

## 7. Project Reviews

A methodology and comprehensive set of templates are worthless unless the project team consistently employs their usage throughout the project's life cycle. The key method for assuring adherence to the methodology and use of the approved templates is to have the Project Office conduct project reviews at the end

You can have the world's greatest methodology, fantastic templates, some very bright and experienced Project Managers and still have unsuccessful projects. Without constant review of a project's key control gates, very few approved methodologies will be successfully employed. It would be nice if society could self govern itself, do all the right things and constantly be living in an utopia like environment. Unfortunately reality constantly demonstrates that monitoring is required to assure consistent project success throughout an organization.

Any organization that has multiple projects running concurrently should have a Project Office whose responsibility is to establish the methodology, teach its use, provide consultation in its use, help Project Managers use the methodology, assure that it is being appropriately employed and continuously improve the methodology. The key purpose of a project review is not to "punish" Project Managers who are not adhering to the methodology, but rather to make sure that all projects are following the methodology and are on track for success. Whenever a Project Manager has a better way for doing things that is outside the methodology, the new process/guideline/template/idea should be given serious consideration as to being incorporated into the methodology. Likewise, the Project Office prior to their usage should approve new ideas or different methods of accomplishing procedures.

Like nearly everything in this world, methodologies can continuously be improved. It is important to control their improvement or Project Managers will never know exactly what processes or templates are to be employed for their projects. The ABCs recommends that a project review be held at the end of each phase within the PROJECT Stage. The Project Audit template provides a set of questions for conducting a review at the end of each phase within the PROJECT Stage.

The questions that are to be asked during the review process are used to ascertain the compliance of the project to the methodology and if it is progressing at its expected rate. The questions vary depending upon the PROJECT Stage's phase. A key part of the process is the recording of any issues. The Project Office helps the Project Manager correct any issues in a timely manner. If the issues cannot be corrected in a brief period of time, then the issues should be escalated to the Project Manager's supervisor for its resolution. The major purpose of the questions is to ascertain how closely the project management methodology is being followed. This has a direct correlation to the project's likelihood of success and the ability to assure timely adjustments to project changes to assure minimal perturbation.

Project reviews should be conducted at the end of key milestones in addition to the end of each phase of the project. The key milestone reviews should include at a minimum the successful completion of the:

- Requirements Specification
- Project Schedule
- Test Plan
- Design Specification
- Source Code Implementation for IT projects
- Test Procedures with Test Data and Scripts for IT projects