

A Course on Essential Project Management

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TECHNICAL DIVISION



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A two-day course entitled “Essential Project Management” was organised by the Project Management Technical Division (PMTD) of IEM from 2 to 3 December 2010 at Wisma IEM, Petaling Jaya. The course was conducted by Ir. Lee Boon Chong. A total of 44 participants consisting both corporate members and graduate members of IEM from various industries attended the course.

Projects are employed as an important means of achieving an organisation’s business goals. Adopting a structured and integrated approach to project management has proven to be critical to the success of a project as well as the organisation. The course contents were closely referenced to PMBOK Guide, 4th edition of the Project Management Institute (PMI). The course first presented the fundamental concept and framework as well as project business link before moving on to the five project management process groups, namely, initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and controlling, and closing.

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS AND FRAMEWORK

The section on fundamental concepts and framework is intended to provide participants with the basic context and foundation to understand the structured processes and detailed building blocks in subsequent sections. It covered the following:

- Definition of project and project management.
- Differentiation between project and operations.
- Definition of programme management and portfolio management.
- Definition, roles and configuration of the project management office.
- Project lifecycle, project management lifecycle and product lifecycle.
- Project constraints including triple constraints and hexagonal constraints.
- Definition of project stakeholders.

PROJECT BUSINESS LINK

A project is normally conceptualised from an organisation’s strategic or business viewpoint. It must be proven to be feasible as well as financially viable before start-up or initiation. This section covered the following:

- Strategic business alignment of a project.
- Project business case.
- Project feasibility.
- Project investment appraisal.
- Project brief and start-up decision.

PROJECT INITIATION AND MANDATE

Obtain the mandate and clear terms of reference. A project must first be initiated legitimately as only a proper mandate will give the project manager the authority to start a project and commit organisational resources. This section covered the following:

- Project start-up meeting.
- Project statement of works.
- Project charter and its development.
- Project objectives and SMART criteria.
- Project manager and sub-project manager selection criteria and job function.
- Project management team and overall project team.
- Influence of the organisation structure.
- Stakeholder identification, analysis and register.



PROJECT PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Plan the project work according to the project charter. This is done by establishing the total project scope, defining and refining the project objectives, and developing the course of action required to achieve the objectives. An integrated project management plan, together with the project documents, is the most important requisite in preparing for project execution and determines the success of project implementation. This section covered the following:

- Project planning kick-off meeting.
- Project management plan, together with the three performance baselines, the major component plans, as well as the integrative content.
- Project scope management planning and its related processes

- Project time management planning and its related processes.
- Project cost management planning and its related processes.
- Project risk management planning and its related processes.
- Project quality management planning.
- Project human resource planning.
- Project communications planning.
- Project procurement management planning.
- Summary of project management planning – integrated project plan.

PROJECT EXECUTION AND ACTION

Execute the project plan. Project objectives, outputs and deliverables are obtained by performing and integrating the work that is defined in a project management plan. This is done by obtaining, coordinating and managing people and other project resources. During project execution, a large portion of the project budget is expended; and changes ensue, necessitating a detailed analysis and appropriate responses such as planning updates and baseline modification. This section covered the following:

- Directing and managing project execution.
- Performing project quality assurance and quality audit.
- Acquiring, developing and managing the project team.
- Acquiring and managing other project resources.
- Motivation and leadership theories and issues.
- Conflict resolution, problem solving and decision-making.
- Distributing project information.
- Managing effective project meetings.
- Managing stakeholder expectations.
- Enhancing project communications and personal effectiveness.
- Conducting procurement – bidder conference and proposal evaluation.

PROJECT MONITORING AND CONTROL

Track progress and control changes. It is critical to monitor and measure a project's progress and performance against the project's plans and objectives, identify and analyse changes to the plan, and initiate corresponding actions to quickly return to the reference project management plan if it gets off base. This section covered the following:

- Monitoring and controlling project work.
- Performing integrated change control.
- Verifying and controlling the scope.
- Controlling project schedule.
- Controlling project costs.
- Earned value management (EVM).
- Performing project quality control and related tools and techniques.
- Reporting project performance.
- Monitoring and controlling risks.
- Administering procurement.

PROJECT CLOSING AND TERMINATION

Completing all project work does not, by itself, end the project; but rather forms the basis for closing the project. Proper project closure is a prerequisite to formally complete the project. This section covered the following:

- Closing project or phase.
- Closing procurements.
- Types of closures.

Under the five project management process groups are 42 project management processes mapped into nine knowledge areas, namely, project integration management, project scope management, project time management, project cost management, project quality management, project human resource management, project communications management, project risk management and project procurement management. Important concepts, inputs, outputs, tools and techniques pertaining to each and every process were explained. This was supplemented with working examples, useful exercises, real-life case studies and hands-on applications.

The course was intensive but practical and interactive. Each participant played an active part in the entire learning process, showing keen interest and inquisitiveness in various subject areas. They synergised by sharing and cross-fertilising their respective experiences and expertise. Feedback from the participants was very positive and reassuring indeed. They learned the structured and integrated approaches, processes, tools and techniques applicable to managing each phase of the project lifecycle. In summary, this course covered the essence of project management, especially suitable for those who intend to gain a fundamental but solid grounding on project management. It is hoped that more of this and other courses could be organised to promote the art and science of project management. ■

IEM READERSHIP SURVEY 2010/2011

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