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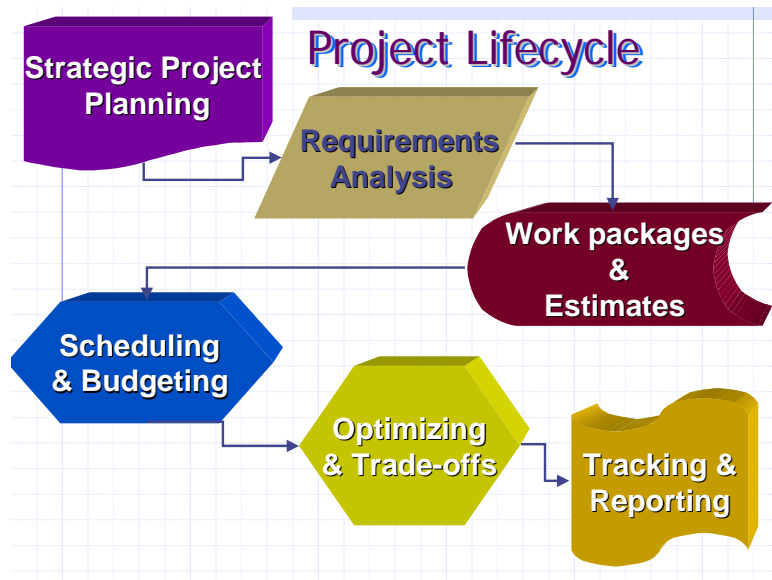
Managing IT Projects

7 Sample Pages

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By Dick Billows, PMP. GCA

Managing Information Technology Projects



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1 - IT Project Lessons

We will begin by sitting in on a "lessons learned" meeting for a failed IT systems development project. Though a gloomy way to introduce the topics we're going to cover in this book, it gives us an inventory of many of the PM problems that are all too typical in today's systems development environment. After all, the point of this book is to help you avoid each and every one of them.

Pat Milbarge, the project manager, doodled with a green fountain pen in the margin of the "Lessons Learned" document, sketching figures of project managers hanging from a noose. Pat had notified all the project's players of the meeting but everyone was late, just like during the project. A few of the project team members straggled in. Pat received crisp nods from some team members but many just went to their seats, eyes downcast. They'd all worked pretty hard. But their hard work had produced nothing for them except association with a failed project. Oh, there were a couple that goofed off and played some games with duration estimates. But the resentment on most of their faces clearly signaled that they blamed Pat for the project's failure.

The users tromped in as a group, led by the VP who'd had almost no involvement at the beginning of the project and whose time investment grew exponentially as deadline after deadline was missed.

"My gosh, yet another meeting," the VP sneered. "We're still trying to fix the mess upstairs! If anything, the number of customer complaints is even worse than before we started this disaster. "

Pat capped the fountain pen, thinking that this was a wonderful way to begin the meeting and said, "Well, the idea of the "lessons learned" meeting is to try to identify what went wrong so we can improve the way we do projects."

"You people," the VP snapped, "have to do a lot better! We cannot keep having these project disasters."

"We delivered every requirement you specified," barked a senior systems analyst, already red in the face.

The VP snapped back "Go tell that to the customers who are still complaining about our bad service and how long it takes us to straighten out problems."

Pat knew it was time to regain control of the meeting. "One of the problems with our planning was that we didn't focus on reducing the number of complaints. In the beginning, we only talked about the new reports, screens and functionalities that you wanted. Then the list of requirements kept growing every week."