

Chapter 7

Prospects and Challenges of Application of Project Management Techniques to Enhance the Delivery of Projects in Libraries and Information Centers

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ABSTRACT

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to a project's activities in order to meet its requirements. This chapter advocates for the application of project management techniques as a panacea to enhance project delivery in libraries and information centers. It extrapolates what library and information centers symbolized and also outlines the nature of projects in library and information centers. The principles of PM are also discussed, which is followed by PM skills librarians/information scientists should learn because of the essentiality of those skills to efficient and effective management of projects in libraries and information centers. It chronicles the various PM methodologies and showcases the benefits of PM in LICs before highlighting the factors influencing project failures in LICs. It is concluded that the application of project management techniques to library and information centers would enable library and information centers to be efficient in initiation, planning, execution, implementation, and finally, enhance project delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

Libraries and Information Centers are information provision institutions that are saddled with the responsibilities of collecting, processing, organizing, storing, preserving, disseminating, and providing access to information resources so that they can be used effectively by the targeted users. According to Ajayi (2019), Libraries and Information Centers are charged with the responsibilities of managing information resources and proper management of these resources is important for the effective use of patrons.

Libraries, Information Centers, archives, museums, cyber cafés, bookshops, documentation centers, newspaper vendors' stands, publishing and media houses, etc., are not established to exist in isolation. They are Centers established to serve as integral parts of a society with the mandates to acquire, process, organize, preserve, provide access, disseminate and utilize adequate, relevant, and quality information to their clientele (Mohammed & El-Kalash, 2019). Libraries and Information Centers must carry out projects.

The Nigerian Institute of Management [NIM] (2019) defines a project as to specific tasks that are undertaken to produce a product or service that is unique and serves a purpose. Project is also specific, deliberate, and time-bound activities that are embarked upon to achieve some specified objectives and goals. When achieving objectives and goals attached to various projects, techniques associated with project management are indispensable in Libraries and Information Centers.

Project management in Libraries and Information Centers gained relevance in the study of Horwarth (2012) titled "How Do We Manage? Project Management in Libraries: An Investigation." Horwarth (2012) reported that all the respondents interviewed in the study agreed that librarians need PM skills. They variously reasoned that:

- 1) *Libraries undertake a lot of projects, and in fact, most library strategic plans are predominately composed of projects, and so it makes it easier to undertake the projects if librarians have these skills;*
- 2) *Most libraries are becoming flatter organizations, and without a hierarchy, management through projects becomes more important; and*
- 3) *It is more cost-effective if projects are managed efficiently – staff costs can be hidden, and if staff needs to spend more time on a project because they do not know how to manage it well, it can add to the cost of the project. He further reported that two respondents noted that there is currently a gap in the PM skill set of librarians and they recommended that training and awareness are needed.*

The purpose of this chapter is to propose the Prospects and Challenges of Application of Project Management Techniques to Enhance the Delivery of Projects in Libraries and Information Centers.

BACKGROUND

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to projects' activities to meet project requirements (Anantatmula, 2019). It involves using the processes that have been refined and solidified through the discipline of Project Management (Horwarth, 2012) to exercise control on the initiation, planning, implementation/execution, and delivery of a project. The underlying principles of project management are to maximize the use of available resources to achieve the project's objectives by identifying the constraints associated with a project and organizing the project into several stages from

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