Chapter 6.9
Integrating Knowledge Management with Programme Management

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge reuse has long been an issue for organisations. The management, reuse and transfer of knowledge can improve project management capabilities (i.e., learning, memory, cycle time) resulting in continuous learning. Although knowledge management has been recognised as a critical success factor in programme management very little research has been conducted to date (Lycett, Rassau, & Danson, 2004; Soderlund, 2004). A framework is discussed that demonstrates how knowledge is created, transferred, captured and reused within project and programme management, resulting in improved project management maturity. The framework utilises a task based approach to knowledge management and assumes that knowledge is created, transferred and reused as a result of an individual performing a specific task, which in this context is a project at the project level and a programme at the programme level.

INTRODUCTION

Organisations use projects to implement their strategy and change (Cleland, 1999). To achieve this, organisations need to utilise knowledge gained from earlier projects or project phases and not reinvent the wheel. One method of achieving this is for an organisation to develop a knowledge management strategy. A knowledge management strategy articulates how the organisation creates, values, preserves and transfers knowledge critical to its operations. As a way of ensuring that knowledge is effectively reused across projects they are often allocated to programmes. A programme is a group of projects managed together

allowing added benefit and control that would not normally be achieved from managing projects individually (Project Management Institute, 2004; Turner, 1999).

Although knowledge management has been recognised as a critical success factor in programme management very little research has been conducted to date (Lycett et al., 2004; Soderlund, 2004). The focus of current research covers knowledge management in project management from intra- and inter-project learning (Kotnour, 1999) where it is important to capture knowledge as lessons learned where a full description of the project is captured allowing it to be used on other projects (Disterer, 2002). There has been a lack of formal knowledge exploitation in project management organisations.

A framework has been developed to demonstrate how knowledge is created, transferred, captured and reused within project and programme management. The framework utilises a task based approach to knowledge management and assumes that knowledge is situated within a specific context. Knowledge is created, transferred and reused as a result of an individual performing a specific task, in this context the task is a project at the project level and a programme at the programme level (Burstein & Linger, 2003). The framework shows how knowledge management can be integrated with project management.

The paper is structured as follows, a background to knowledge management within project and programme management grounded in relevant literature is provided, including actor network theory (ANT). ANT describes the way that a project team can be viewed (Parkin, 1996) in terms of comprising both humans and nonhumans (machines, procedures, processes and documents) and how knowledge can be created, transferred and reused (Latour, 1987, 1999). The next section provides a framework for how knowledge is developed at the task level and is embedded into the project methodology of an organisation allowing knowledge to be linked and reused in future projects and programmes. A description of a case study and a discussion of how knowledge management issues in the case study relate to the framework are then provided.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT INTO PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Project Management Institute (2000) defines a project as:

...a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service. Temporary means that every project has a definite beginning and a definite end. Unique means that the product or services is different in some distinguishing way from all other products or services. (p. 4)

This definition offered by the Project Management Institute and widely used in both industry and academia focuses on project management as a tool rather than including project objectives, business performance (portfolio and programme management) that are fundamentally linked to project success (Morris, 2003). Morris (2003) offers an alternative definition:

Project management has to be about delivering business benefits through projects, and this necessarily involves managing the project definition as well as the downstream implementation. (p. 3)

Project success involves project management taking into account the traditional areas of project control and organisation, as well as the softer issues of stakeholder success, portfolio and programme management, project strategy, technology, and communication management (Morris, 2003). To achieve this, there needs to be a greater understanding of the integration of knowledge management into project management.

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