

wise to consider multiple responses to a given risk. This is true both because some risks cannot be fully handled with just one strategy and because the first strategy may not always be the best strategy.

On other projects, however, many unanticipated risks may materialize. This could be partly due to poor or incomplete risk planning. It could also be partly due to events that would have been so unlikely that the team could not have been expected to plan for them. In either event, specific contingency plans may not be in place to deal with these risks. Identifying these new risks is vital—and the sooner the better. Two categories of project management methods can help to deal with previously unidentified risks. First, the project team in planning may recognize that unknown risks may surface, and they may add a contingency reserve of time, budget, and/or other resources to cover these unknowns. Good project management practice suggests a need for this. The amount of cost and budget reserves that are included can vary extensively based upon the customer's perception of risk and the type of project that is involved. Competitive pressures often dictate a lower limit on reserves than project managers may prefer.

The second category of project management methods includes a number of good practices that project managers often employ anyway. These practices can be classified according to whether the project team has full, partial, or no control over the events, as shown in Exhibit 14.5. Note especially the second column, which deals with risks partially within a project manager's control. A project manager cannot completely control many situations, but by using good leadership and ethics, the project manager can certainly help create a situation in which others want to help the project.

14-2d Implement Risk Responses

Implement risk responses is the process where when a risk event occurs or is quite likely to occur soon, the person assigned to that risk executes the strategy identified in

EXHIBIT 14.5

RISK EVENT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES

RISKS WITHIN PROJECT CONTROL	RISKS PARTIALLY WITHIN PROJECT CONTROL	RISKS OUTSIDE PROJECT CONTROL
Understand and control WBS	Establish limits to customer expectations	Understand project context and environment
Closely monitor and control activity progress	Build relationships by understanding project from client's perspective	Actively monitor project environment
Closely manage all project changes	Use honesty in managing client expectations	Understand willingness or reluctance of stakeholders to agree to changes
Document all change requests	Work with client to reprioritize cost, schedule, scope, and/or quality	
Increase overtime to stay on schedule	Carefully escalate problems	
Isolate problems and reschedule other activities	Build team commitment and enthusiasm	
Research challenging issues early		

Source: Adapted from Hazel Taylor, "Risk Management and Problem Resolution Strategies for IT Projects: Prescription and Practice," *Project Management Journal* 37 (5) (December 2006): 55–60.

CASA DE PAZ DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Since the primary Casa de Paz project vision is to enable Latinas and their children to be able to live independently and achieve success in work and school, it is critical for those women to take a very active role in running Casa de Paz.

What would you include in the transition plan to help them be successful? How would you capture lessons learned? Who would you share these lessons with? (*Hint: Think about the partnerships developed in this project.*)

Semester Project Instructions

For your example project, complete the following:

1. Capture customer feedback concerning your project using the questions from Exhibit 15.2 or other questions of your choice.
2. Capture lessons learned from your project to date using the questions from Exhibit 15.2 or other questions of your choice. Show how you will use these lessons both to improve the remainder of your project and for the next project on which you may work. Organize the lessons into categories such as PMBOK knowledge areas, ideas from Exhibit 15.4, or your own ideas.
3. Create a transition plan so that the recipients of your project deliverables will be capable and enthusiastic users. Secure client acceptance of your project.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN ACTION

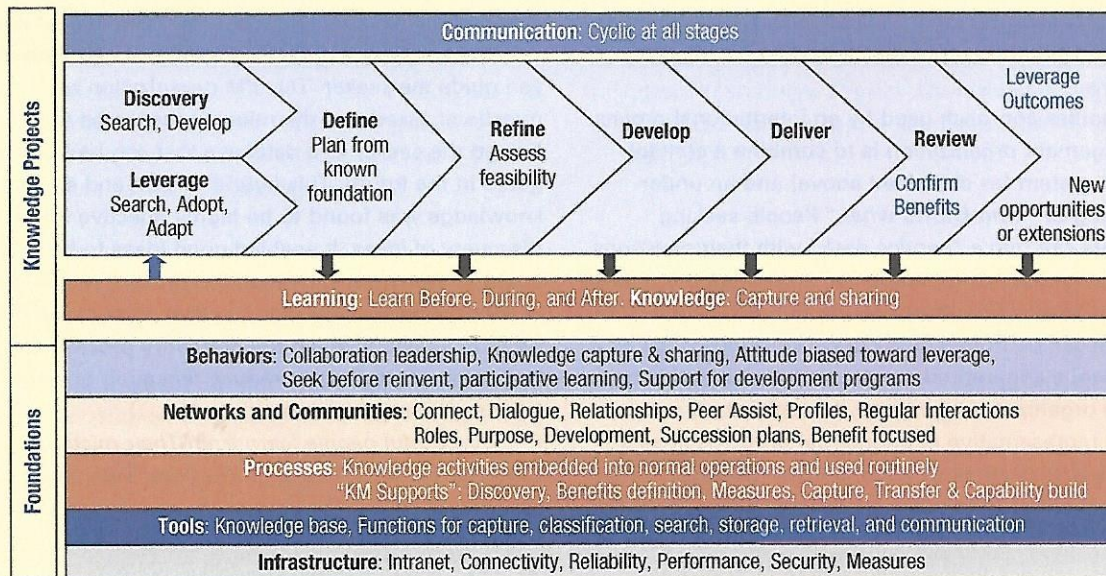
The Power of Lessons Learned

Projects are discrete. They have a beginning and an end, at which time the project team disbands and moves on to other things. Despite the fact there has inevitably been significant tacit learning during the project, there is often only a limited capture of this into a sharable form for future reuse. Too often, as the project team dissolves, the learning fades into the memories of individuals' minds. This makes it extremely difficult for others to benefit in the future from the insights learned. The usual excuses for this loss echoing through the corridors include "just too hard," "not enough time," "team disbanded before we had the chance," and many more. The key error here is the incorrect assumption that learning during or from projects is an "added bonus" or a "nice-to-have luxury." This is not the case in best practice environments.

Those fortunate enough to work on a well-led project will have observed how learning is just part of how we work together. Experienced and

knowledgeable project leaders understand the value in capturing **lessons learned**, as an embedded part of normal daily activities. They engage the team to deliberately harness knowledge and highlight lessons throughout the project to provide insights and enhance performance (during the project and beyond). The value of doing this greatly outweighs the costs of implementation when it is done well and there is a culture of trust and collaboration. This capture of learning at each stage builds the capabilities of those involved and can form a knowledge base to be used by the team or by others in future stages and future projects. In some cases, this knowledge base remains only in the heads of those involved because there is no attempt to capture it in explicit form. This is a mistake because it is difficult to transfer this knowledge beyond the immediate team (although it can be to some extent if there is a culture of storytelling and low staff turnover).

There are many barriers to developing an effective lessons-learned knowledge base, and culture is often



the primary villain. If people involved in the project are not reflective and not willing to invest a little time to capture and share their insights, the lessons are not captured. Equally, culture influences the motivation to look at what has been learned through the discovery process *before* the project starts.

Good projects start with more questions than answers:

Has this been done before?

Did it work? If so, why? If not, why?

What has changed since the last time? (Something that did not work before might now—*if* the context is different.)

If we did it the same, would it still work, or do we need to adapt it?

These questions can be effectively answered only *if* there is some access to what was learned previously and those seeking answers can find it in a convenient and trusted way. This is why talking to someone you know and trust, who was actually involved in the prior project, is always the preferred option. However, in modern organizations, this is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve because of challenges such as high use of contracted team members, high employee mobility, regular restructures, incomplete records in lessons-learned systems (which may be poorly

designed), and the fast change of supporting technologies. So what other good options exist?

Some organizations (including NASA and the U.S. military) have developed quite sophisticated lessons-learned databases. These are usually supported by processes that require people to submit comments into the project systems that will help other people in the future. Over time, these “*what we know*”-based systems build a large volume of data that can be interrogated to provide relevant insights when you need them (hopefully proactively to avert a potential risk becoming an issue, rather than reactively when the issue has occurred). These systems work best when people make it part of their normal work activities to record *both* errors and their solutions as well as what went right and why. Insights of both types are essential to ongoing success. The danger of rigid processes and systems is that people do not see the value in recording something that they believe is for the benefit of unknown others in the future and will not help them (but costs them precious time). So they either just don’t do it, or they record only very basic, nonspecific information that will not be particularly helpful for someone in a future context. Some organizations have a “stick” approach and link recording of quality lessons learned to performance reviews or project sign-offs. Others take a “carrot” approach and

reward those who record effective lessons learned as judged by other people who found and applied the lessons.

Another approach used by an international project management organization is to combine a content-based system (as described above) and an understanding of “*who knows what*.” People seeking insights can ring a “service desk” with their questions and the (experienced) employee answering the phone discusses what it is they need to find out. The service person can be from a range of backgrounds, such as a librarian, a semiretired employee with a long history of the organization’s projects, a specialist, or a nominated representative of an internal group such as a technical committee or community of practice.

Source: Arthur Shelley, http://www.organizationalzoo.com/about/arthur_shelley.

Sometimes these people will know the answer, but if they do not, they can find a person or document that can guide the seeker. This PM organization records all questions asked and the relevant resources that helped the seeker in a database that can be interrogated in the future. This hybrid of tacit and explicit knowledge was found to be highly effective for fast discovery of ideas. It enabled good ideas to be quickly applied elsewhere and helped to prevent reinvention of ideas already developed in other parts of the organization. It also enabled the discovery process at the beginning of projects to reduce repeating of errors from earlier experiences.

“*Successful people learn from Their mistakes AND the mistakes of OTHERS.*” —Sir John Templeton

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