



IPM - Integrated Project Management

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Thesis

Integrated Project Management (IPM) is a methodology that incorporates a singular centralized data structure to support not only reporting criteria but also an actual decision-support process. IPM relies on an Integrated Project Team made up of the complete range of stake holders and provides for the added value practices such as Earned Value Management and Risk Management. IPM is also the premise on which Dekker TRAKKER® evolved into a robust decision support software system.

IPM Definition/Explanation

IPM acknowledges the reality that an array of stake holders is directly involved, on a variety of levels, with the management of a project, and that these stake holders require the status of a project's data points. Stake holders can be generally grouped into the following 5 categories: 1) the customer; 2) the business owners; 3) the organization as a whole; 4) management; and 5) the technical staff, or those who actually produce the products and services that are required to execute the project. To understand the inherent value of IPM, it is essential to understand that different stake holders need different detailed data points depending on the specified role of that stake holder. Also, even when similar data points are required by different stake holders, the format of the reported data is often unique.

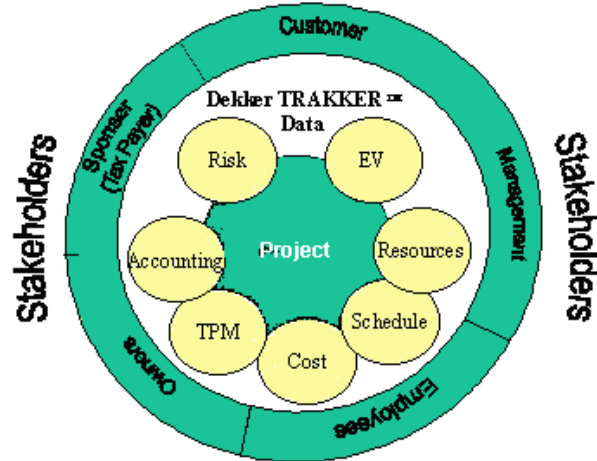
In a traditional organizational structure, individual stake holders are reported to independently, often from numerous separate data sources, through a variety of isolated support tools. The result of this approach is a decentralization of the data points that are reported to different stake holders, as well as a disconnect between stake holders' interrelationships. Each stake holder is therefore primarily, if not entirely, focused only on their individual responsibility to the project. These stake holder responsibilities can be summarized in terms of when their responsibility will be executed, what their specific objectives are, who will be contributing to the effort, where the effort will be involved, and how much it will cost.

An Integrated Project Management approach utilizes a centralized data source. It takes into account all of the stake holder' considerations in terms of collecting and forecasting relevant information associated with and oriented towards a project's schedule, resource requirements, cost, and accomplishments. Unlike a non-integrated approach, it allows each stake holder to also concentrate on how their elements of responsibility will affect and are affected by the responsibilities, actions, and interests of the other stake holders.

The bottom line is that IPM provides insight rather than hindsight on both project and stake holder levels. It allows for the avoidance of crisis management by supporting forward thinking communications between stake holders and by supplying accurate, timely, and consistent data points at multiple levels for every stake holder.

Dekker TRAKKER®

Dekker Management Technologies Institute has developed a software application that incorporates the principles of IPM and can be used as the foundation of a truly integrated approach. DMTI has also evolved an implementation strategy through a wide range of organizations over the last fifteen years. This implementation process has a proven track record of supporting a variety of projects by satisfying the information requirements of each stake holder category (see figure below).



The backbone of Dekker TRAKKER® centers around two primary attributes. First and foremost, TRAKKER is a database. An open database structure allows for unparalleled flexibility by allowing for the following specific capabilities:

1. The ability to handle accounting information so that it can sense what is actually occurring;
2. The ability to complete internal scheduling system and schedule data points;
3. The ability to utilize resource allocation methods including multiple curve loading methods that can be tracked against;
4. Detailed costing so that each resource allocation is timephased and escalatable;
5. The maintenance of data points for rates on Budgets, Actuals, and estimate to complete; and
6. The ability to utilize an automated EVMS.

The second attribute that distinguishes TRAKKER is its accounting interface capabilities. IPM depends on an ability to connect directly to an organization's accounting system without altering the way the GL accounting system operates.

TRAKKER's open database structure combined with its ability to seamlessly interface with COTS and legacy accounting systems allows for the effective utilization of its impressive EVMS and Risk Management capabilities.

Conclusion

A project can be completed on schedule under cost and still not deliver what was originally prescribed. IPM includes technical performance and accounting data that are the 'missing links' in many project management systems. Without these key elements, the project manager may not get what they expected.

TRAKKER epitomizes the concept of IPM. It is difficult to understand the complexity of a database that can handle all of the diverse data elements that should be utilized by the array of stake holders on a project. TRAKKER acts as the central data broker for single projects or

multiple projects which encompass an entire organization. Additionally, upgrading to TRAKKER ABC&P allows you to meet all of the parameters of a true Activity Based Cost system.

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