



Figure 1.0. The project management life cycle with corresponding business stages (Hinds IT Management Project Management Approach)

There are numerous models and methods on the market and in the workplace that address how a project management model should be composed and structured. Most models on the market and workplace vary but many have similar characteristics. However, it is difficult to say which model is best, as this is debateable. Besides numerous knowledge areas, a good project management model comprises 5 key project management processes or groups: project initiation, project planning, project execution, project control, and project close. These five project management processes and/or phases make up what is known as the project life cycle. The project life cycle implies that projects have a start and a finish point associated with a time line.

Besides global best practise, Hinds IT Management has highlighted corresponding project business stages which are of central importance to successful project management, project inception and post-completion project evaluation. These two phases are key responsibilities of the business. These stages can be carried out by a project manager and/or project.

Hinds IT Management's approach is independent from other life cycles, for instance, system/product development. Our approach focuses solely on project management. It is based on many years experience and generally accepted global project management praxis. Our approach signifies that project management encompasses the life cycle processes encapsulated in figure 1.0. We utilize known methods, tools and techniques to accomplish project objectives. Example tools and techniques we apply include: leadership, work breakdown structure (WBS), Pert method, network analysis, team building activities, trend analysis, communication, configuration management, earn value analysis (EVA), quality assurance, stakeholder analysis, problem solving, change, risk and issue control, etcetera. Guiding the project through these management processes effectively and efficiently is a key pre-condition for project success.

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## **Project Inception**

The project inception stage is a very important phase of the project because it sets the foundation needed to for the project's conceptual structure. A key aspect of this stage is the clarification of client business needs and objectives. Other areas of importance in this stage include: comprehension of the product and/or service requirements, project business case, and business strategic goals. Aligning the project to the customer's situation and organization is vital for this stage. The key deliverable of the project's inception is the statement of work.

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## **Project Initiation**

Project initiation phase is where the framework and guiding principles for the future project is established. This stage makes or breaks your projects. This is why it is the most important phase of the project life cycle. This phase defines the scope and fine-tunes the project goals outlined during the start-up stage. The key deliverable of this phase is the project charter, which establishes the project manager and base needed to authorize the start of the project.

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## **Project Planning**

The project planning phase develops on the deliverables from the preceding phase, project initiation. The focal point of this phase is developing the project scope into a stable project plan, which will be later used to guide the project through the project life cycle and fulfil the business requirements. This stage focuses on developing the scope, breaking down the work, preparing time plans and cost estimates, finalizing the team, identifying risks, establishing acceptance and quality criteria and specifying principle project deliverables etcetera. It also focuses on identifying stakeholder information needs and expectation as well as establishing other possible management support processes that will help the project team carry out its mission.

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## **Project Execution**

The project execution phase focuses on executing the project plan. In this phase, the agreed service/solution is developed or provided. Much attention is given to quality assurance, communication and team building. Ensuring focus stays on the project plan, management of issues, and work packages are vital to success in this phase. The key output of this phase is the solution or service deliverables.

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## **Project Control**

The principle aim of the project control phase is to ensure the project meets agreed objectives. This is accomplished by way off controlling areas as: change, risks, time, cost, schedule and quality. The project control stage also focuses on scope verification, monitoring and measuring project performance, communication with stakeholders, and identifying deviation from plans and implementing contingency actions. Neglecting or lack of project control could jeopardize the success of a project.

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## **Project Close**

Closing the project focuses on ensuring contractual obligations is concluded. It also focuses on administrative and financial closing activities. The project's infrastructure is dismantled and releasing staff to their functional organization. Final project performance measurement, procurement audits, product verification are conducted as well as project goal followed-up. Preparing a final report, financial report, and acquiring formal acceptance are also key artifacts of this phase of the project life cycle.

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## **Project Evaluation**

Project post-completion evaluation aims at identifying the pros and cons of the project as well as future recommendations and actions. The project evaluation stage also centers on identifying factors behind variances and/or problem areas. This stage, which is often ignored, can provide valuable information for future projects. The results of this phase can also provide useful historical data, which can be used as reference information in future projects. It can also be used to prevent the recurrence of earlier mistakes, which in the long run improves project lead time and success probability.

Would you like to know more about what Hinds IT Management can do for you? Please feel free to contact us for a meeting or if you have any questions at:

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