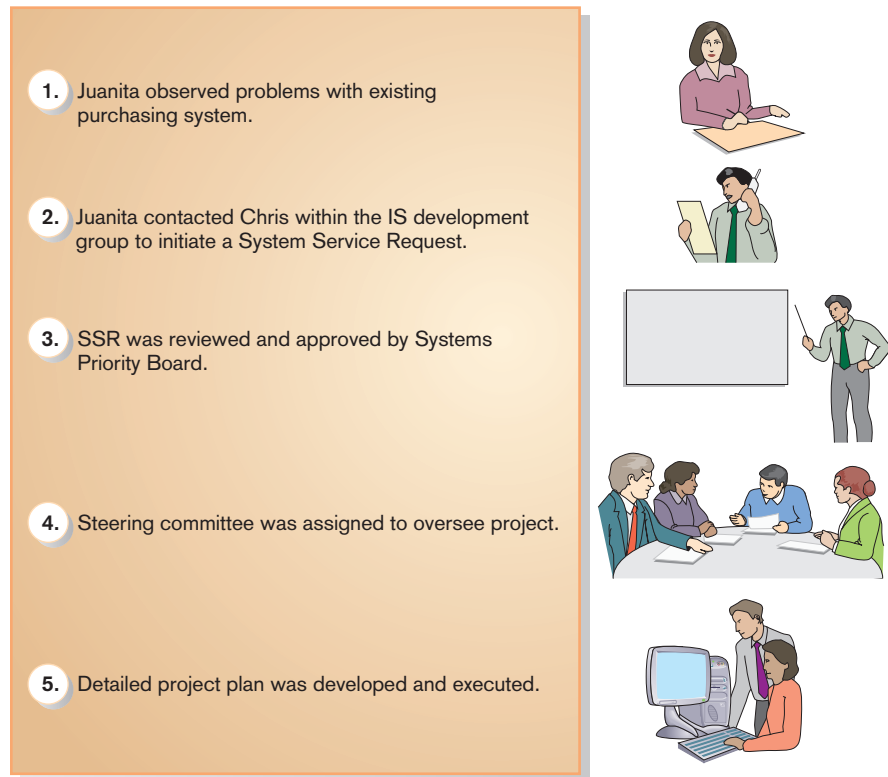


Figure 3-3
A graphical view of the five steps followed during the project initiation of the Purchasing Fulfillment System



must possess. A project manager is often thought of as a juggler keeping aloft many balls, which reflect the various aspects of a project's development, as depicted in Figure 3-4.

To successfully orchestrate the construction of a complex information system, a project manager must have interpersonal, leadership, and technical skills. Table 3-1 lists the project manager's common skills and activities. Note that many of the skills are related to personnel or general management, not simply technical skills. Table 3-1 shows that not only does an effective project manager have varied skills, but he or she is also the most instrumental person to the successful completion of any project.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the **project management** process, which involves four phases:

1. Initiating the project
2. Planning the project
3. Executing the project
4. Closing down the project

Several activities must be performed during each of these four phases. Following this formal project management process greatly increases the likelihood of project success.

Initiating a Project

During **project initiation**, the project manager performs several activities to assess the size, scope, and complexity of the project and to establish procedures to support subsequent activities. Depending on the project, some initiation activities

Project management: A controlled process of initiating, planning, executing, and closing down a project.

Project initiation: The first phase of the project management process in which activities are performed to assess the size, scope, and complexity of the project and to establish procedures to support later project activities.



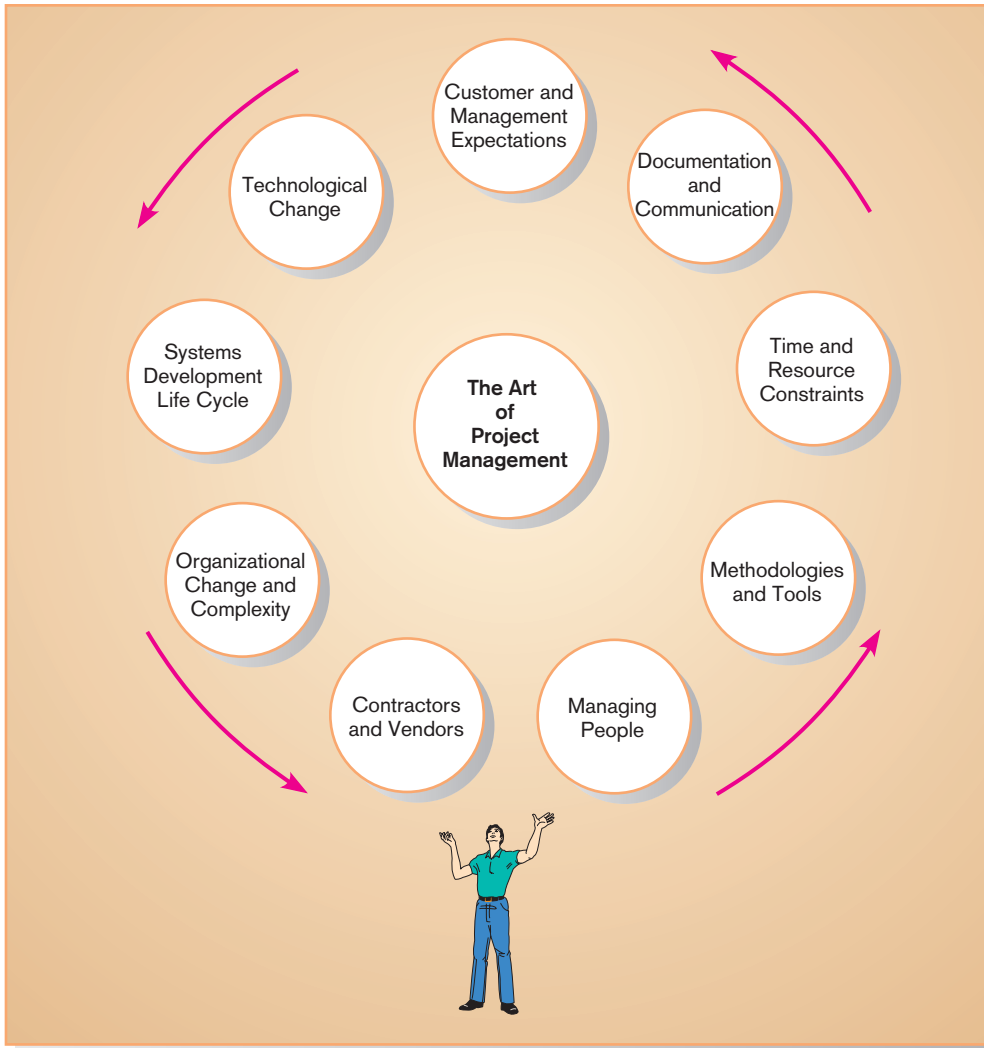


Figure 3-4
A project manager juggles numerous activities

TABLE 3-1 Common Activities and Skills of a Project Manager

Activity	Description	Skill
Leadership	Influencing the activities of others toward the attainment of a common goal through the use of intelligence, personality, and abilities	Communication; liaison between management, users, and developers; assigning activities; monitoring progress
Management	Getting projects completed through the effective utilization of resources	Defining and sequencing activities; communicating expectations; assigning resources to activities; monitoring outcomes
Customer relations	Working closely with customers to assure project deliverables meet expectations	Interpreting system requests and specifications; site preparation and user training; contact point for customers
Technical problem solving	Designing and sequencing activities to attain project goals	Interpreting system requests and specifications; defining activities and their sequence; making trade-offs between alternative solutions; designing solutions to problems
Conflict management	Managing conflict within a project team to assure that conflict is not too high or too low	Problem solving; smoothing out personality differences; compromising; goal setting
Team management	Managing the project team for effective team performance	Communication within and between teams; peer evaluations; conflict resolution; team building; self-management
Risk and change management	Identifying, assessing, and managing the risks and day-to-day changes that occur during a project	Environmental scanning; risk and opportunity identification and assessment; forecasting; resource redeployment

Figure 3-5
Six project initiation activities



may be unnecessary and some may be very involved. The types of activities you will perform when initiating a project are summarized in Figure 3-5 and described next.

1. *Establishing the project initiation team.* This activity involves organizing an initial core of project team members to assist in accomplishing the project initiation activities (Verma, 1996, 1997). For example, during the Purchasing Fulfillment System project at PVF, Chris Martin was assigned to support the Purchasing department. It is a PVF policy that all initiation teams consist of at least one user representative, in this case Juanita Lopez, and one member of the IS development group. Therefore, the project initiation team consisted of Chris and Juanita; Chris was the project manager.
2. *Establishing a relationship with the customer.* A thorough understanding of your customer builds stronger partnerships and higher levels of trust. At PVF, management has tried to foster strong working relationships between business units (like Purchasing) and the IS development group by assigning a specific individual to work as a liaison between both groups. Because Chris had been assigned to the Purchasing unit for some time, he was already aware of some of the problems with the existing purchasing systems. PVF's policy of assigning specific individuals to each business unit helped to ensure that both Chris and Juanita were comfortable working together prior to the initiation of the project. Many organizations use a similar mechanism for establishing relationships with customers.
3. *Establishing the project initiation plan.* This step defines the activities required to organize the initiation team while it is working to define the goals and scope of the project (Abdel-Hamid et al., 1999). Chris's role was to help Juanita translate her business requirements into a written request for an improved information system. This required the collection, analysis, organization, and transformation of a lot of information. Because Chris and Juanita were already familiar with each other and their roles within a development project, they next needed to define when and how they would communicate, define deliverables and project steps, and set deadlines. Their initiation plan included agendas for several meetings. These steps eventually led to the creation of their SSR form.
4. *Establishing management procedures.* Successful projects require the development of effective management procedures. Within PVF, many of these management procedures had been established as standard operating procedures by the Systems Priority Board and the IS development group. For example, all project development work is charged back to the functional unit requesting the work. In other organizations, each project may have unique procedures

tailored to its needs. Yet, in general, when establishing procedures, you are concerned with developing team communication and reporting procedures, job assignments and roles, project change procedures, and determining how project funding and billing will be handled. It was fortunate for Chris and Juanita that most of these procedures were already established at PVF, allowing them to move on to other project activities.

5. *Establishing the project management environment and project workbook.* The focus of this activity is to collect and organize the tools that you will use while managing the project and to construct the project workbook. Diagrams, charts, and system descriptions provide much of the project workbook contents. Thus, the project workbook serves as a repository for all project correspondence, inputs, outputs, deliverables, procedures, and standards established by the project team (Rettig, 1990). The **project workbook** can be stored as an online electronic document or in a large three-ring binder. The project workbook is used by all team members and is useful for project audits, orientation of new team members, communication with management and customers, identifying future projects, and performing post-project reviews. The establishment and diligent recording of all project information in the workbook are two of the most important activities you will perform as project manager.

Figure 3-6 shows the project workbook for the Purchasing Fulfillment System. It consists of both a large hard-copy binder and electronic information where the system data dictionary, a catalog of data stored in the database, and diagrams are stored. For this system, all project documents can fit into a single binder. It is not unusual, though, for project documentation to be spread over several binders. As more information is captured and recorded electronically, however, fewer hard-copy binders may be needed. Many project teams keep their project workbooks on the Web. A Web site can be created so that all project members can easily access all project documents. This Web site can be a simple repository of documents or an elaborate site with password

Project workbook: An online or hard-copy repository for all project correspondence, inputs, outputs, deliverables, procedures, and standards that is used for performing project audits, orienting new team members, communicating with management and customers, identifying future projects, and performing post-project reviews.

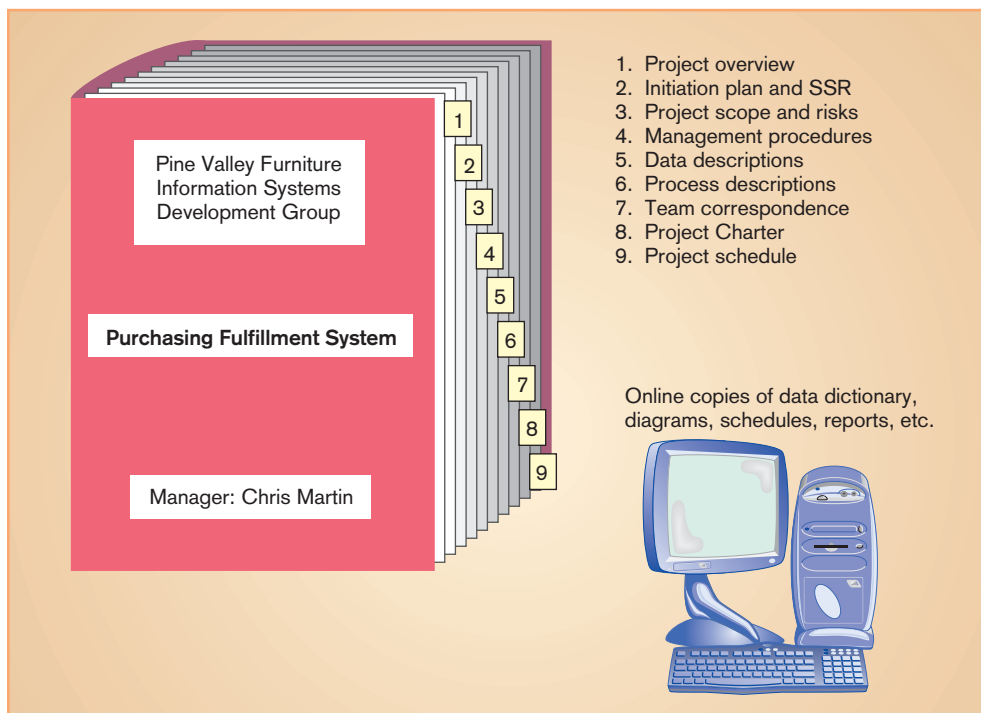


Figure 3-6
The project workbook for the Purchase Fulfillment System project contains nine key documents in both hard-copy and electronic form

Project charter: A short, high-level document prepared for both internal and external stakeholders to formally announce the establishment of the project and to briefly describe its objectives, key assumptions, and stakeholders.

protection and security levels. The best feature of using the Web as your repository is that it enables project members and customers to review a project's status and all related information continually.

6. *Developing the project charter.* The **project charter** is a short, (typically one page) high-level document prepared for both internal and external stakeholders to formally announce the establishment of the project and to briefly describe its objectives, key assumptions, and stakeholders. The project charter ensures that both you and your customer gain a common understanding of the project. It is also a very useful communication tool; it helps to announce to the organization that a particular project has been chosen for development.

Project initiation is complete once these six activities have been performed. Before moving on to the next phase of the project, the work performed during project initiation is reviewed at a meeting attended by management, customers, and project team members. An outcome of this meeting is a decision to continue, modify, or abandon the project. In the case of the Purchasing Fulfillment System project at Pine Valley Furniture, the board accepted the SSR and selected a project steering committee to monitor project progress and to provide guidance to the team members during subsequent activities. If the scope of the project is modified, it may be necessary to return to project initiation activities and collect additional information. Once a decision is made to continue the project, a much more detailed project plan is developed during the project planning phase.

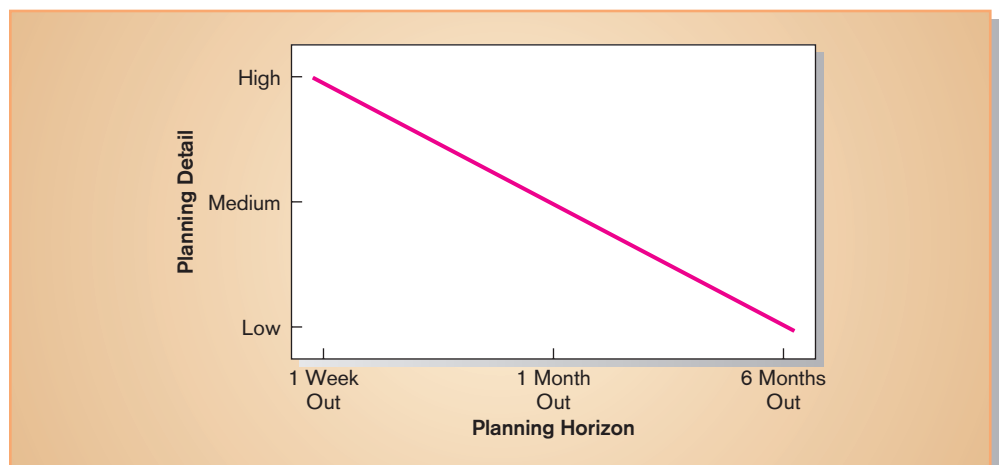
Planning the Project

Project planning: The second phase of the project management process that focuses on defining clear, discrete activities and the work needed to complete each activity within a single project.

The next step in the project management process is **project planning**. Research has found a positive relationship between effective project planning and positive project outcomes (Guinan et al., 1998; Kirsch, 2000). Project planning involves defining clear, discrete activities and the work needed to complete each activity within a single project. It often requires you to make numerous assumptions about the availability of resources such as hardware, software, and personnel. It is much easier to plan nearer-term activities than those occurring in the future. In actual fact, you often have to construct longer-term plans that are more general in scope and nearer-term plans that are more detailed. The repetitive nature of the project management process requires that plans be constantly monitored throughout the project and periodically updated (usually after each phase) based upon the most recent information.

Figure 3-7 illustrates the principle that nearer-term plans are typically more specific and firmer than longer-term plans. For example, it is virtually impossible to rigorously plan activities late in the project without first completing the earlier activities.

Figure 3-7
Level of project planning detail should be high in the short term, with less detail as time goes on



BEC Figure 4-1
Broadway Entertainment
Company's mission, objectives,
and strategy

BLUEPRINT FOR THE DECADE

FOREWORD

This blueprint provides guidance to Broadway Entertainment Company (BEC) for this coming decade. It shows our vision for the firm—how our mission, objectives, and strategy fit together—and provides direction for all individuals and decisions of the firm.

OUR MISSION

BEC is a publicly held, for-profit organization focusing on the home entertainment industry that has a global focus for operations. BEC exists to serve customers with a primary goal of enhancing shareholders' investment through the pursuit of excellence in everything we do. BEC will operate under the highest ethical standards; will respect the dignity, rights, and contributions of all employees; and will strive to better society.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. BEC will strive to increase market share and profitability (prime objective).
2. BEC will be a leader in all areas of our business—human resources, technology, operations, and marketing.
3. BEC will be cost-effective in the use of all resources.
4. BEC will rank among industry leaders in both profitability and growth.
5. BEC will be innovative in the use of technology to help bring new products and services to market faster than our competition and to provide better service to our customers.
6. BEC will create an environment that values diversity in gender, race, values, and culture among employees, suppliers, and customers.

OUR STRATEGY

BEC will be a **global** provider of home entertainment products and services by providing the highest-quality **customer service** and the **broadest range of products and services**, at the **lowest possible price**.

had also mentioned that the next step for BEC is to launch an online rental subscription service. Carrie had the opportunity to talk to Karen during one of the training sessions, and had informed Karen of the courses she had taken on information technology in marketing and electronic commerce. Karen was very impressed with Carrie's educational background and had stated that her know-how would prove to be significant in improving BEC's Web site to meet the needs of customers. Carrie was very excited because she had an idea of what needed to be done to improve the Web site to better suit the needs of the consumers.

As a new store manager, Carrie was quite busy, but she was anxious to do something about her idea. She still did not understand how all aspects of BEC worked (e.g., the Manager Development Program had not discussed how to work with BEC's IS organization). Carrie thought that maybe she should call someone in the IS organization in Spartanburg to discuss her idea. The person who came to her mind was Karen Gardner. However, calling a vice president didn't seem like a smart move at this point, because without a more thorough plan for her idea about a customer information service, there was no way she could get BEC management to pay attention to it. Carrie also knew the help desk phone number, which she called

when there were problems with Entertainment Tracker, the BEC computer system that store employees used. This, too, did not seem like the right call to make, because her idea did not relate directly to Entertainment Tracker. Carrie knew a way, however, to better develop her idea while still giving all the attention she needed to her new job. All she needed to do was to make one phone call, and she thought her idea could take shape.

FORMALIZING A PROJECT PROPOSAL

Carrie's call was to Professor Martha Tann, head of the Management Information Systems (MIS) program at Stillwater State University. Carrie had taken Professor Tann's course on MIS that was required of all business students at Stillwater. Professor Tann also supervises a two-semester capstone course for MIS majors in which student teams work in local organizations to do systems analysis, design, and development for a new or replacement information system. Carrie's idea was to have an MIS student team develop a prototype of the system and use this prototype to sell the concept of the system to BEC management.

Over the next few weeks, Carrie and Professor Tann discussed Carrie's idea and how projects are conducted


by MIS students. Students in the course indicate which projects they want to work on among a set of projects submitted for the course by local organizations. There are always more requests submitted by local organizations than can be handled by the course, just like most organizations have more demand for information systems than can be satisfied by the available resources. Projects are presented to the students via a System Service Request form, typical of what would be used inside an organization for a user to request the IS group to undertake a systems development project. Once a group

of students selects a project, the student team proceeds as if it were a group of systems analysts employed by the sponsoring organization or an outside consulting firm. Within any limitations imposed by the sponsoring organization, the students may conduct the project using any methodology or techniques appropriate for the situation.

The initial System Service Request that Carrie submitted for review by Professor Tann appears in BEC Figure 4-2. This request appears in a standard format used for all project submissions for the MIS project

BEC Figure 4-2
System Service Request from Carrie Douglass

Systems Service Request
Stillwater State University
Capstone MIS Project Course



**STILLWATER
STATE
UNIVERSITY**

REQUESTED BY Carrie Douglass DATE January 12, 2007

ORGANIZATION Broadway Entertainment Company, Store OH-84

ADDRESS 4600 So. Main Street

CONTACT Tel: 422-7700 FAX: 422-7760 e-mail: CarrieDoug@aol.com

TYPE OF SYSTEM	URGENCY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New System	<input type="checkbox"/> Immediate—Operations are impaired or opportunity lost
<input type="checkbox"/> System Enhancement	<input type="checkbox"/> Problems exist, but can be worked around
<input type="checkbox"/> System Error Correction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Business losses can be tolerated until new system installed

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today, Broadway Entertainment Company (BEC) sells and rents videos, music, and games to customers. BEC is profitable and growing. Increased competition from existing and emerging competitors requires BEC to constantly consider better ways to meet the needs of its customers. Increasingly, customers want the convenience of an online rental service. Customers want us to be aware of their needs, and want us to create a new service that will help them better manage their time and entertainment needs. The vision of BEC is to be a market leader in the use of technology to provide the highest-quality customer service with the broadest range of products and services. Even though providing such an online rental service as part of our relationship with our customers is consistent with this vision, no such service is provided today. The purpose of the proposed project is to prove (or disprove) that such a service will improve customer satisfaction and lead to increased revenue and potentially increased market share. A sustainable competitive advantage would be desirable, but is not necessary at this stage.

Specifically, the proposed system will provide services such as (1) the ability for the customers to review a comprehensive library of titles, (2) specify their preferences in a wish list, (3) check on the status of delivery, (4) make a rental without a due date or late fees, (5) read movie recommendations from other customers, and (6) promotion of in-store special offers. The project should conduct a thorough analysis of online rental services, design a Web-based system to provide such a service, and implement and test a prototype of this system.

SERVICE REQUEST

I request that a thorough analysis of this idea be conducted. I need a working prototype of the system that could be tested with a selected group of actual customers. The prototype should include major system functions. A survey of users should be conducted to gather evidence to support (or possibly not support) my subsequent request to BEC to build such a system for all stores.

IS LIAISON Student team leader, assigned when a team is selected for this project

SPONSOR Carrie Douglass, Manager BEC Store OH-84

----- TO BE COMPLETED BY SYSTEMS PRIORITY BOARD -----

Request approved Assigned to _____
Start date _____

Recommend revision

Suggest user development

Reject for reason _____