

# HOW INTEGRATED IS YOUR PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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- Integrated (with various parts or aspects linked or coordinated)
- Project (an individual or collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim)
- Management (the process of dealing with or controlling things or people)

The above are the Oxford dictionary definitions of the words Integrated Project Management. Individually they are a bit gauche, but together they represent something that is greater than the sum of its parts, and that is the goal behind having a properly integrated project management system.

Integrative (Project) Management (the application of management processes that integrate some or all fundamental components of scope, schedule, cost, risk, quality and resources.) – from the APM Body of Knowledge

On successful projects, especially on complex challenges such as turnkey heavy lift operations, developing an integrated approach is essential. It is not enough to be able to manage one of these components individually, they need to be managed holistically.

A common change in heavy lift projects is a material change to the cargo. Often the subtlety of seemingly small changes can be overlooked across the projects supply chain and a controlling hand is needed to make sure that holistic planning and adjustments are made accordingly. For example, what would the impact be if the centre of gravity shifted between design stage to when the "as weighed" condition post fabrication? Is the lift arrangement still adequate? Does the sea fastening, grillage and deck support arrangement still work? These are some of the things the integrated project manager will consider as they have a view of the bigger picture.

Ensuring that this happens is not straight forward. It requires robust processes and personnel; without these, you will have no control of your project, and processes will be mere sheets of paper (or electronic equivalents), without the staff to understand and implement them.

Inevitably, as a project progresses, there will be changes. Client requirements will develop, information will mature, and schedules will change. The corner stone to an integrated project management

fig. 01/ A birds-eye view of a mobile crane deployed on a barge



system is a good change management process. It is the key to ensuring that changes to one component of the project is examined for impact across others.

For example, what impact does a scope change have on the baseline schedule, and what onward impact does that have on the resource requirements and cost? Or similarly, if resource availability changes, how does that impact the schedule and the quality of the product? In heavylift projects programme changes can have significant impacts on resource availability, with many projects relying on temporary hire of specific, and often highly utilised, assets at tightly defined points in a programme.

An effective change management process allows a Project Manager to review the changes across the board and make informed decisions on the best course of action or enables them to escalate knowledgably.

Most heavy lift projects are run on tight budgets. Making use of integrated project management can present opportunities to save money at various stages. With many sub-contractors involved, the Project Manager will have a deep knowledge of the agreements in place with each. With the client's interests in mind the project manager can identify any risks or opportunities to arise from changes.

The Project Manager (PM) is the key person within the system, and they need to have a combination of soft and hard skills in order to run an integrated system correctly. On one hand the PM will need to communicate with the stakeholders and lead a project team, but on the other be technically capable of analysing data and carrying out impact assessments. These are just a handful of examples to illustrate the point but Project Manager's duties extend to a lot more.

So, process and personnel go hand in hand when running an integrated project management system...

And a fully integrated system does not just stop at project level; it should encompass the whole organisation as requirements for one project may impact on another. No one project in an organisation exists in a bubble, but rather each are part of a larger whole. Sucking in extra resource due to overruns has a very real, and mainly detrimental impact on other projects waiting on that resource to be made available. This is particularly true of smaller organisations who may run matrix structures where resource is shared throughout projects.

Project management websites and textbooks are replete with example documents that need to accompany an integrated project. Whilst these are definitely 'cogs in the machine' they are not a panacea. Completion of these is the start, not the end of the process. Often projects will be too small to justify the overhead of this level of paperwork and having strong fundamentals in the project team is what will keep the principles of integrated project management alive as opposed to a set of documents.

How is this level of integration achieved? As would be suggested by the word 'integration,' there is more than one facet to achieving this. Change and documentation control along with effective communication, as mentioned above are others. Only by having effective communication is it possible to determine the impacts that will ripple throughout an organisation. Speaking to varied personnel is the best way to get a broad knowledge of how an organisation works and understand the various drivers at play.

It can be summarised that integrated project management is the collection of processes that ensure various elements of projects are properly coordinated. It establishes and manages the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and resources, according to defined processes devised from your organisation's set of standard processes. Finally, it involves making trade-offs among

competing objectives and alternatives to meet or exceed needs and expectations.

Integrated project management is an aid to eliminating haphazard management techniques and instinctive managerial actions. By understanding, sharing and collating processes and knowledge across the entire organisation, integrated project management brings a much needed robustness to project management approach.

With an integrated approach to project management, it is possible to build a project charter, sketch out the project scope and map the project plan. Projects are closely monitored, and performance is measured against an established baseline. There is also a fixed process for dealing with stakeholders and their requests.

Implementing integrated project management gives a broad understanding of each project and its requirements, helping the project team to share knowledge and processes across projects, making for a healthier organisation.



fig. 02/ a mobile crane being used to install a linkspan