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| Sometimes Project Management can seem very ‘terminology heavy’ and only those ‘in the know’ are able use and understand the Project Management terms. It doesn’t have to be that way. However, if you don’t know these terms, you may still feel that way. To help you become familiar with the Project Management language, here is a list of commonly used Project Management terms and their definitions.* ***Definitions in bold and italics come from formal sources*** (such as PRINCE2®, Dictionary.com and/or TechTerms.com)
* Definitions without special formatting are less formal definitions in laymen terms
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| Term | Definition | Related terms  |
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| 1. Benefit
 | * ***“a measurable improvement resulting from an outcome, perceived as an advantage by one or more Stakeholders”***
* Benefits are the measurable improvements resulting from outcomes. Outcomes are the changes in ‘real world’ behaviour, as those resulting from the use of new project Deliverables
* Benefits justify the project costs, if the business (stakeholders) perceive their value to be worth more than the financial costs to do the project.
* Benefits are usually realised after the project has been disbanded. Change Management is required to manage and realise Benefits.
 | Business Case; Change Management; Outcome |
| 1. Business Case
 | * ***“the justification for the project, typically comparing the benefits against the cost, time and risk of doing the project”***
* Usually in an official document, the Business Case sets out the case to the business to pursue the project because the benefits (return on investment) is worth more than the costs, time and risk of doing it.
* The Business Case should be updated regularly to ensure that the case for doing the project remains valid.
 | Benefit; Cost |
| 1. Change Control
 | * ***“a formal procedure to identify, assess and control changes to the project scope and constraints, so they are captured, assessed and either approved, rejected or deferred”***
* A process to help you identify and manage changes during the project. No changes should go undocumented. If the decision is to approve or reject, there should be evidence that it was considered and a decision made. This is so that at the end of your project, you are not being judged or assessed on creating a Deliverable that was removed or de-scoped half way through the project.
 | Request for Change; Issue |
| 1. Change Management
 | * A management discipline designed to manage and lead the people in the business to change their actions, attitudes and behaviours to incorporate the new Deliverables into their working practises.
* It is important to understand that this adoption does not come overnight and will take careful planning and execution (and funding and resourcing) on top of project management.
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| 1. Configuration Management
 | * ***“the recording and updating of information about a project’s Deliverables, such as version number, storage location, and who has access”***
* It involves assigning a unique identification or naming convention to each of the project’s Deliverables and documentation, so that they can be tracked throughout the project (e.g., from ‘In development’ to ‘in testing’ to ‘complete’ to ‘handed over to user’)
* It also strongly relates to Change Control – every time a decision is made to approve a change to one of the project’s Deliverables, the new version of the Deliverable needs to be tracked (not just the old version).
 | Change Control |
| 1. Cost
 | * The project’s cost target. The Project Plan should indicate how much money all the project work will cost. This will prove that the plan is achievable within the project’s cost target.
* There should also be an indication if there is any tolerance or leeway around the cost target.
* Also known as Budget
 | Project Plan; Tolerance |
| 1. Client
 | * Sometimes projects are driven by a customer or client. They can play the role of Sponsor or they may concede to a senior manager who will represent their needs. In this kind of project set up, the client is usually paying for the project, though not always directly involved in it.
 | Sponsor |
| 1. Constraints
 | * ***“things that need to be considered as fixed or must happen. Restrictions that will affect the project”***
* The parameters within which the project must deliver the project’s scope.
* Time, Cost and Quality
* Each constraint should ideally have some tolerance around the desired target.
 | Scope;Project Plan;Stage Plan |
| 1. De-scope
 | * A decision to remove an Deliverable from the agreed scope of the project. Usually made via Change Control process or by the Project Sponsor in response to changing project circumstances.
 | Scope |
| 1. Deliverable
 | * An output that will be handed over to the users as part of the project remit.
* Deliverables are specified and then created according to their specifications. They are also tested against their specifications to ensure they are ready for the users to use them.
* Also known as output or product
 | Output; Product |
| 1. Deliverable Description
 | * ***“a description of a Deliverable, it’s purpose, composition and quality criteria”***
* A description of the Deliverable capturing input from the users to make sure it is understood what would make it ‘usable’ and input from the suppliers to make sure the Deliverable is possible to create (with existing technology and expertise)
* Included in the plan documentation
* Also known as requirements or specifications
 | Project Plan; Stage Plan |
| 1. End Stage Decision Point
 | * ***“a review by the Project Board to decide whether to approve the project to continue to the next stage”***
* Based on the performance of the previous stage and the strength of the plans for the next stage, the Project Board must decide if they want to keep investing in this project
* Inputs into the decision include:
	+ Performance results of previous stage
	+ Stage Plan for the next stage (including lessons from the previous stage)
	+ Updated Project Plan with new, revised estimates
	+ Updated Business Case (reflecting new, revised estimates)
 | Stage; Stage Plan |
| 1. Escalate
 | * When a member of the project team is forecasting to deliver outside of his/her agreed constraints (or tolerances, if any), then he/she needs to immediately alert the next level of management
	+ Team Members escalate to the Project Manager
	+ Project Manager escalates to the Project Board
 | Constraints; Escalation Report; Tolerances |
| 1. Escalation Report
 | * ***“a description of the situation being escalated, its impact and potential options for resolving”***
* An Escalation Report can be a verbal alert or a formal written report. Either way, it is an immediate report as soon as it can be forecast that the delegated constraints or tolerances will be exceeded.
 | Escalate |
| 1. Estimates
 | * ***“an approximate calculation or judgement of the value, number, quantity, or extent of something”***
* A best judgement of something that will happen in the future. They are not guarantees. They will need to be revised and updated as more information is known.
 | Plan; Project Plan; Stage Plan |
| 1. Go / No Go Decision
 | * “a determination to proceed with or abandon a [plan](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/plan.html) or [project](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/project.html).”
* In the project environment, Go / No Go decisions are made before the project begins (between Confirm Need and Define Phases) and at the end of each stage (see End Stage Decision Point)
 | End Stage Decision Point |
| 1. Issue
 | * ***“an event that has happened, was not planned, and requires management action”***
* When something has gone wrong on the project, it is affecting the project’s scope or constraints and it is requiring your attention to manage.
* Issues that are causing the project or stage to exceed its constraints, the issue must be escalated immediately.
 | Change Control;Escalate;Escalation Report |
| 1. Outcome
 | * ***“a change in real world behaviour’ (e.g., adoption and use of new Deliverables produced by projects)”***
* Once the project’s Deliverables have been handed over to the users, the users must then start to use them. Normally, Change Management is enacted to motivate users to change their ‘real world’ behaviour and adopt the new Deliverables into their daily work. Once users use the project’s Deliverables consistently as the only way to work, not just the new way to work, the outcome will be achieved. Once the outcome is achieved, Benefits can be measured and realised.
 | Benefit; Change Management; Deliverable; User |
| 1. Output
 | * A project Deliverable that will be handed over to the users as part of the project remit.
* Also known as Deliverable or product
 | Deliverable; Product |
| 1. Phase
 | * ***“a distinct period or section in a process of change or development”***
* Projects have five general phases. These tend to be sequential, though can be overlapping.
* Each phase has a different management focus.
* Management time and energy will need to be centred on making sure the right focus is being applied at the right time.
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| 1. Plan
 | * ***“a proposal for doing or achieving something which specifies the what, when, how and by whom”***
* A schedule of work with estimates for time and cost of achieving the desired level of quality
* Includes an explanation of the schedule
* Every project has a Project Plan, depending on the size and complexity of the project, there may also be Stage Plans.
 | Project Plan; Stage Plan |
| 1. Product
 | * ***“an output, whether tangible or intangible, that can be described in advance, created and tested”***
* Also known as output or Deliverable
 | Deliverable; Output  |
| 1. Progress
 | * ***“movement toward a goal or against a plan”***
* The desired level of progress is being made on a project if the project is being forecast to meet its constraints (or tolerances).
 | Constraints; Plan; Progress Report;Tolerance |
| 1. Progress Report
 | * ***“a description of the current situation of the project and how it is still on target to meet its constraints (or tolerances)”***
* A Progress Report can be verbal or written. It confirms that the expected progress that was planned for is actually being made and is still predicted to finish according to the plan.
 | Progress |
| 1. Project Manager
 | * A role on the project team responsible for managing the team to complete the project’s scope within the constraints set by the Project Board.
 | Projects Office; Sponsor |
| 1. Project Plan
 | * ***“a high level plan showing the major deliverables of the project, when they will be delivered and at what cost”***
* A high level view of the entire project, showing activities over time in a schedule
* Includes an explanation of constraints, assumptions, dependencies and risk mitigation
 | Stage Plan |
| 1. Projects Office
 | * A role on the project team to help with administrative tasks such as maintaining logs, taking minutes, tracking documentation and reporting.
 | Project Manager |
| 1. Quality
 | * The project’s quality target. The Project Plan should indicate how all the project work will be achieve the level of quality expected by the client or sponsor. This will prove that the work planned for in the plan is realistic to achieving the quality target.
* There should also be an indication if there is any tolerance or leeway around the quality target.
* Also known as ‘Fit for purpose’, expectations, measurable acceptance criteria, success criteria, requirements
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| 1. Request for change
 | * ***“a proposal for change to the project’s scope”***
* Any request for something new or different to the project’s Deliverables (even a request to do less or fewer Deliverables) needs to be captured and assessed before deciding to approve, reject or defer.
 | Change Control |
| 1. Risk
 | * ***“an uncertain event that could have an effect on your project”***
* Something that might / could / may happen on your project that will affect you achieving your project within your constraints
 | Risk Management |
| 1. Risk Management
 | * ***“processes to identify, assess, plan and implement risk mitigating activities to counter uncertainties within the project”***
* The project management activities needed to identify the potential pitfalls within the project and to counter these with proactive actions (or a proactive, conscious decision to not do anything about a risk)
 | Risk |
| 1. Scope
 | * ***“the set of Deliverables, or outputs that the project team is responsible to provide to the client (or Sponsor) of the project”***
* The total number of Deliverables that the project team are responsible for delivering within the project constraints of time, cost and quality.
 | Constraints; De-scope |
| 1. Sponsor
 | * A role on the project team responsible for taking ownership of the project. As a senior manager, they will be ultimately accountable for the success of the project, though their responsibility is to give direction to the Project Manager and let the Project Manager manage the project.
 | Project Manager |
| 1. Stakeholder
 | * ***“a person or group who is interested in the project. Stakeholders could impact the project, could be impacted by the project”***
* Someone who is interested your project. You will need to communicate with them throughout the project. Some stakeholders will need more information than others. All stakeholders will need some level of communication, even if it’s through written communications (e.g., emails or newsletter).
 | Client;Sponsor; Supplier; User |
| 1. Stage
 | * ***“a section of the project that the Project Manager is responsible for managing at any one time”***
* Larger, more complex projects are broken into stages – smaller more manageable sections that can be planned for and managed in detail.
* The Project Manager is responsible to manage the stage, report progress and check with the Project Board at the end of each stage to seek approval to move on to the next stage (or to close down if at the end of the project).
 | Stage Plan |
| 1. Stage Plan
 | * ***“a detailed plan used by the Project Manager to maintain day-to-day control and management of the project (a stage at a time)”***
* The Stage Plan includes:
	+ list of the Deliverables required from this stage (including the Deliverable descriptions or specifications);
	+ explanation of the dependencies between Deliverables;
	+ list of the activities required to create the Deliverables;
	+ list of the quality activities required to test the Deliverables;
	+ list of the tolerances built into the plan; includes the management activities to monitor and control the work includes the management activities (towards the end of this plan) to plan for the next stage (planning to plan)
 | Project Plan |
| 1. Strategy
 | * ***“an approach or line to take, designed to achieve a longer term aim”***
* An explanation of how some element of the project will be achieved - the rules or guidelines that should be followed during the project.
* The plans within the project should reflect rules and guidelines from the strategies.
 | Plan; Project Plan; Stage Plan |
| 1. Supplier
 | * ***“the person, group or groups responsible for the supply of the project’s Deliverables”***
* Can be internal or external suppliers (or a combination) who will be doing the specialist or technical work on the project’s Deliverables.
 | Stakeholder |
| 1. Time
 | * The project’s time target. The Project Plan should indicate how all the project work will be completed by this time target. This will prove that the plan is achievable by the time target.
* There should also be an indication if there is any tolerance or leeway around the time target.
 | Project Plan; Tolerance |
| 1. Tolerance
 | * ***“allowable deviation from a project target without having to escalate to the next level of management”***
* How much are you able to miss your targets (plus and minus) by without escalating it to the manager above you (e.g., from Team Member to Project Manager or from Project Manager to Project Sponsor)
* Example: Time target one year. Tolerance: +4 weeks/ -2 weeks (you can be up to 4 weeks late or as early as 2 weeks early, without having to escalate the variation)
* Also called: Leeway, wiggle room, buffer
 | Escalation report |
| 1. User(s)
 | * ***“the person or group who will use one or more of the project’s Deliverables”***
* The project creates Deliverables for users to use. The project team need to understand the user’s requirements to make sure the Deliverables created by the team are usable at the end.
* Users can be internal (staff) or external (customers)
 | Stakeholder |
| 1. Version
 | * ***“a form of something (such as a product) that is different in some way from other forms; a variant”***
* Project documentation tends to be updated frequently (e.g., at the end of each stage), so it is important to be able to distinguish amongst the various versions. A sequential number or date scheme can help control the numerous versions.
 | Configuration Management |