



Project Management Assessment Overview

Goals

The goals of the assessment are to:

- Provide a self assessment of your company skills in nine areas of project management (e.g. Risk Management, Scope Management, Cost Management, etc.)
- Within each of these nine areas, focus on 3 to 6 sub areas (e.g. Risk Identification, Risk Quantification, Risk Response etc.)
- Develop a benchmark as to where you stand today so that activities to improve your skills can be measured
- Provide guidance as to what areas need to be addressed as a priority to lift your overall performance by quantifying each sub areas
- Complete the assessment quickly and at little cost and disruption to the organisation

Their Approach

Many consulting organisations will bring in a team of consultants to interview project managers, and produce voluminous reports. Recommendations tend to lead to further consulting work. Results are usually qualitative and you have no idea after another 12 months of investment if you have made progress in fixing the problem. You rarely see where the quick wins are. The report is usually filled with anecdotal trivia that hides the real problems.

On another level, a project manager being interviewed by a consultant is hardly likely to confess the mistakes he or she made in their last project. They will talk about what they would do next time rather than what the organisation typically does. Other project managers may yet to learn the same lessons.

In the end, you will probably receive a nicely bound document that will take up lots of meeting time to discuss, before gradually being forgotten.

Our Approach

We take a different approach. We understand you have limited resources. You want to focus on where you can put those limited resources to get the best results. Where are the “low hanging fruit?”

We believe you need a painless review process that quickly identifies where you need to focus your efforts. We know you are quite capable to sit down and create a list of 100 things that could be done to improve project management in your organisation. Your issue is that you can only do 10 of the 100 activities. Which 10 should you choose?

Any process should be fast, cheap, and disrupt your life as little as possible. You don't need the solutions detailed. You need the problems identified. If you have a significant problem with how you carry out risk assessments, there is all manner of information and people available to fix the problem. You just need to know that risk assessment is to be one of your targets for improvement in the next 12 months.

The Process

Our process is as follows.

- You provide us with a list of people who have participated in a significant way in a project in the last 6 to 12 months. This could include project managers, business staff and technical staff.
- We email them a survey form which has around 150 questions. The respondents rate the questions 1 to 6. Typically we find the survey takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete. A key component of the survey approach is that we assure everyone the responses will remain anonymous to the company. We compile results and do not pass the individual responses back to the company.
- The respondents email the survey back to us.
- We usually give them around 10 days to complete the survey. After that we ask you to chase non-respondents and will wait another 7 days before compiling the information.
- The information is compiled and we provide a report back to you with the ratings for each area.

The Survey Categories

We have aligned with the Project Management Institute (PMI) nine areas of project management:

- Scope Management
- Time Management
- Cost Management
- Human Resource Management
- Risk Management
- Communication Management
- Procurement Management
- Quality Management

- Integration Management

We provide a rating for each area as well as sub areas within each category. For example for Risk Management, we provide rating for:

- Risk Planning
- Risk Identification
- Qualitative Risk Analysis
- Quantitative Risk Analysis
- Risk Response Development
- Risk Response Control

The Rationale behind the Questions

Sampling Technique

The thinking behind the questions started from our experience carrying out interview type assessments in a number of organisations. What became evident was that generally speaking, if in a particular sub area, certain activities were well performed, most activities were well performed in that area. The converse was also true. If some activities were performed poorly, most activities in that area were performed poorly.

For example, in Risk Planning if a plan is produced as to how risks will be managed, and all stakeholders are involved in the plan, and assessments are completed over the life of the project, we can generally say that risk planning is well managed. Further questioning is unlikely to come up with major problems. In other words, three questions will give an indicative rating that is unlikely to change if we were to ask another 10 or 20 questions.

Whilst improvements may be possible, they are not likely to deliver substantial improvements. Improvements are likely to be of an incremental nature. A weaker performing area will yield better results for the same effort.

On the other hand, if the rating is low, there are probably all sorts of risk planning activities that are also neglected. The response to a poor performance in this area might include:

- Development of a process for risk planning
- Development of templates for risk planning
- Training in risk planning
- Establishment of a risk planning expert who could be assigned to projects to assist with risk planning

The questions in this area on the survey form are:

Risk Management	Risk Planning	A plan is produced identifying how risks will be managed	
		All Stakeholders are involved in the plan	
		Risk assessment are repeated over the life of the project	

Ratings are between 1 for “Does not happen” to 6 for “Always happens”

Independent

A second aspect of the survey approach is that we are an independent organisation and people are more likely to be honest with us – particularly as we stress the results are anonymous. It is unlikely that an internal survey would yield such frank responses.

Broad Audience

We not only talk to project managers. We also include people who had a significant involvement in projects. In this way we not only see it from a project manager’s perspective, but also from a participant’s perspective. For example, the project manager may think they included all stakeholders in the risk planning above, but other people in the team may feel that some key stakeholders were not involved.

We do however provide the facility to leave a question blank, or rate a zero if the person does not believe they can sensibly answer a particular question.

Weighting

When we prepared the questions, we worked with a market research organisation to ensure the questions fulfilled professional market research standards for construction. We also worked through a panel of highly experienced project managers to weight each question. Each question was weighted as to the importance of the question in relation to the sub area. The sub area is weighted as to how important it is to the complete area.

Survey Results

The results of the survey are provided as numbers and graphical representation in an Excel format. They can be cut and pasted into Word or PowerPoint. An example is included at the end of this document. The particular organisation surveyed did not perform well in this area.

We also provide the average responses for each question.

	Risk Planning	40.0%
A formal risk identification exercise is carried out		36.7%
Risks are documented		41.2%
There is a mechanism to formally log issues		38.9%

Confidentially

The report is only delivered to the person who commissions the report. Copies are not made available to anyone else in the organisation. If, for example, a CIO would like to do a confidential health check on his project management capability, this is an extremely efficient tool. In a few weeks we can deliver a quantitative assessment of your abilities in the area of project management.

Supplementary Report

If required we can also provide a supplementary report that goes beyond the statistical findings. This can identify areas in which work may need to be undertaken. For example in the example above, it is clear that only a third of projects carry out a formal risk identification exercise. We would obviously recommend that a process is put in place to carry out a risk identification process.

In order to save you money, we would not recommend we produce such a report until after you have reviewed the statistical results. Most of the solutions are self evident.

Timing

Typical timing to undertake such a study is set out below.

Provide a list of participants and email addresses	1 week
Send out emails (typically we ask the company to send out an email announcing the survey a day before we send out the survey)	3 days
Receive responses	10 days
Chase non respondents	1 week
Prepare statistics and deliver to the Company	1 week
TOTAL TIME	5 weeks

Cost

The cost is dependant on the number of participants. Indicative costs are in the range of A\$7,500 to A\$12,000 (US\$5,800 to US\$9,500 at May 2005 exchange rates). If a report is required, there would be an additional charge. Quotes can be provided for individual organisations.

Testimonial

Perhaps the final comment should go to one of our clients:

Highly responsive, customer focused company that fulfilled our needs in a timely and very professional manner. The survey, analysis, and report were delivered as expected and provided us with insights into where our organization can benefit from additional project management training. I highly recommend them!

John A. Thich, Ph.D.

Vice President and Global Business Director-Driveline Manager-Business Services

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Further Information

For further information visit our web site at:

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Risk Management

Score
 Project Risk Management includes the processes concerned with identifying, analysing, and responding to project risk. It includes maximizing the results of positive events, and minimizing the consequences of adverse events.

Perceived Importance 62%

Total Risk Management Rating 39%

Risk Management Planning. Deciding how to approach and plan the project's risk management activities. 40%

Risk Identification. Determining which risks are likely to affect the project and documenting the characteristics of each. 39%

Qualitative Risk Analysis. Analyzing conditions and risks qualitatively to determine and prioritize their impact on project objectives. 43%

Quantitative Risk Analysis. Determining the probability and consequences of risks and estimating their impact on objectives. 34%

Risk Response Planning. Determining how to enhance opportunities and minimize threats to objectives. 36%

Risk Monitoring & Control. Executing risk response plans, monitoring risks, identifying new risks and evaluating the effectiveness of responses. 41%



