general contractor and his subcontractors; furniture manufacturers and dealers; and information systems cabling and hardware vendors. It may also include vendors from specialty areas such as the audio-visual vendors; food service vendors; sound masking vendors; and security vendors.

Depending on the size of the project, the number of people in each of these groups can vary from a few to many. Each group is made up of individuals with differing experience, attitude, goals, approaches, and personalities. Some of the groups will be managed directly by the project manager in order to accomplish the work of the project. Even though the project manager will not manage the work of other groups directly, these groups will rely on the project manager as an interface between themselves and others. If each group is to perform well, the project manager must coordinate all efforts.

The Process

The project process encompasses the phases of the design effort, from pre-design services through contract administration. The project manager is responsible for leading the team through the process, by establishing that process and guiding team members through every step. As the project begins, the project manager must establish the infrastructure within which the team will execute each phase of work until the project is successfully completed. This infrastructure includes all of the supporting processes of establishing scopes of work, contracts, work plans, quality standards, communication protocols, documentation methods, fee budgets, project schedules, project budgets, etc.

Once this infrastructure has been created, the project manager must guide the team through the phases of work within the context of a defined scope of services, contractual agreements, staff hours and fee projections, quality standards, communication and documentation methodologies, and an approved project schedule and budget. While it is critical that the project manager con-