



INITIATION

*"INITIATING PROCESSES - recognizing that a project or phase should begin and committing to do so"
..... A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*

How is a project recognized in an organization and how do we commit the organization to that project?

Typically a project is originated in an organization as the result of a direct need for the new product or service which is aligned with the organizations business goals and priorities.

One of the difficult situations is that the Project Manager is usually assigned as a result of the Initiation Process. To ensure the project has been initiated properly the Project Manager should confirm the activities that took place prior to he/she being assigned. Specifically, this should include reviewing the business case and priorities that justified the project in the first place.

One of the major tasks of the Project Initiation phase is to receive commitment that the project has been accepted and can begin. Commitment can mean many things:

- Has the appropriate initial funding (as specified in the initial business case) been budgeted and approved
 - Management commitment - are resources (people, equipment) available to allocate to this project
 - Executive commitment - Is the project recognized as a corporate entity and are the executives willing to commit their time as required
 - Communication - has the commitment to the project been communicated to the necessary departments and people of the organization
 - Has a business sponsor / owner been assigned to the project
1. **Appropriate funding.** The appropriate funding can be assigned as part of the project initiation phase and refined once the project is fully planned. This would mean additional, or possibly, less funding than was originally estimated. On the other hand, a predefined budget that cannot change will limit the scope, resources and timeline of the plan. The plan will be developed with the predefined budget as the cap. In either case commitment by the organization would mean that an appropriate funding amount had been agreed upon and allocated to the project. The Project Manager should also confirm if there is a limit associated with the funding amount.
 2. **Management commitment.** Management commitment ensures that the people responsible for the allocation and assignment of resources has an understanding of the project and supports the project. Sometimes Project Managers are faced with resistance from resource managers for a variety of reasons. The resource manager may not agree with the project because it has not been fully explained or they were not part of the decision making process. Resources have already been assigned and will not be available for this project. Scheduling and requesting of these resources will become a much easier task if there is a recognized management commitment at the project initiation phase. Project Managers should make sure that management is committed to the project.
 3. **Executive Commitment.** Executives who are responsible for approval of project have to ensure that there is a sound business case for the project. This process also ensures that the projects are aligned with the corporate business strategy and business plans. Executives may be asked to participate in the steering of the project and must be willing to commit their time and energy to support the successful execution of the project. Project Managers should ensure that the project has the necessary executive support.



4. **Communication.** Has the Project, and the organizations commitment to the project, been communicated properly to the rest of the organization. If the project is not known, or if is not known that the project has been formally approved, this will cause undo confusion and potential resistance for the Project Manager and other members of the organization. The Project Manager should ensure that some form of communication has been or will be delivered to the organization about the project and the commitment to the project.
5. **Business Sponsor / Owner.** For a project to be successful a business owner / sponsor must be assigned as part of the project initiation phase. This will ensure that the project being executed has the necessary user support that the project will need. Most Projects today are driven to produce new products and services that will be used by the business community. It is imperative that the business community be involved to support and represent the organization in this project. The Project Manager should ensure that a business owner/sponsor be assigned and committed to the project as part of the initiation phase.

The Initiation Process is the first one of the Project Management processes. Successful execution of this process will help ensure the likelihood of successful execution of future processes. Commitment of the organization at all levels is imperative to the successful execution of the project.

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