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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Modern Project Management: An Introduction

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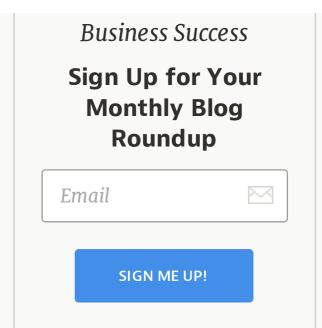Five Trends Transforming The Future of Services Delivery

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Projects have been around since the Great Pyramids, but how we approach managing them has changed. Modern project management has been developing over several decades. To put this in perspective, let's start with traditional project management.

Traditionally, projects were predictable workflows that arrived at predictable results. Processes were efficient, accurate, and stable. Sometimes these were called "continual effort" projects, because they emphasized repeatable work that didn't change often (for instance, maintenance activities).

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Today, projects have changed. Services firms provide more "single-time efforts" than continuous ones. Their projects are often unique and short-term (for instance, building a website or implementing a software product).

That has driven a shift in how we manage projects.

Traditional project management

Traditional project management serves continual efforts. It uses common technology, known scopes, and task-based workflows to achieve mostly predictable results. Issues arise only occasionally.

Modern project management

Modern project management serves unique projects. These could be one-time projects, such as website builds. Often, a services provider specializes in delivering unique projects repeatedly, such as a creative website builder. Because of its customized results, modern project management requires more flexible processes and scopes as well as highly specialized resources. It's common to find services

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firms tapping outside resources through contract tasks that roll up into a larger project within the provider's core services offering.

Did you know?

Project management, in a basic understanding, is the way people plan, lead, organize, and control (PLOC) work to arrive at a result, such as a product or service.

What does that mean for PLOC?

In modern project

management, there have been several shifts related to planning, leading, organizing, and controlling work.

1. Plan

Project planning has become more flexible. Once a deal closes, project managers must find the appropriate resources, budget, timeframe, and tools (i.e., technology) required to complete the work in a manner and for a cost to which the client has agreed.

2. Lead

Today's project managers need a more widespread understanding of specific resource skills, since they will be leading a variety of people through specialized tasks that roll-up into the successful deliverable. They must speak many languages, from

programming and creative to project financials, sales, and accounting. This knowledge helps them gain group consensus, solicit specific contributions, and create the best environment for individuals to contribute to the group project.

3. Organize

Organization requires greater flexibility as well. Project managers are increasingly relying on technology to help conduct their work. They are looking for solutions that pull them out of time-consuming spreadsheet calculations, data exports, manual report building, and manual monitoring in favor of real-time integrations and tracking tools now available. This helps them optimize resource allocation, budget tracking, report building, and on-time delivery.

4. Control

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With more flexible tools comes greater control. Project managers are able to shift resources mid-project in order to address an issue that has arisen, such as potentially not meeting a deadline or going over budget. Today's software creates this environment of greater control, with early adopters of platform innovations pulling ahead of their competitors.

The takeaways

- Project management is as old as goods and services.
- Modern project management has shifted toward unique results.
- This shift has created a need for flexible, though repeatable, steps for project delivery.
- Technology has enabled early adopters and innovative project managers to pull ahead of their competition.

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