

OGL 320: Foundations of Project Management

Module 2 Worksheet

Worksheet Guidelines

- Complete Sections 1 and 2 below.
- Use your own words; however, when you quote or paraphrase, remember to cite per APA Standards using information in the [APA Tools and Template Area](#).
- Be sure to proofread your work for spelling or grammatical errors because repeated errors will result in earning fewer points.
- A paragraph is 4-5 sentences.

Section 1: Organizational Culture Short Answer

Using the readings, slideshows, and videos from Module 2 as a basis, answer the following questions:

- 1) In looking at slide 4 from Module 2's slideshow presentation, discuss how an organization that you were/are involved in fits one of the profiles. You can focus on a place you worked/work or volunteered/volunteer at. Explain why the profile(s) fits your example and whether you think the culture is a benefit or detriment to the organization.

Each organization has its own culture profile that impacts project environments in different ways:

- **Innovative cultures** are flexible, like to experiment with new ideas, and don't shy away from failure (e.g. Google).
- **Aggressive cultures** are competitive and fast-paced (e.g. Microsoft).
- **Outcome Oriented cultures** emphasize achievement and results (e.g. Best Buy).
- **Stable cultures** are predictable, rule oriented and bureaucratic (e.g. Kraft Foods).
- **People Oriented cultures** value fairness, supportiveness, and individual rights (e.g. Starbucks).
- **Team Oriented cultures** emphasize collaboration and cooperation among employees (e.g. Southwest Airlines).
- **Detail Oriented cultures** emphasize precision and competitive advantage (e.g. Ritz Carlton).

Multiple cultures may coexist in a single organization in the form of subcultures and countercultures.

Image source and citation: "Principles of Management," <https://new.edu/resources/organizational-culture-5>

I work at a very innovative public High School in Carlsbad, California. I started there in 2013/2014, when the school first opened. Building new schools, especially of our caliber, is so rare these days with the lack of educational funding. It was necessary as our small City had always functioned with only one high school but was quickly outgrowing it. We

got a lot of support from our community and voters so we were able to get the funding needed to build Sage Creek High School.

The reason why I love our school so much is mostly because of how innovative we are. We are new so we don't have the traditions our sister school has. We can be more flexible with our processes and events because it's all new to us. We joke and like to say we have meetings for our meetings. We have committees for our committees. We are constantly improving and learning from our mistakes. We know that. Our first Principal, who just left this past school year, always said we needed to "fail forward." I loved this about him. He knew we would make mistakes along the way but that we needed to learn and grow from those mistakes.

- 2) Why is it important for a project manager to understand their organization's culture?

In our text, it states "organizational culture is shaped by the common experiences of members of the organization." (PMBOK, p. 20) This included sharing the same vision, missions, procedures, motivation, their view of leadership and their work ethic. These are just a few examples of what shapes an organization. I just couldn't imagine a project manager NOT knowing these key elements of their organization. Understanding the culture would be key to being a successful and strong PM.

- 3) What problems can arise if they fail to understand that culture?

There are so many problems that could arise from a project manager not knowing their organization's culture. They could choose wrong team members for a project. A PM should be able to assign the pertinent roles to a project according to knowing their staff. They need balance and understanding. The clientele, staff and stakeholders must trust you in order to follow your lead. In order for this to happen, it's vital the PM knows the culture of all aforementioned people. Without knowing their org's culture, they run the risk of making ill informed decisions for their projects.

- 4) What do you feel the TWO most important characteristics of a project team are? Why? Please be sure to draw from the course materials and elaborate on your response.

"According to the American Project Management organization, approximately 90% of the factors contributing to a projects' success depends on the people involved, so "get the right people on the bus and in the right seats."

I believe the two most important characteristics of a team is having an environment where everyone contributes and benefits. This is important to me because everyone will feel like they are contributing to the success of the team and in the long run, everyone will benefit as well. I've been a part of too many "teams" that never really felt like a team. There were the obvious leaders who were loud and always spoke over everyone. Then there were people who I knew wanted to speak but just always felt overpowered by

others. I would want a good leader who sees this and who tries to keep the balance so everyone CAN contribute to the success of the team.

It's also extremely important to have a supportive environment. Your team members have to feel comfortable on their team. They need to trust their colleagues and leaders. They should feel comfortable asking questions and coming to leadership to bring up issues or concerns regarding the project so the PM can address those issues immediately and professionally. Cohesiveness, trust and support is necessary for success.

References:

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide), Project Management Institute, 5th Ed. (2013).

Project Management Masters Certification Program slideshow, American Project Management (2013).

Creating Teams with an Edge: The Complete Skill Set to Build Powerful and Influential Teams, Harvard Business School Press (2004).

The Blind Men and the Elephant: Mastering Project Work, David Schmaltz (2003).

“Manage the Knowledge Gap,” by Dmitri Ivanenko in Permalink (2011)

Section 2: Premortem Short Answer

Using the “10 Project Management Lessons from the Titanic Disaster” (Titanic) from Module 1 and the “Quasar Communications” Case Study from Module 2, answer the following questions.

- 1) From the Titanic article, what THREE points are the *most useful lessons to you*? Why? Be sure to fully develop your responses and weave in examples when possible.

The sinking of the Titanic was an absolute tragedy. After reading this article, there were so many events that took place which caused the sinking.

One of the most useful lessons I took from this is not to make assumptions during a project. As the project manager, do not assume someone is working on an item. Do not assume anything is known or will get done without asking questions. If the task has not been clear or if you would just feel better by getting an update, ask. It's the job of the PM to ensure communication dialogue stays open, professional and candid throughout the project.

The project manager should have a baseline and methodology for completing the project already in place. It's important to design a plan and to use the most sophisticated way or software to plan and track progress of the project. In my line of work, we use Google. I'm grateful for using this program because it gives us the capability of collaborating on shared documents, viewing documents and finding documents within a folder in our Google Drive. It was easier before my school closed due to COVID to communicate with one another by stopping by a classroom, setting up a face-to-face meeting or calling someone. Because our schedules are so different and we are not allowed to meet, having Google has helped us all to stay on track with a project and coordinating our communication via Google Chat.

I am in finance for a public high school. Documentation is a large part of my job because I am audited by a third party. I have to ensure I have every single receipt, signature, meeting minutes, ticket inventory sheet and all deposit batches every single time I process a check or make a deposit. Because I deal with public funds, it's vital I stay organized and stay thorough with the Education Codes and policies in place. I even make sure any business decision is in writing via email or a Google Doc. There are so many moving parts with each project so having documentation to show how and why decisions were made along the way is important to stakeholders and managers alike.

- 2) Explain what it means to use a premortem method in project planning and the types of benefits it can yield.

Using a premortem method in project planning is "'imagining that an event has already occurred—increases the ability to correctly identify reasons for future outcomes by 30%" (Review, H. B. (n.d.). Page 53. *HBR Guide to Project Management*.) Setting up a premortem plan allows the team to act as if the project has already happened to try to get ahead of any potential issues. It allows the team to improve the project. It's also a way for the project manager to strengthen the plan because this method asks as if the project DID fail although it hasn't even started. It allows a conversation to happen with hypothetical issues that arose so team members feel more comfortable bringing up those potential issues and don't feel like they are attacking someone or if they are being attacked.

- 3) From a PREMORTEM perspective, using the "Quasar Communications" case study, discuss what you believe are the top FIVE reasons projects fail in general.

When we look at the "Quasar Communications" case study from a premortem perspective, then we can get to the bottom of the potential failures of this large undertaking of a project.

I believe the single top reason a project would fail is communication. This may seem vague but it's completely valid. If we dive into communication, we know a risk assessment should be done prior to the project. An enterprise project management methodology plan should also be in place so all clientele and stakeholders are aware of the tasks and common goals of the project.

Project team development is another reason why a project will fail. The powerpoint presentation "Setting Up a Project for Success: Identifying Influencing Factors", states each team member should have clearly defined goals and timelines. The PM should establish norms of behavior and communication. One of the most important items discussed is to be committed to the common project goal. Forming a strong group, knowing everyone's strengths and possibly even weaknesses, is a key factor for a successful project. Not creating this team before the project begins will almost inevitably make the project fail.

I've enjoyed learning more and more about elements of a project. The term "scope creep" is when a customer asks you to flex on your project outline and goals. They want you to make just one small change for them. When the PM does this, it will in turn negatively impact your timelines, your project goals and potentially your budget. Making one small change, then another and another just snowballs into too many changes and before you know it, you have completely derailed from the project plans.

Every project should also have a design plan, also known as methodology. Without this, it's difficult to stay organized with planning and tracking of progress throughout the project with sophisticated software. From the capital equipment project manager for Quasar Communications, they stated "My biggest complaint is with this new priority scheduling computer package we're supposedly considering to install." Projects fail because the plan or software includes technology that project managers do not support or have enough product knowledge to use well.

The lack of balancing projects between teams and project managers will also make a project fail. In the section "small customer project management" the PM was frustrated with their workload. They felt they had too many projects to oversee and oftentimes, one of the projects would be neglected because of the need for more attention on another project. This information must be communicated to someone above the project manager before a project starts to ensure the project is seen through from beginning to end with happy stakeholders and clientele.

References:

Harold Kerzner's *Project Management: Case Studies* (2013), pgs. 165-169

A Guide to Project Management Body of Knowledge (5th ed.), pgs. 20-37

References:

A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide), Project Management Institute, 5th Ed. (2013).

Project Management Masters Certification Program slideshow, American Project Management (2013).

Creating Teams with an Edge: The Complete Skill Set to Build Powerful and Influential Teams, Harvard Business School Press (2004).

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