

Planning for Project Closure

Why close a project?

- What are the benefits of project closure to
 - the project?
 - the organisation and/or other projects?
 - the Project Manager?
 - the Project Owner / Sponsor?
 - the Project Funder?
 - the project team members?
 - the project's other stakeholders?
- What is the purpose of closing a project?
- What do we expect to gain from project closure?

What do we need to consider?

- Who is accountable for project closure?
- What specifically are we "closing"?
- What do we understand by project closure, and how does it differ from project evaluation?
- What are the outputs or deliverables from the closure process?
- Are there any outputs from previous project closures, we can refer to or from which we can leverage?
- What elements do we discuss in project closure?
- As well as the traditional performance areas (e.g. budget, deliverables, etc), what other less-tangible performance areas do we need to consider? (e.g. team function, leadership, relationship management, etc)
- What questions do we ask?
- Which areas do we want to explore in detail?
- What information do we want to gather? (prompts around people / emotions as well as project outputs?)
- Who do we need to communicate with?
- Is there any sensitive or confidential information we will need to manage?

How do we close a project?

- How does our organisation typically close projects?
- How do we conduct the closure for this project?
- What is the most appropriate process?
- When is the most appropriate time to evaluate the project's performance?
- What options do we have available to run this closure? (e.g. survey, focus group, formal meeting etc)
- Who do we invite to participate?
- How should we manage differing views or opinions?
- How will we address any performance management issues?
- How will we manage any conflict?
- Who is best placed to facilitate the closure? (e.g. Project Manager, independent party etc)
- Who will gather and collate the information?
- How will the information be reported? And to whom?
- How do we ensure that we gain leverage from the learnings?
- Where does the information (learnings) need to go? To be given to whom?
- How can we ensure that we gain value from the process?

What else do we need to think about

- Did the project realise any unanticipated (fortuitous) benefits? Do these "fit" into the project closure process? If not, what do we "do" with them?
- Did the project realise any unanticipated disbenefits? Do these "fit" into the project closure process? If not, what do we "do" with them?
- What would happen if we did not formally close the project?
- What could be the implications if we close the project "badly"? Disrespectfully? Just by "ticking the boxes"?
- How does this differ from other project processes?
- What else needs to be covered in the closure? (project-specific needs)
- How else can we gain value/benefit from the process?



Remember to close the "people elements" of your projects!