Project Managers & Adaptation

The plan must continually adapt to drive results

Even the best, most thought-out and detailed plans will encounter change. Unplanned change that requires project management plan adaptation can be caused by any of the following factors, or a combination of them.

Project Managers must manage these risks and have their change radar on at all times to anticipate and respond to change affects, and keep driving results. Note that the degree of applicability of these factors is dependent on the project, company, team, and environment in which the project is managed.

- Resource changes and availability
  Resources can change jobs, become unavailable, or be taken by higher company priorities.

- Subcontractor availability and performance
  Performance and delivery can be challenging to manage even with constant oversight and contractual penalties and incentives.

- Budget changes
  Project budgets can be changed or restricted by overall company budgets and priorities.

- Rate of vendor or customer product evolution
  Products can evolve and have new releases during a project timeframe.

- Process or service changes
  Company and vendor processes, services, and operational models can affect project delivery.

- Outside project interaction
  Other projects may compete for resources, attention, execution paths, and buy-in and approval pathways to delivery.

- External dependencies
  All projects depend on at least some other efforts, projects, processes, resources, and/or decisions.

- Stakeholder changes
  New stakeholders can have different priorities or expectations of project delivery.

- Project Manager and Stakeholder knowledge
  Key personnel must have the knowledge and experience, or know who to consult with for guidance, to make the key execution, directional, and stage gate decisions.

- Business strategy changes
  A company strategy can affect project deliverables and application of results.

- Market changes
  The marketplace can impact the significant, requirements, and delivery expectations of a project.

- Economic changes
  Economic cycles can affect company budgets, priorities, and products.

- Technology outages or failures
  Downtime or outages, especially with communication, collaboration, and tracking tools, can effect project execution.

- Competition impacts
  The products and strategies of a competitor can impact the significance and deliverables of a project.

- Internal competitive efforts
  Company priorities can determine the attention and resources that a project receives.

- Weather
  Availability, communication, collaboration, travel, and delivery can be impacted by weather events.

- Disasters or pandemics
  Project teams may not be prepared for remote working and the impact on collaboration, absenteeism, and other business operations.

- Unforeseen risks without contingencies or responses
  An incomplete assessment of risks, or the occurrence of a new risk event, can lead to delays or execution alternatives.

- Incomplete deliverable requirements
  Additional requirements that evolve during the project and should have been included but were not considered in the original plan can impact all project elements and plans.

- Requirement changes or add-ons
  Changes in requirements or delivery, or scope creep, can have a significant impact on all project elements and plans.

- Contract negotiations
  Agreements with partners and vendors can lead to both limitations and opportunities related to execution and performance.

- Pre-determined dates for deliverables
  Sometimes dates are set or promoted by stakeholders before the Project Management Plan or schedule is completed.

- Pre-determined deliverable features
  Sometimes the features and results of the project are promoted and expected before the Project Management Plan and all inputs and effects on the deliverables has been established.

- Different result expectations
  Communicating and selling the project charter, as well as project status updates, must be done continually to all stakeholders.

- Different impact expectations
  Stakeholders can have different or evolving views of the impact of a project on the business.

- Lack of project adoption
  A project is not a success if it's not adopted and used per the justified benefit.

- Lack of sales throughout project to promote adoption
  If stakeholders are not informed, they may question and impede project decisions and execution.

- Incomplete or incorrect project team
  If difference resources are required than planned and on board, execution and delivery are impacted.

- Resource Performance
  If resources do not perform to their job requirements or expectations, project execution and performance is impacted.

- Project Manager experience
  Experienced Project Managers expect and are prepared for change.

- Lack of decision making delineation or authority
  The Project Managers, and influential stakeholders, must have authority to keep the project moving.

- Lack of decision making ability
  Project Managers should have the knowledge and experience to make key execution decisions within their authority.

- Lack of adaptive Project Management ability
  Project Managers must anticipate and expect change, and not panic when plans are off track.

- Incomplete or incorrect stakeholders
  If the engagement of stakeholders is not complete, significant effort can be expended to get them on board.

- Lack of adequate project monitoring
  Project performance must be tracked and monitored to the confidence level necessary, as time, money, and resources are always limited.

- Team communication
  Daily and accurate team communication and collaboration is critical to project expectations, execution, and delivery.

- Team conflict
  Disagreements or friction among the team must be addressed and overcome to maintain communication and execution.