

Project Closure

Overview

This chapter aligns with chapter 3 of the PMBOK. 11% of the CAPM questions come from this knowledge area. The content connects to the Closure category of the PMP questions.

This chapter describes several of the essential close-out activities to be performed at the end of a project.

Designers Share Their Experiences

Dr. Andy Gibbons – Instructional Psychology and Technology – BYU



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The most interesting part of scaling back a project toward the end is, actually it's the funnest part of the project because there are a lot of celebrations as people are dropping off the payroll you have a party for them, and you have a close-out, and there are gifts that are given to each other, and it's fun. And people who are on your staff use their talents to celebrate each other. We had one, oh just this amazing artist on this one helicopter pilot project I did. And he drew a big caricature of the whole team. And gave out caricatures of the team members to each one of them. It was a wonderful thing, and I still have a poster that is about this big, in colorful color, the nicest artwork you want to see. The caricature of everybody that is on the team and they all signed it. It's just a warm memory. And one of the things that you want to do at the end of the project is make sure that you've given the people on your project the best possible experience. As a manager, you're not just a dollar and cents person, you're not just a timetable person. You're a leader and you need to be an inspiring leader. And you need to, by the time they finish the project, they need to have seen you as a leader, they need to have learned something, the project needs to have enriched their experience, they need to have gained friendships, they need to be working as a team. If you can't get there, then the project gets done, but as a designer you haven't done your job.

Heather Bryce – Independent Studies – BYU



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I think the biggest challenge in finishing a project is keeping people engaged. When you've worked on a project for a long time, maybe at the beginning of a project you had a more important role than you might as your role kind of becomes less in one project as you move onto another, I think it's hard to stay engaged in that former project. As your roles, you might have to do a few edits, come back and fix a few things that you worked on, but you might have moved on. So I think that's the biggest challenge is, people who have moved on to a more important role in project B, it's harder to get them back to "Hey don't forget about the things you need to finish up to get project A. So I think the most important process that we have is the course completion process. It goes through a lot of different hands and it's those final touches that you have to put on to have a course go live. And while the tasks themselves are kind of small, they add up. So a course could be delayed up to two weeks, because people just sit on their tasks. You know, "oh it's just a five minute task". But if everybody sits on a five minute task for a couple of days the time adds up quickly. So I think as the project manager you need to make sure that people continue to be engaged even when their role lessens, and to make sure you finish up strong.

Dr. Larry Seawright – Center for Teaching and Learning – BYU



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With the BYU Learning Suite, which is an ongoing project, there is never a close-out or something like that. Until the University decides, okay we're going to shift from using our own internally developed learning management system, and we'll go back out on the market and once more buy a more commercially available one. At that point then we'll go through the close-out process, and take a look at things. But, that being said, you still have, no matter how you officially close out a project, there is a delivery. We're going to start delivery on December 1st this year. Faculty, it will be available to them to begin to build courses. So that's really the close out period at that point were going to have post-mortem meetings. We'll take a look at what went well, what didn't go well? What can we learn that we can apply to the ongoing enhancement process, because this is an ongoing project. Things that we can do better, places that we can involve the faculty more, so that there's more faculty buy-in. Places where we can involve students more, so students are more appreciative of it, and understand it better. Quite frankly, become demanding of faculty, you know, you must use the Learning Suite because it makes our lives so easy, kind of thing. That's how the Learning Suite will succeed. Ultimately, in any project, it's the end users and whether or not they like it that will determine its success. They like it and start buying it or accessing it or downloading it, you know, whatever the method of delivery is, or the method of purchase is, then it's a success. And you know, you can take a look those things and say, you know, this was good, these things were not quite so good, but there has to be some point where you just kind of stick a stake in the ground and say let's take some time and look at what worked, what didn't work and what lessons can we learn from that. And that's kind of difficult sometimes. It's actually the classic evaluation problem. A lot of evaluation never gets done because it takes time, it takes money, and it's never used. You know, once the evaluation is done, people don't make use of it, same with a project management post-mortem. If you don't take the time and the money to do it, you won't get useful data that is usable and actionable for making changes. So you don't want to just go through and have a post-mortem because it's part of the project management checklist. You want to do it if people are going to use it. Otherwise just skip it and, you know, go on with the project.



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