

Chapter XXI

Project Management Assessment Methods

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author describes how one can implement and incorporate creative techniques to design, develop, document and disseminate a systematic process for conducting assessment, whether it be in a multinational corporation or it be in a small business environment. The author accomplishes this by providing models, samples and established guidelines for effectively using assessment results for continuous quality improvement. The author focuses on the importance of adopting modern techniques and stresses that technology should not be viewed just as a growing trend. The author shows how technology can be intelligently implemented as an invaluable assessment tool that can quickly identify areas for improvement so that a given corporation can continue to climb the ladder of success in a competitive global market of the 21st Century.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment, by itself, in simple terms and in principle, may apply to a wide variety of disciplines and can be interpreted in multiple ways. For ex-

ample, one may discuss *performance assessment* of an individual employee assigned to manage a specific technology project. On the other hand, the long term strategic planning process and operational methodology of a senior executive in a

multinational corporation can be *assessed*. A team of police officers, paramedics, fire marshals and rescue officials may visit the site of an accident and *assess* the situation. Another example may be taken from educational establishments and accreditation agencies. For educators, assessment of student learning is a highly structured process that involves recording, reviewing, reflecting and reporting essential results for purposes of continuous quality improvement.

Assessment is *not* just procurement of data. Meaningful data must be methodically collected, correctly correlated and instinctively interpreted. Properly tabulated and viewed, assessment data will provide important information that can further be used to significantly improve the existing situation, whether it be project management, long term planning, marketing analysis, customer support, clientele interaction or student learning. The primary objective of *assessment* must be to promote overall growth and enhance professional development. Executives, Employers, Educators and Administrators are therefore able to obtain valuable insight from analyzing gathered data in a systematic and scientific manner.

Assessment is essential for the successful operation of all types of ventures, whether they be small businesses, commercial establishments, large companies, retail outlets, industrial conglomerates or multinational corporations. Active assessment techniques provide useful feedback that can be fruitful in increased productivity, improved efficiency, reduced costs and boosted morale. It has to be recognized that assessment is not just a *rehash* of the company's annual report, rather must be viewed as a quality improvement tool that is embedded in the governance document of the corporation. Assessment should be at the *'heart'* of an industrial environment should encompass everything from pre-manufacturing market analysis surveys all the way to post-sales customer support. This obviously implies that a corporation must assess *market research* separately from *manufacturing*. They need to assess

engineering design separately from *customer support*. Regardless all these separate assessment data have to be effectively consolidated to provide one *'big-picture'* that can be representative of the industrial conglomerate's assessment efforts. It is further recognized that large volumes of data are being collected that need to be standardized, streamlined and systematized for sound, judicial interpretation.

The ultimate objective of assessment practices in an educational establishment should be to examine and determine whether or not the current curriculum of their college is meeting the needs of their designated clientele. Assessment methods should emphasize entire programs and treat the student body as a complete group and document their overall educational accomplishments. It must be observed that assessment in educational establishments is normally classified into two major areas. First is identified as *Formative Assessment* and is normally administered during the *lifetime* of a chosen program. This type of assessment is expected to provide immediate feedback as to how the program can be improved, the next time it is implemented. Many instructors consider *formative assessment* to be a part of routine instructional methodology. The second is known as *Summative Assessment* and is administered after the program has been *in place* for some time. The results of summative assessment may help decide whether or not activities pertaining to the selected program should be continued. Some administrators view *summative assessment* as a measure of accountability. In this chapter the author outlines some techniques for documenting and analyzing assessment data.

While the example chosen by the author may focus on a particular discipline, the reader should recognize the fact the philosophy of assessment methodology can be easily modified and adapted to meet the needs of the individual situation. Some assessment techniques may choose a scale similar to *Likert Scale* for analyzing the data they have collected.

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