PROJECT SCOPE MANAGEMENT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Abhishek Sudra, PMP has a diversified experience into business management, product and project management. Experience varies from improving efficiency of existing products via methodologies like design thinking, to creating new products and doing end-to-end Project Management.

All perks of working in a startup environment!

TABLE OF CONTENT

PROJECT SCOPE MANAGEMENT

Before we dive straight into deep waters, let us understand scope management as a process and its importance.

The difference between Project & Product Scope

Scope in a project revolves around two things: Project Scope & Product Scope.

- Project Scope is the work that needs to be accomplished to deliver a product, service, or result with the specified features and functions.

- Product Scope is the features and functions that characterize a product, service, or result.

Definition of Scope

By definition – Scope management is the process of defining what work is required and then making sure all of that work – and only that work – is done.

From a project management perspective, project scope is more work oriented, and product scope is more oriented towards the functioning of the required product.

In a broader sense - Scope Management is the listing of the items to be produced or tasks to be done to the required quantity, quality and variety, in the time and with the resources available and agreed upon.

WHY DO SCOPE MANAGEMENT?

Scope management is important for two reasons mainly:

- A successful project manager understands exactly what is needed to achieve the objectives in a project and mapping out how to get there.
- For every project, no matter the size or complexity, it is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure it stays on track the entire time. The simplest way to do so is to define the scope of the project.

If requirements aren't completely defined and described and if there is no effective change control in a project, scope or requirement creep may ensue.

But most importantly on a project, managing the expectations of clients and stakeholders can be one of the most difficult tasks a project manager can face. With a distinct scope, it helps everyone to stay on the same page throughout the life cycle of the project. A well-defined scope can help to avoid common problems. Scope management establishes control factors, that can be used to address elements that result in changes during the lifecycle of the project.
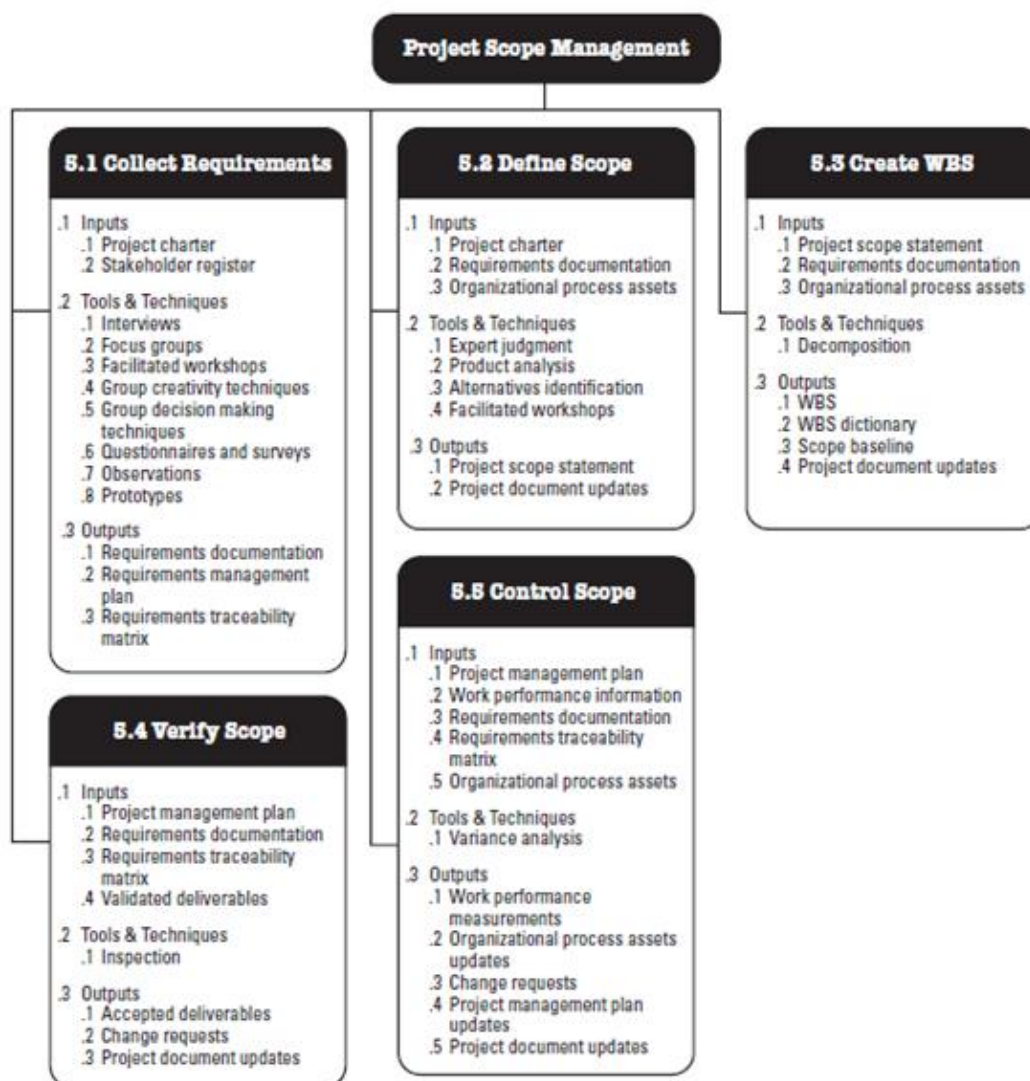
Project scope is critical because without it project managers would have no clue what time, cost or labour was involved in a project. It forms the basis for every decision a project manager will make on a job and when it needs to change, proper communication will ensure success every step of the way.

Defining scope properly will prevent surprises later in the project life cycle and prevent scope creep. Scope creep refers to a project that has seen its original goals expand while it's in progress. As the term suggests, scope creep is a subtle process that starts with small adjustments and ends up resulting in projects that take far longer to complete or even fail before they are finished.

PMP AND SCOPE MANAGEMENT

Traditionally scope management was often done subconsciously; PMP or PMI rather structured the scope management process with the best practices, which have been acknowledged and practiced globally today. Scope Management consists of the following:

Project Scope Management

5.1 Collect Requirements

.1 Inputs
  .1 Project charter
  .2 Stakeholder register

.2 Tools & Techniques
  .1 Interviews
  .2 Focus groups
  .3 Facilitated workshops
  .4 Group creativity techniques
  .5 Group decision making techniques
  .6 Questionnaires and surveys
  .7 Observations
  .8 Prototypes

.3 Outputs
  .1 Requirements documentation
  .2 Requirements management plan
  .3 Requirements traceability matrix

5.2 Define Scope

.1 Inputs
  .1 Project charter
  .2 Requirements documentation
  .3 Organizational process assets

.2 Tools & Techniques
  .1 Expert judgment
  .2 Product analysis
  .3 Alternatives identification
  .4 Facilitated workshops

.3 Outputs
  .1 Project scope statement
  .2 Project document updates

5.3 Create WBS

.1 Inputs
  .1 Project scope statement
  .2 Requirements documentation
  .3 Organizational process assets

.2 Tools & Techniques
  .1 Decomposition

.3 Outputs
  .1 WBS
  .2 WBS dictionary
  .3 Scope baseline
  .4 Project document updates

5.4 Verify Scope

.1 Inputs
  .1 Project management plan
  .2 Requirements documentation
  .3 Requirements traceability matrix
  .4 Validated deliverables

.2 Tools & Techniques
  .1 Inspection

.3 Outputs
  .1 Accepted deliverables
  .2 Change requests
  .3 Project document updates

5.5 Control Scope

.1 Inputs
  .1 Project management plan
  .2 Work performance information
  .3 Requirements documentation
  .4 Requirements traceability matrix
  .5 Organizational process assets

.2 Tools & Techniques
  .1 Variance analysis

.3 Outputs
  .1 Work performance measurements
  .2 Organizational process assets updates
  .3 Change requests
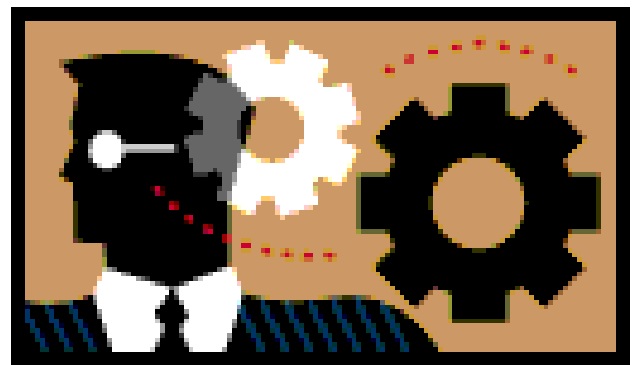 .4 Project management plan updates
  .5 Project document updates

Details about each activity can be found elaborated in the Rita Mulcahy or PMBOK book/s, for your perusal. I would just highlight a brief case study on how PMP helped me manage scope on my projects.

HOW DID PMP CERTIFICATION HELP ME?

BEFORE PMP CERTIFICATION :

1.   I was the project manager for an ERP software development project in my organization. It was an internal project and the development was being done in-house itself. Before being conscious about scope management, I as a project manager would often collect requirements only from the process/product owner and not from other key stakeholders.

2.   Even if requirements were raised by other stakeholders, they were often de-prioritized and they never did appear on top of the backlog.

3.   As a result a lot of changes would pop up during the sprint sign-off/UAT release; some very critical to business. This cycle continued for some time, and it seemed as if the project will never end.

4.   All the requirements were then maintained as a backlog in an excel sheet and project did see the light of the day.

5.   I delivered a few projects in this manner, with every project the process was improvised a little, but scope creep was persistent.

1.   I was now a certified Project Management Professional and managing two critical projects with a vendor.

2.   This also meant that before the project could kick off, scope should be defined properly so that nothing is missed. As addition of anything after project kick-off would result in a scope change, also affecting schedule and cost.

3.   As a PMP certified project manager, the first step naturally, was to identify all the stakeholders for collecting requirements.

4.   A key to identify as many stakeholders as possible during initiation was to identify the people who are being affected by the project, the people who will work on the final product of the project, and the people who are initiating this project.

5.   After the stakeholders were identified, they were divided into smaller groups as per the function of the stakeholders. The groups were then interviewed/met with to collect requirements for that function of the software (you can either have a meeting with all of them at once or have focus groups).

6.   All the requirements were then documented in the 'Requirements Traceability Matrix' against the stakeholder's name and department/function.

7.   After all the requirements were gathered, they were bifurcated into – 'In scope' & 'Not in scope' items. This was done with reference to the business objective, expected benefits, and project constraints.

8.   'In scope' items were further prioritized basis the benefits, time estimates, and cost estimates

9.   Prototypes/mock-ups were created and shared with all the stakeholders for their buy in. Suggested changes were incorporated and business rules and logic were documented.

10. By now all the modules/activities that were needed for the project were clear. We handed over all these documents to the vendor as a part of SOW.

11. Vendor prepared a sprint wise project plan basis the SOW, and shared time & cost estimates.

12. Project was kicked-off and vendor delivered the first 2 sprints within 2 months, which would otherwise take 4-6 months if it was being done internally.

13. This was a result of clearly defined scope.

14. Though while sprint 3 was ongoing we received a new requirement from an unknown stakeholder. The requirement was valid and in-line to the project objective.

15. The requirement was documented and shared with the vendor. This was considered as a change request and affected the entire project.

16.   It was later realized that this stakeholder was on leave when requirements were collected from his functional group.

17. A lesson learnt, now requirement gathering is considered as completed only after all the identified stakeholders have given a sign-off.

That is it folks! Being trained in project management by an expert is no less than a certification. All it takes knowledge and application of that knowledge.

Talk Project Management is where individuals over the world come and offer their perspectives and learning on Project Management.

It is a phase for specialists and aspirants to trade their perspectives and learning on specific point.It provides you with the opportunity to talk about trending topics on project management.

It helps you to enhance your skills on those topics and gain more knowledge about it. You also get a chance to attain free webinars and can clarify your queries from our experts online. Free E-books and templates are provided to help you grab hands on the topic thoroughly.

Visit us at: www.talkprojectmanagement.com