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PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT PLANNING IN ORGANIZATION

A study for a case company

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ABSTRACT

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This Master's thesis topic came from a need for improvement in project management in the author's organization. The purpose of this thesis was to improve the organization's project management in a way that would fit to the organization and the employees. The development of project management within the organization started during the writing process of this thesis and it will continue indefinitely.

The theoretical framework aims to analyze what projects are and what it means to use projects as a way of work. In addition, project management methods are introduced and why it is important to implement project management as a tool and what are the benefits of project management.

To fulfil the purpose of this thesis, the theoretical framework was applied to create an appropriate project management tool for the organization. As the small team of employees is constantly working on their own daily duties along the tasks within projects, it was essential to create a structure within the familiar ways of working and using the tools that are already well known without needing to learn new applications. This approach ensured the employees will be able to quickly adapt to the new structure to benefit from the new guidelines and templates created as project management tools.

The choice of project management style was simple, yet effective. During the process of initial implementation of base for the structured project management, it was already possible to see the positive effect on projects themselves but also on employee satisfaction. With less uncertainty and improved communication within the projects, the team was able to work more efficiently.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In some workplaces or organizations typical work revolves around projects. Yet the habits of projects as a way of work might have evolved alongside without structured project planning or project management. This issue can be found in small organizations that might have started on a sole trader basis and then slowly growing to have employees or freelancers join the team. Eventually, if the organization keeps growing and wants to grow, problems may arise if project management is non-existing or occurs as personal management without open communication and clear structure.

This thesis introduces what a project is exactly, what it means when projects are way of working and how an organization can improve their project management with simple yet effective changes. These changes improve project success rate and employee satisfaction while leading the organization to have better return of investment.

Results for the thesis aim to offer guidelines to reshape project management and reach a solution for project management tool adaptation for current place of employment. In the beginning of the writing process the projects and project management in the organization started to take leaps towards structured and directed project management. The starting point for this was a situation where each employee had their own style of using project management tools and time management tools. While each employee and team member does an excellent job with their own tasks, this unstructured way of working has space to create problems in cases like sudden employee sick-leave, or when there is a need for someone to assist with tasks to help speed up certain project steps. Unstructured and unavailable style of project management within personal calendars, lists or other tools might also hinder the growth opportunities, as well as personal growth of each employee and the growth of the organization.

Structured project management will help the whole team work more efficiently while also increasing their feeling of belonging in the organization. With open communication, accessible project management tool and the project management guidelines the employees will have less struggle within daily work. Less time wasted will result in more time for actual work and personal development or ideas on how to improve the organization.

2 ORGANIZATION

Maikki Marjaniemi Valmennukset Oy, later referred to as organization, was formed in 2017 with two founding partners. By 2022 the organization had employed six employees, each working in their own responsible field. The main products are online courses in field of exercise and wellbeing. The organization currently offers over fifty different courses and is constantly growing variation in the course catalogue. The organization also has published three books and offers a variety of e-books.

The organization offers quality products that are safe and trustworthy to customers. Quality is ensured with excellent customer service and employees who are trained and skilled in their areas of expertise. Another main value is flexibility which reaches to customers and employees. For customers this means offering diverse products, guarantee for the products and having customer service available and ready to help. For the team flexibility is seen as flexible roles, flexible work hours and offering resources for employees to improve their own work or the organization.

Organization has premises in Oulu and half of the employees work either full time remote or part time remote while the rest meet regularly at the office to complete different kind of tasks. The whole team gathers two to three times a year at minimum, either for work or fun.

2.1 Roles

In the small team the roles are flexible, and each employee can reform and improve their own role. There is room to grow, and organization supports employees to learn new skills. Currently there are six employees, whose roles could be described in the following manner:

- CEO
- Content creator
- Producer
- Social media manager
- Customer service
- Expert

Every role has its own area of responsibility in the daily work, and within projects the roles become more flexible and activities within a project can be set for a different role depending on who has the

resources. These resources are most commonly time and skills. This means similar that activities in different projects might be shared between different roles.

2.2 Daily operations and projects in organization

General work week is split between daily operations and projects. Daily operations mainly build up from repeating tasks that are essential for the organization such as customer service, payroll, and management. These activities have their own schedule and are not like projects, which usually have a set timeframe and clear start and ending point. Projects share similarities but are always unique. The most common project types could be named in three different categories: product projects, marketing projects and internal projects. All three categories are complex and most projects have several employees working on them simultaneously.

As the organization grows in customer numbers and has growing selection of products, each employee in the team has spread out of their original job title. Employees are learning new skills and tools to answer to the need of development within the organization. This has led to the demand for structured project management, to ensure the success of the projects.

As the projects are more complex, include more tasks and several different roles to accomplish the tasks within one project. As the team often works on several different project simultaneously, the need for open communication, accessible and easy to view project management tool has become apparent.

Projects are a main part of the work within the organization, and as they are now getting more complex, it is essential the project management methods and a tool catches up with the demand. Implementing a tool fit for the organization will help not only management but also employees to keep on track with the projects, while also ensuring better success rate for the projects.

3 PROJECTS AS A WAY OF WORK

Projects and daily operations are both types of processes and can share similar characteristics such as resources and outputs but the two differentiate when it comes to repetition. Projects are unique while daily operations are repetitive processes. This means projects and business operations require a different framework for management. (Smyrk & Zwikael 2011, 1.)

Project can be defined in several different ways, but all projects share the characteristic of having a clear beginning and end. (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, 17). Typical for a project is that it has activities that are temporary and set within a timeframe. The activities build towards achieving the goal of the project and a project manager coordinates the activities. (Mäntyneva 2016, 9.)

To create higher chances for the project to achieve the goal it is possible to apply project management methods. One definition of project management is to describe it as an application of management practices directed at achieving the project goal and objectives. Where projects are focused on having a result of a predefined solution or system, project management on the other hand is used to minimize the risks of these activities that might fail during the projects. (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, 26.)

3.1 Project types

Different classifications of projects could be done by nature of the project. For example, product development project, research project, and delivery project. Classification can also be done by the field, for example design, marketing and installation projects. (Mäntyneva 2016, 9.)

In a product development project, the aim is either to improve an existing product or to create an entirely new product. Product development projects can also apply to services, which can also be called service development project. If the need for a product development project comes from organization's or person's own need, it can be challenging to have realistic expectations for return of investment and timeline for the project. Because of this, product development projects are relatively

risky, and it is difficult to make a long-term estimate of the completion of the product and the subsequent commercialization. This is especially the case with completely new products. (Mäntyneva 2016, 10.)

Considering the production of online content as a product or service it can be complicated to communicate properly; the content does not appear simply on its own, but creation should be considered as a project. Even the content that is available to users without purchase has a process behind it with a goal, timeline, and budget, either timewise or monetary. (Saksala, 2015.)

Operational development projects are carried out within organization. The goal of these projects is to improve the productivity and efficiency of the organizations' operations. Operations development projects can focus, for example, on the development of new operating and working methods, organizational renewal, and the development of employee skills. Change management and management are often a key part of the operating environment of operational development projects. Mere successful implementation of the project is not enough, but its results must be rooted in the organization which supports the change towards the target state. (Mäntyneva 2016, 10.)

3.2 Project tasks

Projects build up from tasks or activities that are related to the goal of a project and works towards achieving the goal. Tasks are usually tied to the different phases of the project and the roles that work on the project. Contents of a project can involve a single task that is common to several project members, a goal oriented and defined series of tasks, or a problem needing to be solved. (Arto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, 17.)

Visualising a project can help to get an overview of what needs to be checked as done to reach the finish line of a project. One way to do this is to break down the project into tasks and listing them either simply on paper or with a more modern solution, a project management tool application. In visualisation one can add descriptions to the task that help the project to stay within its predefined terms such as time, budget or person who handles the task. To make such a list, tasks can be identified by different methods such as completion time or importance.

3.3 Project resources

Project resources include the people, equipment, budget, time, skills and knowledge and everything else that is required to reach from planning the project to accomplishing the goal of the project. These resources give structure to the project but also limitations. Performing tasks within the project to reach the goal will consume the resources which are not limitless. These resources can be evaluated and predefined how they are spent within the project. (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, 19.)

Sometimes there is only one person who is then responsible for all the roles and tasks within a project and sometimes there is new or existing team of employees or volunteers assigned into different roles and tasks for the project. Even in one person projects it is important to manage the project appropriately. If the goal is structured and goal-oriented project management, the size of the project should not be the reason to dismiss the demand for proper project management framework.

In bigger projects, resources are often measured with more precision and placed realistically. However, in smaller projects, there is bigger risk for evaluating that the work needs less resources than is realistic. Falling into the false assumption that small project reaches the goal with no proper effort or time put into it. Leading to a situation where the project can fail due to not being taken seriously as a proper project. Even smaller projects demand proper project management to be successful. (Saksala 2015, 128.)

Project size can be measured with how long it will take to achieve the goal and reach the end of the project. Organization can describe projects as large projects when they have the longest timeline when compared to the organization's other projects. Other organizations can have similar timeline for smaller projects. It is often difficult to manage large projects. The longer the project lasts, the higher chance there is to adjust aims and goals of the project. (Grit 2018, 25.) Time is a resource when it is managed effectively. Without management time can become a problem for the project. Successful project is one that is on time, stays within the budget and reaches the desired goal. (Avison & Gholamreza 2008, 177.)

3.4 Project communication

Project communication can be a remarkable failing point for a project. If the team is not fully aware of the project as an entity and employees are unsure which role oversees what task, the project is in danger of not reaching the goal within predicted timeline, budget or in worst case, not at all. Project manager has the responsibility to ensure that the whole team working on the project is up to date with the activities in the project. They also need to communicate if there are changes, updates, or problems. (Petrocelly 2018, 75.)

With enabling open communication and trust within a team that works on the project, organization has better chances of high-performing project team. As the project team has more productive meetings, better problem solving, and better understanding of the purpose and benefits of the project, the better the performance. (Project Management Institute 2021.)

3.5 Project risk management

Just as a project has an opportunity for success, there is also a risk for failure. There are many reasons why project can fail and recognising these failing points can help avoiding them and create higher chance for success. With risk management it is possible to identify possible failing points for the project and fix them before they have become a problem. Typical failing points for a project could be for example too many simultaneous projects, undefined or rapidly changing goal for the project, unrealistically optimistic timeline, inadequate communication within the project and role attachment to the project. (Mäntyneva 2016, 129.)

To succeed, the project needs a committed project group, but other project stakeholders must also be committed to the project. The project manager must clearly communicate to all members of the project team what their role in the project is. The benefit of other stakeholders from the project should also be illustrated. Commitment is also promoted if each employee participating in the project knows how their contribution to the project is evaluated. Sufficiently frequent communication and contact between project team members enables open communication. It can happen face-to-face or virtually. The possible arrangement of meeting times in advance gives people the opportunity to focus on their own work tasks. It is assumed that the people working in the project are

experts in their own subject, and it is not motivating for them if the project manager watches even the smallest detail. Meetings can be used as checkpoints so that all participants stay sufficiently informed about the progress and possible changes of the project. (Mäntyneva 2016, 133.)

Too many simultaneous projects needlessly divide the attention and focus of the employees. This should be avoided as it increases the risks of projects to fail. Solution could be mutual prioritisation of projects and avoidance of unnecessarily working simultaneously on multiple projects. Reasonable flexibility must be left in the project implementation schedule so that possible unexpected situations can be reacted to without delaying the overall schedule. (Mäntyneva 2016, 133.)

Project risk management is a tool and when using the risk management methods, it is possible to define and identify the possible risks within a project. With proactive recognition of risks and correct responding, organization can avoid risks becoming problems that would cause the project to fail, either partially or fully. (Bissonette 2016.)

4 PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS TOOL

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques for project tasks. With project management, projects have better opportunity to reach the predefined outcome. (Project Management Institute 2021.) Project management can be used to assess the success of a project while also managing the risks of failure within the project. (Smyrk & Zwikael 2011, 42.)

Project management as a tool is one approach to project management. It is instructional and tool oriented which can include project management as charts, forms, instructions, checklists, templates, and techniques for planning and following the project development. It can also include visualization tools and has the purpose to decrease uncertainty related to projects. (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, 31.) Visual project management has gained popularity to communicate project resources, planning and controlling projects within organizations. (Crawford 2006, 80.) Organizations often develop their own project management models and practices by using different tools and predefined documentation style. (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, 31.)

While there is a big market offering different kinds of project management tools with their own logic and visuals, an organization does not necessarily find one that meets their needs. Instead of setting up a fancy looking tool and send an internal memo for everyone to hook up to it, it might be better to first plan the needs and goals of the project management tool. There is no “one size fits all” solution when it comes to project management.

4.1 Visual project management

Visual project management is a concept that utilizes visual tools and data visualisation methods with project communication and reporting. A project generally has hundreds of individual data points, including tasks lists, performance metrics, calendars, worksheets, and countless number of other data points related to project. These data are constantly growing and with visualisation tools, it can be communicated better to the project stakeholders. (Williams 2015.)

The main benefit of visual project management is that the important information related to the project is easier to create, view and approach more effectively and efficiently. This means project team can work faster resulting in keeping up with the estimated schedule and reducing confusion in communication. With visual project management it is possible to view planning and execution of tasks in a single glance and easy to understand user interface, while tracking the project in real time. It improves overall scope of the project and allows everyone working on the project to consume the data at any time. (Williams 2015.)

Common methods to visualise data are lists, charts, drawings, graphs, tables, maps, and several more. While it might sound simple to create a list of tasks, it can depend on the organization needs what all data needs to be communicated in the list. Depending on the data points needing to be presented, a list can become long and difficult to view, thus negating the point of data visualisation. There are several different approaches to data visualisation as a project management tool and selecting the right method one can be challenging.

One example of a project visualisation tool is Kanban. Kanban is a simple approach that can be visualised in several different styles. Kanban method includes creating a backlog of tasks and then moving the task from backlog into the next location on the board. Backlog acts as a to do list or a holding area for pending tasks. Tasks are moved to different stages in board, depending on the status. (Brechner 2015.) Kanban board can be shown as a simple table (table 1), but if multiple more data points need to be available, it can become hard to view (table 2).

TABLE 1. An example of Kanban board as a table

Backlog	In progress	In test	Done
Task 4	Task 3	Task 2	Task 1
Task 6	Task 5		
Task 7			
Task 8			

TABLE 2. An example of Kanban board as a table with more details in tasks

Backlog	In progress	In test	Done
Task 4	Task 3 – Employee 1	Task 2 – Employee 2	Task 1 – Employee 1
Task 6	Task 5 – Employee 3	(Deadline 1.1.)	
Task 7			
Task 8			

There is no limit to the visual style of a Kanban board, and it can be modified to fit the style and need of the team or the organization. A Kanban board could be set physically on a whiteboard with sticky notes, digitally on a cloud document (figure 1) or even in an application created for Kanban method (figure 2). There are close to limitless options to choose from so organization should not dive too fast into picking just any first tool that shows up in Google search results. Best fit for organization can be found with doing research on the organization need and applying a tool that is fit for the organization and employees.

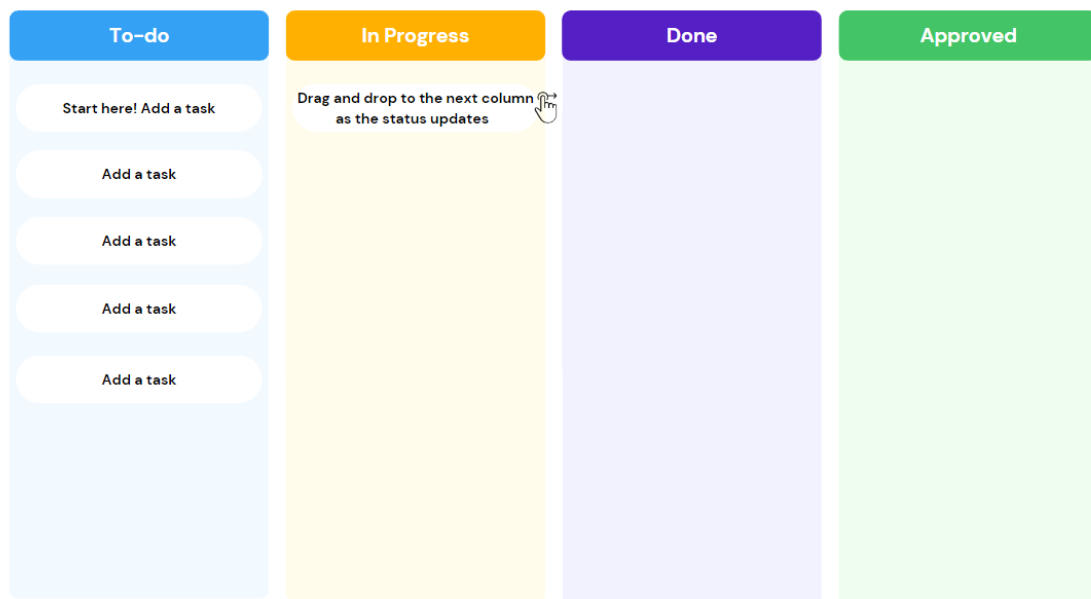


FIGURE 1. Colourful example of Kanban board

Manage tasks visually on Kanban Boards

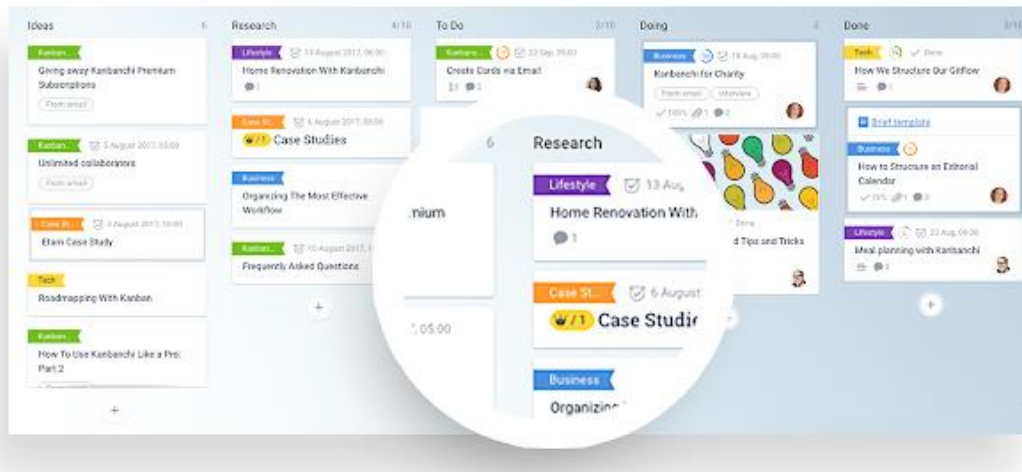


FIGURE 2. Google Kanban board tool Kanbanchi Task and Project Management (Kanbanchi Team 2022)

Another possibility to visualise project management is checklists. The idea of checklists could seem simple and easy to dismiss when discussing project management and project management tools, but it can be a valuable starting point to get into more structured and planned project management before having courage or resources to implement a project management application for the organization. Checklists have an advantage of being familiar to most; they are, easy to modify for different needs and, most importantly, they are tools for visualising data, thus making it possible to streamline project management with low cost and low skill demanding way. Checklists could be considered a stepping stone before implementing an application designed for project management such as Google Kanbanchi Task and Project Management.

Checklists can have the minimum amount of data and be merely a list of tasks. This style could work better for a one-person project if the need is to just track which tasks are on the to do lists and which tasks are finished. With more people and more complex projects, it is likely more data is to be visualised. In this case, it is important to create clear guidelines on how different data points are visualised, to ensure the checklist does not become messy and complicated to view.

Checklist

- Task 1
- Task 2
 - Task 2.1
 - Task 2.2
- Task 3

FIGURE 3. Minimalistic checklist example

Checklist

- Task 1 – Employee 1 (Deadline 1.1.)
- Task 2 – Employee 2
 - Task 2.1 – Employee 3
 - Task 2.2 – Employee 2
- Task 3 – Employee 1

FIGURE 4. More data points added to the minimalistic checklist.

There is no limit to how many data points a checklist can include, but if the amount grows too complicated to visualise in a comprehensible manner, it could be time to update from checklists to another tool. Ready made tools as applications often have options to set deadlines into a calendar that could send notifications to update on the tasks, and other tools to let some of the managing be handled by bots rather than project manager needing to do the manual work.

4.2 Goals

Goals of project management is to focus on improving the way of work all through the organization. Implementing project management guidelines and a tool will help the organization to reach this goal. As a result, organization will have a structured, accessible, and easy to use project management tool for an organization, which allows a more efficient way of working as it is clear to the employee what their role and purpose is in a project. With open project management communication each employee is also aware that all relevant tasks within a project are assigned to responsible roles. This eliminates the issue of back-and-forth questions, related to the project tasks and goals.

Implementing these guidelines and a project management tool will allow organization to improve business performance. Less money wasted, better focus on organization and employee time and effort, and higher success rate within projects are all reachable goals when putting effort into improving project management.

4.3 Benefits for the organization

Organization has an opportunity to benefit in several ways when improving project management; some which are easier to measure than others. When implementing structured and clear guidelines, methods, and tools to improve the way of work, employees will have better sense of belonging leading to better work environment and performance. (Emery 2019.) Improving employee satisfaction in their workplace and own work will allow the employees to gain more confidence to work efficiently. This could also allow higher chances for projects to reach their goal. This benefit is not tangible and can be challenging or impossible to measure but could also be one of the most valuable benefits to gain.

Structured project management and clear guidelines for projects allow less room for human errors such as forgetting to complete a task or making a mistake while working on a task. It also negates the risks of assuming the other employee is working on a task and needing to ask other team members details on the project tasks, both scenarios which could increase delay. This benefits not only the organization by having less mistakes within the projects, but also improves employee satisfaction. Project management tool helps to follow the guidelines and will cause less irritation between employees. It also opens the communication between employee and organization. With less disturbance, irritation and wrongly set assumptions in their work, the employees will be more satisfied with their own work and the organization.

As project management helps minimize human errors, it improves the chances of the project to remain within desired schedule, even in cases of the employee's sudden absence from the work such as sick leave. With a project management tool, it is possible for other employees to see what tasks the absent employee has on their to do list and have better chance to reassign the tasks.

This creates opportunity to finish a project within satisfying schedule even if original task assignment needs to be changed. Without project management and project management tool, it might be impossible to know which tasks the employee has finished or unfinished. Catching up without having access to the knowledge of the employee is time consuming and can be avoided by applying project management tool.

4.4 Change management

Change is constant and can not be stopped. Especially in organizations change is fast and typical organization experiences several change initiatives during a year. Motivations for change are usually growth, technology related or world situation related, like COVID-19 pandemic. (ATD research 2022, 9.)

Some people are not burdened by the constant changes and can easily switch their habits from one situation to another while some other people cannot adapt so rapidly, and changes can limit their ability to function. The spectrum of how well a person adapts is wide and could depend on their personality, role in organization and current situation in personal or work life. Organizations need to take these details into consideration, as it is their employees who are in a constant state of change. Controlling the changes is a work management issue and it must be considered how to help people move forward when work forces them to adapt to changes. (Saksala 2015, 75.)

The purpose of change management is to help enable changes in the organization and to get from the current situation to the future situation. It helps the organization to prepare and create opportunities for success for the change. Organizations have responsibility to ensure their employees can adapt to the change and have time, space and skills needed for the adaptation. (ATD research 2022, 13.)

5 PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN THE ORGANIZATION

Demand for project management in the develops when an organization grows and becomes more complex. With growing supply of different products and services, growth of customer base and complexity of internal processes, it has become essential to manage the organization and allowing further growth, to create structured and purposeful project management guidelines and apply them as a tool for the employees.

Previously there has been an attempt to implement a project management tool, but it was too unorganised without proper plan and majority of employees felt it was too complicated to use, which led to not implementing the tool, and slowly forgetting the tool altogether. As the tool was too unfamiliar and project management in general was not organized in the way that would have made the implementation of any existing project management tool a success, each employee gravitated back to their own individual task list habit.

Taking steps to plan and implement a structured base for the project management, this thesis aims to create structure for the projects and as result deliver templates for the main project types to create efficient workflow, minimize failing points within projects and improve overall employee satisfaction in their own roles.

5.1 Current situation

The starting point for the development of project management in the organization is mostly based on independent to do lists, which all employees have and manage on their own. The style has worked partially while it has also caused some issues within projects and daily operations. Most problematic with this kind of individual task lists has been that rest of the team is completely blind to what is on the list, what has already been taken care of and if there is a need to move tasks between employees. This becomes a bigger issue if the employee with their individual task list needs urgently to go into a sick leave, or if there is some other emergency, where the absence is unexpected and the employee cannot finish with the list, cannot take new tasks. Creating a need to delegate the tasks to the other employees. In sudden absence, the time to prepare might be

non-existent, thus creating problems to the organization having no possible way to view what tasks still need to be handled.

These kinds of individual task lists can also cause communication issues within the organization. One single employee might be asked multiple times whether they have a specific task on **their** list, and what is the status of the task. This is not only time consuming but also irritating and causes unnecessary seizures to the flow of a workday. Employees might also feel they do not want to irritate and bother their co-worker, which can lead to an assumption a task is already taken care of or it is on another person's list, especially if the tasks has previously been other employees responsibility. While some tasks do repeat for the same role, within changing project tasks, it cannot be assumed the same role is responsible for the same task, if it has not been assigned to them. This could lead prolonged delays for tasks that might not be essential in early stages of a project but are important in the project plan. These unfinished tasks might be noticed very late.

Project related tasks become entwined with daily operational tasks, as most often each employee has worked on at least two different kind of task list within their workday, thus creating enormous pressure to remember. When placing the trust on human memory and on each one's personal to do lists, it creates major risk of human error. The goal of reshaping and developing structured and open communication project management is minimizing these risks, making the way of working more efficient and creating room for improvement, for projects, daily operations or personal growth.

5.2 Tasks

Tasks within the organization can be split into two categories. Daily operational tasks and project related tasks. Daily operational tasks are repeated in their own appropriate schedule. These tasks are essential for the organization and include payroll, management, customer service and social media. Most of these tasks are assigned to a role responsible for them. Customer service and social media tasks are tasks that can be documented and have guidelines for other roles to take over in case of unexpected need or when the employee usually responsible is on a vacation.

Project related tasks can change depending on the project type, timeline, and the goal of the project. Generally, the main project types can share similar task lists with slight changes based on the type and details of the project. Project related tasks are most often assigned to a corresponding role but are often not tied to specific roles unless a specialist skill is needed. Organization has

similar projects repeating within a calendar year, and this opens an opportunity to create structured project plans for different project types. Structured plan can allow changes and flexibility, which should be planned in the project planning phase, but it will minimize the chances of forgetting the tasks that are needed for the project.

5.3 Goals

Goal of the development of project management is to have a clear-cut picture of the project workflows that can be applied when embedding a new tool for project management. As a benefit, risks of human errors will cut to a minimum when the repeating projects have structure with a pre-planned lists of tasks and responsible roles for each phase of the organization's projects.

With project management double work, errors and time waste is cut to a minimum thus creating more beneficial workflow and improving work environment. With better project management, also employee satisfaction will rise, as there will be less confusion and wondering who is doing what. When employees work more efficiently and communicate better, projects will have streamlined timelines and accomplish the goals without struggles.

As the main work is done by with working on multiple projects side by side, usually with one main project, it is important to have an easy-to-understand project management tool. The tool does not essentially have to be an application or a tool used in other organizations. The tool needed to achieve these goals can be something as simple as shared to do -list.

5.4 Project types in organization

Organization has three main project types, which can roughly be categorized as product projects, marketing projects and internal projects. Product projects include development of new product or service and improving an already existing product or service. Marketing projects are most often marketing campaigns related to the products or services. Product projects and marketing projects repeat most often. The third type of projects are internal projects, which are different from the two previous ones. Internal projects are most often one-time projects, for example creating structured plan for project management.

As all three different types of projects have very different goals and timelines, the measurement of success is also based on each individual project rather than chosen based on the project type.

The focus for creating structure and guidelines for projects and project management will be on the marketing projects and product projects as the internal ones have more individual needs and details. Meanwhile the internal projects will benefit from the overall development of project management within the organization.

5.4.1 Product projects

Product projects consist of creating a new online course as a product, a follow up online course as a product, a new e-book as a product or a printed book as a product. New services also fall into this category of product projects as most tasks related to a product and service are similar. All these product projects have a different set of needs to be accomplished, and each have their own goals, which are decided in the planning phase of the projects.

These projects have tangible result when the project is finished, there is something new or updated to offer to the customers. Key performance indicators for product projects can be staying within planned timeline and budget. Monetary success for individual product does not come from the product project as the return for investment can be calculated only with finished marketing project. This means a product project most often has simultaneous of following marketing project, and employees will be working on both projects simultaneously. Product projects should remain separated from the marketing projects, as they should have their own timeline, budget, and goal.

5.4.2 Marketing projects

Marketing projects can and often are intertwined with product projects, but they can also be separate. For online courses there are new launch marketing and sale marketing projects. New launch marketing works alongside with development of new online course, with pre hype phase for the product and it has its own individual needs for being a successful campaign. Marketing describes a marketing campaign that is created for an already existing online course that is available for sale price for a set period of time. On top of online course marketing, there is also marketing campaigns

for books and e-books. In addition, whole store super sale is rare, but has its own marketing campaign style. All these marketing campaigns should be seen as their own separate projects and included in the planning of project management tool.

The most common projects for the organization revolve around marketing. Marketing campaigns for a specific product or product category start monthly or bi-monthly, and generally have a timeframe of six to ten weeks. The need for these projects is based on season, market demand, supply and estimation based on past sales. Marketing campaign projects are in an essential role for the organization as these create cash flow. Marketing campaigns are a way for the organizations to communicate to the customers.

Marketing projects usually employ the whole team. The CEO and expert are often responsible for initial planning, the content creator and producer work on the material and the content needed for the campaign. The social media manager is responsible for the discussion going on in social media and often also helps with written content for the campaign. Customer service needs to be on board with what is going on and able to answer the questions customers ask.

Marketing campaign results are measured with key performance indicators such as sales and advertising costs. The better the selling point and need are communicated to the customer, the lower the advertising costs. Also the sales numbers are expected to rise.

Without structured project management for the marketing sales, risks for human error and unnecessary delays in the schedule grow. As these projects are carried out alongside other projects, even a related product project, it is easy to forget even essential tasks if they are not clearly communicated. In the project planning phase, the tasks can be listed for everyone working in the project to view. In this phase it is possible some tasks are assigned to different roles than in the previous project, and structured project management with easily viewable manager tool leaves less room to assumption who has which tasks and when it should be finished.

5.4.3 Internal projects

Internal projects include projects that are not related to the customers, as they will not have a product to offer and are not communicated to the customers. These projects can have very different timelines and tasks, and often are one-time projects. Internal projects improve the way of working, work environment, internal communication and managing the organization. Examples of internal projects are creating structured plan for project management such as this thesis is, creating guidelines for communication, applying new tool for the scheduling, and offering employee opportunity to study to obtain new skills or knowledge.

Internal projects usually have minimalistic project plan compared to the other types of projects. They can also have just one role assigned to the tasks and they are carried out alongside other projects and daily operations. This creates a risk of not scheduling a reasonable timeslot or prioritizing other tasks over the internal project tasks, resulting the internal project falling into bottom of the to do -list, and possibly not being finished, especially if the project is not urgent.

With structured project management, it is possible to create better circumstances for organization to ensure the internal projects are not left undone and simultaneously communicate to the employee. These projects should be scheduled appropriately and are just as valuable as something that can be measured with monetary key performance indicators.

5.5 Current development of project management in organization

During the writing process of this thesis organization is working on the adaptation of shared checklists that describe and assign tasks for different project. These lists are shared to the whole team via cloud folders. The shared folders are organised in appropriate categories based on the product they are related to, with subfolders for different projects related to the product. This folder and file taxonomy guidelines have already improved the daily working as all relevant material is easier to find.

Before implementing new guidelines for folder taxonomy it was often occurring problem to have multiple files including related data. Data was scattered, outdated and hard to connect (figure 5). This style caused other employees to update files that were old versions, thus resulting in double work. It also caused an issue of important files being saved on locations where they could not be

accessed when needed, if the employee working in home office attended a meeting in another location and had only saved the file on the personal computer.

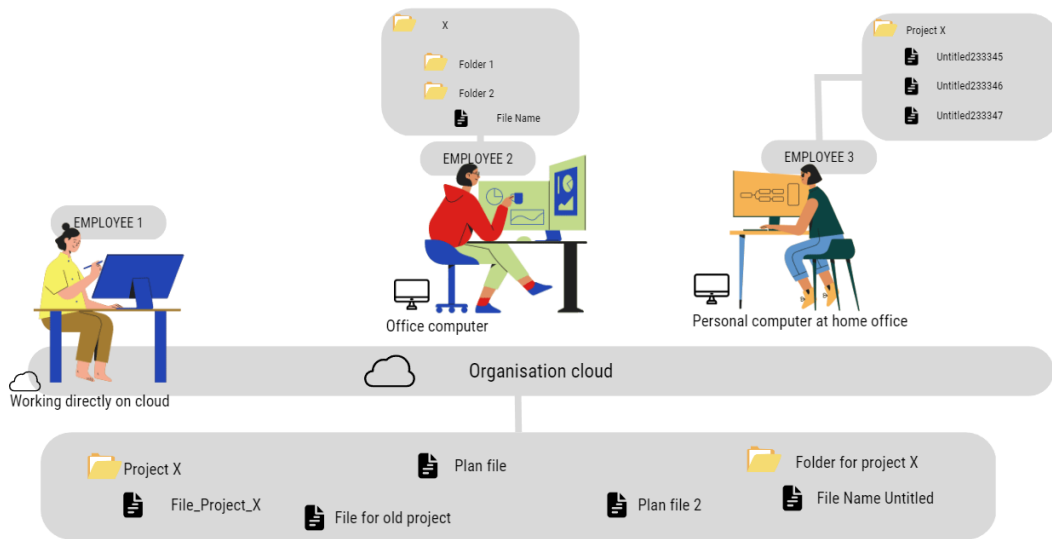


FIGURE 5. Before implementing file and folder taxonomy.

Solution to the problems between cloud and separate devices was solved with implementing guidelines for everyone working on shared organizational cloud with structured taxonomy. With shared main cloud, main folders that are needed for different areas of work, and clear naming system for sub folders and files (figure 6), it has become possible for each employee to access the latest version of any needed file, wherever and whenever.



FIGURE 6. After implementing file and folder taxonomy

One of the most important files that can be found in the organization cloud is a marketing and production calendar file, which includes tables of annual plans of marketing and production (figure 7). These tables are rough estimations for the whole year but are updated continuously. Each month is updated at least at the end of the previous month to show as current plan as possible. Monthly tables are also updated based on what plans and details come up in weekly meetings, to which whole team attends.

Timetable	Marketing	Production
xx.xx - xx.xx	Product 1	Project 1
xx.xx - xx.xx	Product 4	Project 3
xx.xx - xx.xx	Product 7	

FIGURE 7. Monthly plan table in marketing and production calendar file

Attached to each monthly table there is a list that can include checklists and linked files (figure 8). The purpose of this list is to provide an overall view of the monthly plan and it should not have all detailed project tasks listed. Instead of listing all project tasks are listed in their own separate file, which is linked into the overall view. The project file can also be found in its own folder but linking the file to monthly overall view gives a quick access point when needed.

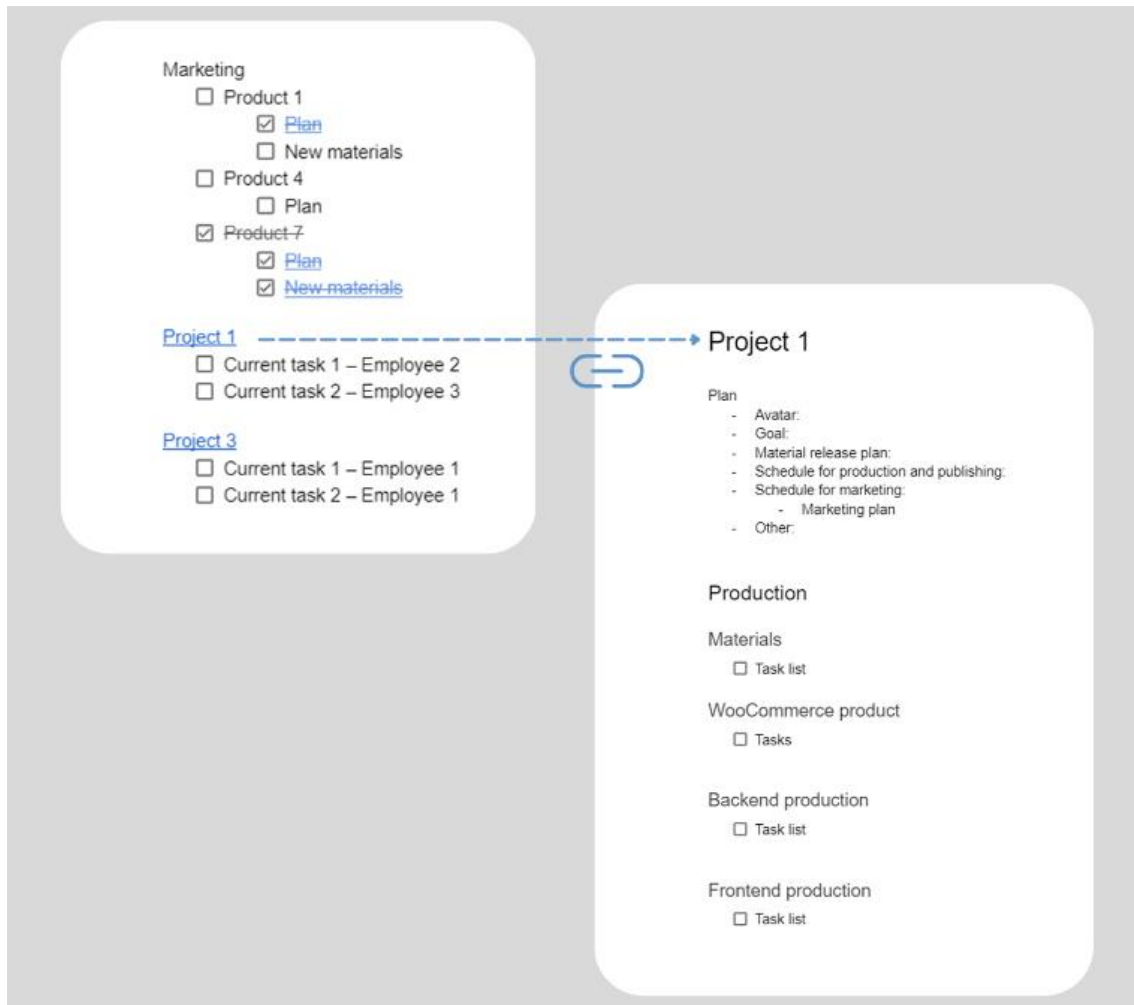


FIGURE 8. Task list attached to monthly plan with project plan files linked accordingly.

Each product has its own folder in the organization cloud and within the product folder can be found the materials related to the product and folders for the past and ongoing projects related to the product. These folders and files are separated based on if the project is either marketing or production related.

Within the project folder there is a project file that has all the details of the project. It includes project plan and checklists for each phase of the project. This file is linked in the monthly list when the project starts. The file has a checklist that is based on a project template checklist. This template is copied and pasted from a template file and modified to fit the project needs. The templates ensure no necessary details are forgotten and the checklist with assigned employees helps everyone work on the project and keep updated. Each different project type has its own template premade and the templates are updated regularly.

5.6 Future suggestions to improve project management

As the current solution for the project management involves creating and upkeeping several separate files, it can become unsustainable. The organization has taken massive leaps to update their project management and it has already shown great results with employee satisfaction and sales, the work does not end here. With the upkeep, copy pasting, file management and calendar management, organization could benefit from implementing an application as project management tool. This application could include automated options for some of these repeatable tasks within project management, and help offer a simple visualised view of the project management.

Choosing the new tool is not a simple task and should not be hurried. Currently there is also no urgent need for implementing application as tool, as of right now the team is still getting used to the style that was implemented during year 2022. The current project management phase will offer understanding of the needs for the future tools, as the files, templates and guidelines are yet improving, and organization is adding new dimensions to it when needed.

Timeline for implementing new application as project management tool could be set when the team notices the current system starts to slow them down, rather than making their work more efficient. Signs to move onto more automated tool could be if employees start get frustrated with the current system, project success rate decreases or if mistakes start to happen more often.

6 CONCLUSION

The objective for this thesis was to provide a foundation for the project management of the organization. As the team is small and their work revolves mostly around projects, it was essential for growth to take charge of project management and implement guidelines and structure to ensure project success. Starting point for the improvement could be pinpointed to the start of year 2022, when the team had opened the discussion of being dissatisfied with the way of working. This discussion led to need for rapid changes in the workplace. These changes included the need to implement a project management tool that is accessible, easy to view and logical to use. To ensure success with the implementation, it also needed to be in a form that is already familiar for everyone in the team.

As a starting point it was first explored what a project is focusing on the relevant points for the organizations' project management improvement. While projects and projects as way of work are familiar to many people, it is simple to forget what exactly a project entails. Not all work-related tasks are projects and no two projects are alike. Projects are complex and unique and there is a chance of failure if they are not managed properly. With working project management and fitting project management tool, there are chances for multiple benefits for the organization.

Making the effort for change and start managing projects with incentive and new structure requires first some background. It is essential to know the organization, the employees, different kind of projects and their needs, and the customers. When it comes to project management, there are no ready made solution despite having great guides and studies available for what works best.

While gathering information on how to better understand projects as a way of work, the organization simultaneously started the work to improve with the familiar tool and methods. The need to keep up with the daily duties and projects while simultaneously improving project management, created a challenge to create a tool that each employee is already familiar with.

When the tool is already known and used on a daily basis, new guidelines were simple to implement. Within one simple shared cloud folder, a folder and file taxonomy, shared master file and a checklist things were already improving massively. Easy to view and accessible project task list also decrease need of back and forth questions between employees. Employees were happier and

able to focus on their own tasks better. Projects got higher success rates and met the timelines and finished on schedule. Tasks that needed to be finished with sudden and urgent deadlines could be prioritized more often and less urgent tasks do not suffer from reprioritization. Management made massive changes with the communication through the whole organization and this open communication has increased feeling of belonging for the employees, which has resulted in a more enjoyable workplace.

In the year 2022 organization went through several enormous and meaningful changes. These changes were well received by the employees and have improved the daily operations and projects. It is impossible to pinpoint any one change that could take the credit, as there were changes in technology, internal management, project management, communication, and strategies. With these changes the year 2022 ended with employees being able to work more efficiently, feeling of success with their own work and opportunities to improve their own workplace when seeing the need, high success rate with projects, and growth in customer numbers and sales.

The improvement of project management and implementation of project management tool is not finished, as the checklists and templates are constantly updating to match the need. During the writing process of this thesis the main parts of the changes were already implemented and in the process of improving the current templates, the latest version is always available and in use for the new projects starting up.

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