

PMI 4.6.3.2 Close Project or Phase

Close Document: Lessons Learned

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This is an example of the final compilation of lessons learned on a project. I did not have a template from that project, but was able to base this on one found at www.ProjectManagementDocs.com.

I am concerned that Lessons Learned documentation is usually discussed in how-to-close-a-project sections. A template to capture lessons learned should be distributed to each team member before project start. If lessons are not captured as we learn them, very few of them will make it into this document (ask me how I know)!

LESSONS LEARNED

<PROJECT NAME>

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the lessons learned document for the New Building Construction (NBC) Project is to capture the project's lessons learned in a formal document for use by other project managers on similar future projects. This document may be used as part of new project planning for similar projects in order to determine what problems occurred and how those problems were handled and may be avoided in the future. Additionally, this document details what went well with the project and why, so that other project managers may capitalize on these actions. Project managers may also use this document to determine who the project team members were in order to solicit feedback for planning their projects in the future. This document will be formally communicated with the organization and will become a part of the organizational assets and archives.

LESSONS LEARNED APPROACH

The lessons learned from the NBC Project are compiled from project journal entries throughout the project lifecycle. Lessons learned were also gathered from both realized and unrealized risks in the project risk register as well as through interviews with project team members and other stakeholder as necessary. The lessons learned from this project are to be used as references for future projects and

contain an adequate level of detail so that other project managers may have enough information on which to help base their project plans. The lessons learned in this document are categorized by project knowledge area. These knowledge areas consist of: procurement management, risk management, integration management, quality management, time management, cost management, scope management, human resource management, and communications management. NOTE: some knowledge areas may not contain lessons learned if none were documented throughout the project lifecycle.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS PROJECT

The following chart lists the lessons learned for the NBC project. These lessons are categorized by project knowledge area and descriptions, impacts, and recommendations are provided for consideration on similar future new construction projects. It is important to note that not only failures or shortcomings are included but successes as well.

Category	Issue Name	Problem/Success	Impact	Recommendation
Procurement Management	Contract Requirements	The PM was not fully engaged in the contract process.	All requirements were not included in the initial contract award. A contract modification was required which added a week to the project.	PM must be fully engaged in all contract processes. This must be communicated to both PM and contract personnel.
Human Resources Management	Award Plan	There was no plan for providing awards and recognition to team members.	Toward the end of the project morale was low among the project team. There was increased conflict and team members were asking to leave the project.	The PM should institute and communicate an awards/recognition program for every project.
Scope Management	Scope Creep	Stakeholders continuously tried adding to the project scope throughout the project lifecycle.	The PM did not have a plan for addressing scope creep and allowed some requirements to be added until the sponsor stopped it. Overall project delay of 3 weeks was the result.	The PM must have an approval process for any proposed scope changes and communicate this process to all stakeholders.
Quality Management	Building Material	A process for determining acceptable building material quality was planned into the project.	This allowed the project team to work with the contractors to smoothly ensure all materials were of acceptable quality and avoided any re-work and delays associated with substandard material.	Always plan quality standards and allowances into the project plan. This helps avoid delays and cost overruns.
Risk Management	Zoning Approval	A risk was identified that there may be delays in receiving approval from the county zoning board. This was a success because it was identified early and planned for.	Impact was minimal because the PM included potential zoning delays into the project schedule.	Always consider external impacts on the project cost and schedule. This must be continuous throughout the project lifecycle.

LESSONS LEARNED KNOWLEDGE BASE / DATABASE

The lessons learned for the NBC Project will be contained in the organizational lessons learned knowledge base maintained by the project management office (PMO). This information will be cataloged under the project's year (2011) and the type of project (New Construction) for future reference. This information will be valuable for any project manager assigned to a new construction project in the future.

LESSONS LEARNED APPLIED FROM PREVIOUS PROJECTS

The NBC Project utilized several lessons learned from past projects:

1. The addition of a risk associated with planning cost and schedule based on external dependencies (i.e. zoning approvals) was determined during the planning process by consulting the lessons learned from the Building #3 expansion project from 2009.
2. The planning of acceptable quality standards was based on lessons learned from the Startup Site Construction Project of 2011. By planning for quality standards the project team was able to avoid schedule and cost overruns by clearly communicating acceptable quality standards to all contractors involved with the project.

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated in the lessons learned chart above, the NBC Project did not have a process for reviewing and approving requested changes in requirements or project scope. Not only is this a lesson learned for similar future projects; but the organization must ensure that all project managers are aware of the need for this process to be included in the planning of all future projects. Therefore, it is recommended that prior to work beginning on any new project, the project manager must brief the project sponsor on the process for requesting and approving changes to project scope.