



Project Management (Part 6) - Putting Your Team Together

An Online Continuing Education Course for Engineers

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Module 1

Aligning the Key Players for Your Project

In This Module

- ▶ Comparing three organizational structures in terms of their pros and cons
 - ▶ Defining the actors and their roles in the matrix structure
 - ▶ Being successful in a matrix organization
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In the traditional work environment, you have one direct supervisor who assigns your work, completes your performance appraisals, approves your salary increases, and authorizes your promotions. However, increasing numbers of organizations are moving toward a structure in which a variety of people direct your work assignments. What's the greatest advantage of this new structure? When all is said and done, it supports faster and more-effective responses to the diverse projects in an organization.

Success in this new project-oriented organization requires you to do the following:

- ✓ Recognize the people who define and influence your work environment.
- ✓ Understand their unique roles.
- ✓ Know how to work effectively with them to create a successful project.

This module helps you define your organization's environment and understand individual roles. It also provides tips to help you successfully accomplish your project in a matrix-structured organization.

Defining Three Organizational Environments

Over the years, projects have evolved from organizational afterthoughts to major vehicles for conducting business and developing future capabilities. Naturally, the approaches for organizing and managing projects have evolved as well.

This section explains how projects are handled in the traditional functional structure, the project-focused projectized structure, and the extensively used matrix structure, which combines aspects of both the functional and projectized structures.

The functional structure

The *functional organization structure* (see Figure 1-1 for an example) brings together people who perform similar tasks or who use the same kinds of skills and knowledge in *functional groups*. In this structure, people are managed through clear lines of authority that extend through each group to the head of the group and, ultimately, to a single person at the top. For example, in Figure 1-1, you see that all people who perform human resources functions for the organization (such as recruiting, training, and benefits management) are located in the human resources group, which reports to the chief executive.

Figure 1-1: A functional structure for administering projects.

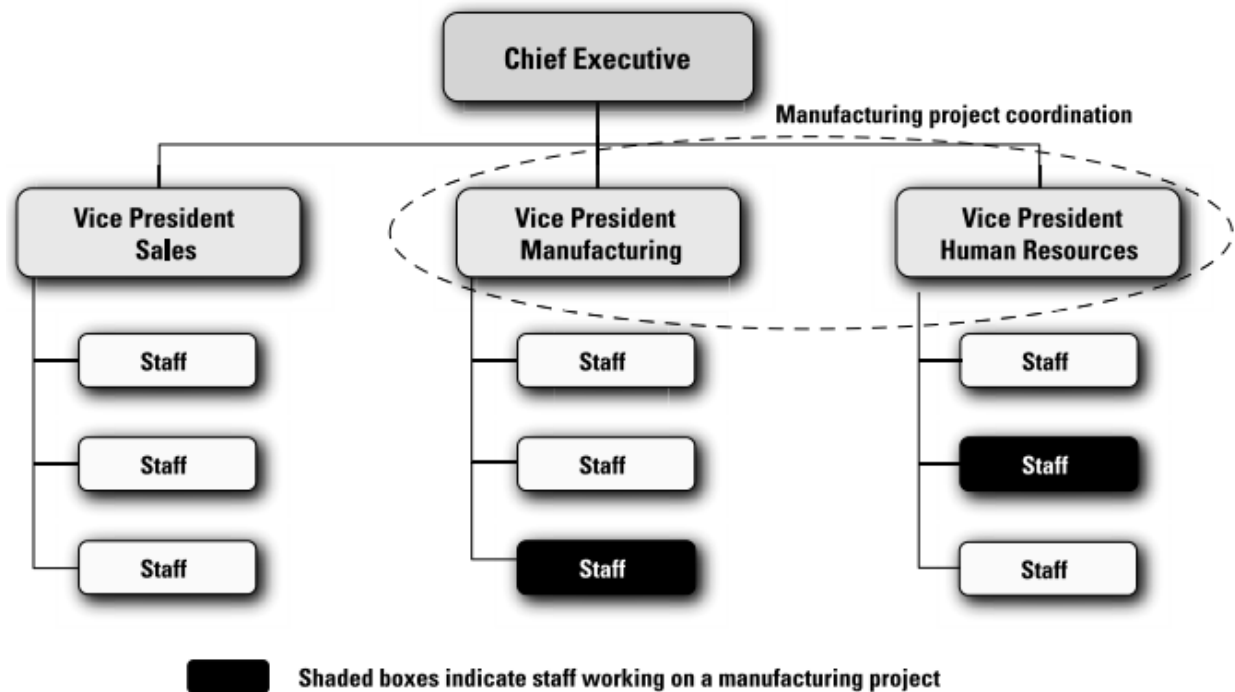


Illustration by Wiley, Composition Services Graphics

Depending on the nature of the project and the skills and knowledge required for it, a project in the functional structure may be handled completely by staff within a particular functional group. However, as illustrated in Figure 1-1, if the manufacturing group is performing a project that requires the expertise of a person from the human resources group, the vice president of manufacturing must make a formal agreement with the vice president of human resources to make the necessary human resources staffer available to work on the project. The vice president of human resources must then manage this person as he performs his tasks for the project.

The project manager has less authority over project team members in the functional structure than in any other form of project organization. In fact, he serves more as a project coordinator than a project manager because the functional managers maintain all authority over the project team members and the project budget.

Advantages of the functional structure

The functional structure has the following advantages:

- ✓ **Functional groups are reservoirs of skills and knowledge in their areas of expertise.** Group members are hired for their technical credentials and continue to develop their capabilities through their work assignments.
- ✓ **Functional groups' well-established communication processes and decision-making procedures provide timely and consistent support for the group's projects.** From the beginning of their assignments, group members effectively work with and support one another because they know with whom, how, and when to share important task

information. Decisions are made promptly because areas of authority are clearly defined.

- ✓ **Functional groups provide people with a focused and supportive job environment.** Group members work alongside colleagues who share similar professional interests. Each member has a well-defined career path and one boss who gives his assignments and reviews his performance. The established interpersonal relationships among the group's members facilitate effective collaborative work efforts.

Disadvantages of the functional structure



Warning

The functional structure has the following drawbacks:

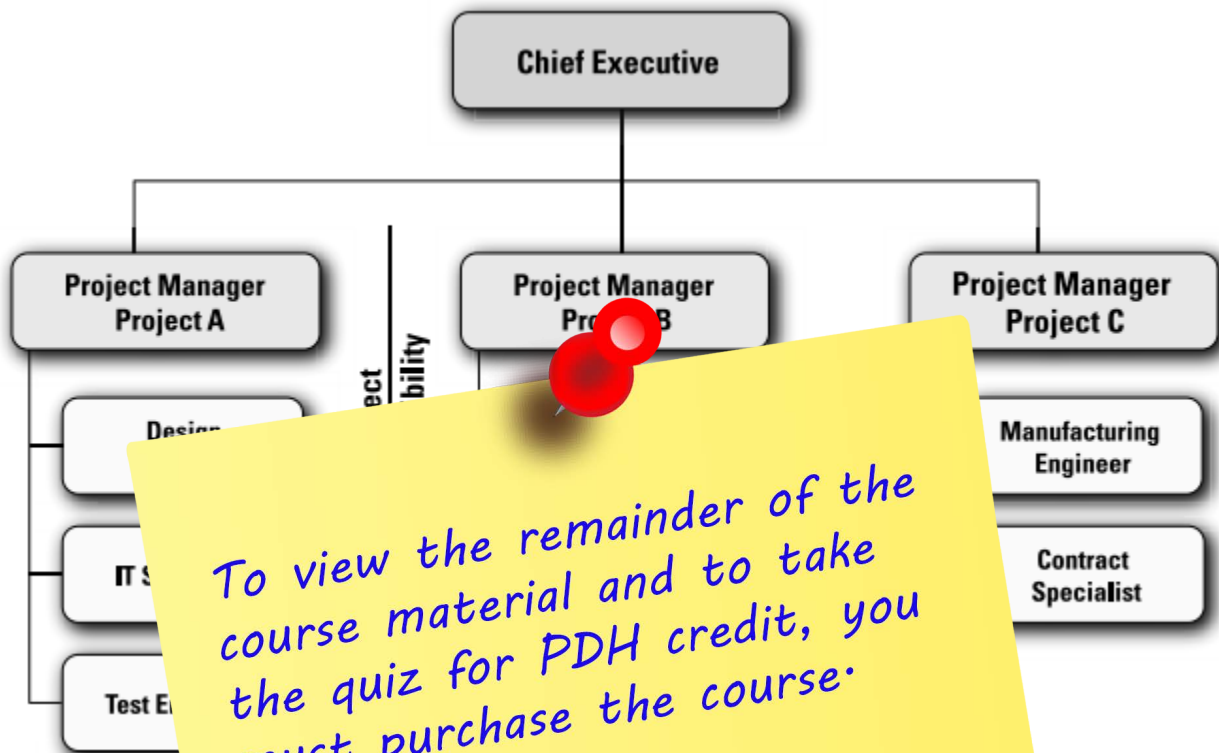
- ✓ **The functional structure hampers effective collaboration among different functional groups.** Group members' working relationships are mainly with others in their group, and management assesses their performance on how well they perform in the group's area of specialization. This setup makes effective collaboration with other groups on a project difficult.
- ✓ **The functional group members' main interest is to perform the tasks in their group's specialty area effectively rather than to achieve goals and results that may involve and affect other groups in the organization.** Group members' professional interests and working relationships are mostly with others in their group, and their boss, who gives them their work assignments and evaluates their performance, is the head of the functional group. This environment encourages members to be most concerned with and to give the highest priority to their functional group's task assignments.
- ✓ **A functional group may have difficulty getting buy-in and support for its project from other functional groups that must support or will be affected by the project.** Each functional group can initiate a project without consulting other functional groups. As a result, people in these other areas may be reluctant to support such a project when it doesn't address their needs in the most effective way. They may also be reluctant to support it because the project may be competing with projects from their own functional group for scarce resources.

The projectized structure

The *projectized organization structure* groups together all personnel working on a particular project. Project team members are often located together and under the direct authority of the project manager for the duration of the project. As an example, you see in Figure 1-2 that a design engineer, an IT specialist, and a test engineer all work on Project A, while a different design engineer and a different test engineer work on Project B.

The project manager has almost total authority over the members of her team in the projectized structure. She makes assignments and directs team members' task efforts; she controls the project budget; she conducts team members' performance assessments and approves team members' raises and bonuses; and she approves annual leave.

Figure 1-2: A projectized structure for administering projects.



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Advantages

The projectized structure has the following advantages:

- ✓ **Project team members have a strong sense of identity, resulting in increased commitment to the success of the project.** Communication within a project with the same group of team members gives people a greater understanding of one another's strengths and limitations, as well as a deeper understanding of and a stronger belief in the value of the intended project results.
- ✓ **Everyone on the team shares the processes for performing project work, communication, conflict resolution, and decision making.** The projectized structure enhances project productivity and efficiency because more time can be devoted to doing work rather than to creating systems to support doing the work.

Disadvantages of the projectized structure

Warning

The projectized structure has the following disadvantages: