

PROJECT MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES PAPER

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Introduction

Though there are a number of project management organization structures, the most predominant ones are functional, matrix and pure project. By definition, organizational structures are the manner in which project groups in an organization are structured (Grundy & Brown 2001). As a result, this paper aims at comparing and contrasting the three primary project management organizational structures. It also discusses the situation in which each structure would be best method to manage a project team, and a rationale for the decision.

Functional Project Management Organizational Structure

Just like pure and matrix organizational structure, functional structure not only facilitates the coordination, but also implementation of various activities involved in a project. They all aim at creating a good environment that will favor interactions among and between teams involved in the project by ensuring minimal disruptions, overlaps as well as conflicts during project execution. This is because all of the three structures aim at reducing confusions uncertainties as well as confusions that might occur during project development, implementation and handing over as they clearly define the role and responsibility of every team member and their relationships within the project and the external environment (Grundy & Brown 2001).

However, functional structure differs from pure and matrix structures as though it entails a vertical hierarchy in the project management organizational structure, the functional manager works together with other employees that assign and share tasks, or project tasks are assigned to departments to complete a certain portion of the project and report to the encourages reporting to more than one line manager and but one project manager for every tasks assigned.

Basically, functional structure ensures flexibility in staff utilization as every department selected for a particular task has administrative base with people having technical knowledge in fields relevant to the assigned task. As a result, they can be engaged temporary in case their knowledge is necessary and returned to normal duties after finishing. It also entails grouping experts in a department to encourage knowledge and experience exchange amongst them. As a result, any member of the functional group can access technical knowledge existing in his/her team.

This structure also encourages the movement of some experts from one project to the other due to the broad basis of technical staff at every functional department. This implies that since department staff members possess required technical expertise, experts can be moved from one project to the other without having any negative effect on the functionality of the team. However, projects undertaken under this organizational structure denies the project manager a full authority and responsibility to every part of the project, as every departmental head has the authority and controls the project part assigned to him/her. As a result, it can lead to inadequate coordination in projects. This inadequate coordination is likely to reduce of various needs and wants of the client due to several management levels in the project (Dušan 2008).

Pure Project Management Organizational Structure

This project management organizational structure differ from functional and matrix structures in the sense that though it is also a hierarchical structures, projects are usually separated from home organizations, making them independent segments having its own administration and technical staff. However, the only connection with the home organization is through periodical reports on project advancements. In addition, the work performance is

also different from different projects as a result of different solutions in business practices. Though some home organizations might be responsible for issuing administrative, financial and control rules and policies, most of the home organization in practicing this structure gives projects absolute freedom to develop their own policies and rules.

As compared to functional structures where the project manager has no fully responsible and lacks full authority over the project, pure structures on the other hand gives the project manager full authority and responsibility towards the project, though he/she has to report to the seniors at the home organization on the project advancement. As a result, every employee taking part in the project under this structure is responsible to the project manager, meaning that departmental heads' advice and permits are not of great importance as that in functional structure as the project manager is the only director.

In addition, in case a number of projects have been successfully executed, pure project management organizational structure enables every member of the staff to develop necessary skills and technical knowledge. This is because most of them are permanent in such projects. However, there are various uncertainties on what will happen after the project not only on employees, but also on equipments among other things.

Matrix Project Management Organizational Structure

As compared to functional and pure structures that are represents extremes of a number of project management organizational structures, matrix is a combination of the two structures. As a result, there are two types of matrix structures, namely strong matrix, and coordinating matrix. As a result, in this, the project is not completely separated from the home organization as in pure structure. However, the project manger takes the full responsibility and authority over the project just like in pure structures. In addition, matrix structures contain

functional department just like in functional structures that enables temporary transfer of experts and workers from such departments enabling flexible use of worker force. This is of great help when a number of projects are being executed at the same time and experts for every department are available. As a result, there is no uncertainty on the future of employees and equipments (Dušan 2008).

Though the matrix structure seems attractive, it violates the management unity command principle. This is because there are at least two managers, namely functional, permanent and project manager that might present a serious problem.

Conclusions

It is clear from this discussion that though the three project management organizational structures have similar characteristics, they also differ in one way or the other. As a result, each structure best suits managing a projects in a particular situation. As a result, functional structures best suits projects where the major focus is on the qualitative technology application. This is because it allows grouping of experts in functional departments to ensure adequate sharing of technical experience and knowledge they possess. This enables technological continuity in case some experts quit the project team. This is because through sharing of experience and knowledge, provides the best way of advancing expertise among team members in their functional department.

On the other hand, if the project involves realizing a number of similar projects, then pure project management structures are the most preferred. Because it allows permanent but less expert employees to develop required skills for some technologies involved in such projects. It also shortens communication lines to increase efficiency and speed of realizing

projects. This is because the project manager needs not to communicate to functional departments, but directly with the top management.

Matrix project management organization structure on the other hand is preferred when the project products require integration of inputs from various functional areas that understand complicated technology expertise. This is because functional departments are involved, meaning that experts from different functional groups can be temporarily drawn to deal with a sophisticated function related to their field (Dušan 2008).

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References

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