Sample Answers to In-Text Questions

**Chapter 3: Project Management**

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why are projects so important in modern society? What are their advantages and disadvantages for organizations?

Answer: Shortened product life cycles, narrow product-launch windows, increasingly complex products, and global competition have made projects a principal way for modern organizations to gain a competitive advantage. Advantages are better collaboration, teamwork, and feelings of accomplishment. It can be a competitive advantage if companies do not plan and execute major projects well.

1. What are some of the critical reasons why organizations are moving more of their operations to project-based work; in other words, what are some societal and macro-economic reasons why projects make sense?

Answer: Some reasons are the complexity of business today, technology advancements, software requirements, budget constraints, marketplace competition. And speed to market requirements, for starters.

1. Why is an understanding of project life cycles so useful for allocating resources (both people and money) to projects?

Answer: You have to know when to budget for people, equipment and budget resources, based on what activities take place in what phase of the project. Most resources are needed during the execution phase, so you need to know when to ramp up.

1. Consider the case of the Marine Corps’ Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle. How did “scope creep” affect this project?

Answer: By expanding the project, the government kept adding time and money. Two years were added twice, and costs per vehicle had tripled.

1. How do deterministic activity duration estimates differ from probabilistic duration estimates? Why would some projects use one method versus the other?

Answer: deterministic assumes that sufficient info exists, so you can refer to that data. The other uses estimated probabilities of times. It would depend on whether you had more confidence in the historical dates, or the accuracy of the estimated dates.

1. Consider a project discussed in this chapter and conduct a risk management assessment on it. After identifying various types of risks, classify which of them can be transferred, shared, minimized, or accepted.

Answer: Answers would vary.

1. Think of a project you have been involved with. How did it go? What made it successful or not so successful? How could you have improved its outcome given what you have learned from this chapter?

Answer: Answers would vary.

1. What rules apply when crashing a project?

Answer: You have to estimate the costs of crash methods, and prioritize less costly methods. You have to weigh the costs and benefits, or tradeoffs. You would crash items along the critical path for maximum benefits.

1. S – Curves assume that a project’s performance is directly related to the money spent to date. Explain the flaws with this reasoning.

Answer: How much money has been spent may not be the best way to measure how the project is doing, especially to schedule and value added to date. EVM is used more today, especially by government projects. In that way you know completing value, as well as cost outlay.

1. Conduct an Internet search for “project management disasters,” and read a minimum of three of the publications you find. What common features or errors do these disasters have in common? In particular, do you believe that project management disasters are most often a failure of initial planning or subsequent execution? Defend your perspective with evidence or examples from the Internet.

Answers: Answers may vary

# Critical Thinking Exercise

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Answer: Answers would vary