

1.1: Introduction

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define the characteristics of a project.
2. Compare the difference between traditional and Agile project management.
3. Explain the difference between a Project Lifecycle and the PMI Project Processes.
4. Explain the three broad categories of projects.

There is no greater example of the art and science of project management (PM) than those demonstrated in building the Pyramids of Egypt. Since then, builders and engineers have applied specific processes systematically which have evolved into PM. Today, in every field of work, PM is an essential practice to achieve project success. The objective, in general, is to establish and deliver the customer objectives in an organized and detailed manner. Whether the business is in production, construction, or service delivery, planning and carrying out a project requires clearly defined processes.

While the general management function may include many tasks, PM is specifically oriented toward processes and requires a specific set of tools and skills. When PM is performed correctly, organizations gain greatly. PM processes can reduce risk and improve the likelihood of success. It approaches tasks in an organized, detailed, and accountable way. Even when organizations have limited resources and a small chance of success, PM experts can help in leading through recessions and economic uncertainty, and ensure future strategic goals are met. Therefore, performing PM requires dedicated individuals with good discipline who understand the processes, and are able to follow through to completion. Good project managers keep the project on track and ensure the alignment of project objectives within the strategic objectives of the organization.

The starting point in discussing how projects should be properly managed is to first understand what a project is and, just as importantly, what it is not.

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