



Project Management GPRM 521

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Academic Declaration

I, Cynthia Ledile Mofokeng (full name/s and surname)

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Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	<i>Project</i>	3
1.2	<i>Project Management</i>	3
2	Project Initiation.....	4
2.1	<i>Business problem and business case</i>	4
2.2	<i>Stakeholders</i>	5
2.3	<i>Deliverables:</i>	5
2.4	<i>Purpose and requirements of the project.....</i>	5
2.5	<i>The Project Scope</i>	6
2.6	<i>Key Milestones.....</i>	6
2.7	<i>Project life cycle</i>	7
2.8	<i>Work Breakdown Structure (WBS).....</i>	9
2.9	<i>Responsibility Matrix.....</i>	9
2.10	<i>Cost estimation</i>	11
2.11	<i>Resource Plan.....</i>	11
2.12	<i>Risk management plan.....</i>	12
3	EXECUTION	12
3.1	<i>Contract administration.....</i>	13
3.2	<i>Communications management with Stakeholders.....</i>	13

3.3	<i>Quality assurance</i>	<i>13</i>
4	MONITORING AND CONTROL.....	14
4.1	<i>Time management</i>	<i>14</i>
4.2	<i>Team management</i>	<i>14</i>
4.3	<i>Cost management.....</i>	<i>14</i>
4.4	<i>Change Management.....</i>	<i>14</i>
4.5	<i>Quality management.....</i>	<i>15</i>
4.6	<i>Risk management</i>	<i>15</i>
5	PROJECT CLOSURE	15
5.1	<i>Acceptance</i>	<i>15</i>
5.2	<i>Final project reporting and handover</i>	<i>15</i>
5.3	<i>Review Project Completion.....</i>	<i>15</i>
5.4	<i>Lessons learned.....</i>	<i>16</i>
6	PERSONAL REFLECTIONS.....	16
7	REFERENCE LIST	18

1 Introduction

This essay will provide a brief theoretical description of Projects and Project Management. The purpose of the essay is to provide a detailed implementation plan which addresses the 10 Project Management Knowledge Areas (PMBOK) and the International Project Management Association (IPMA) Individual competences.

The four phases of project will be discussed and demonstrated in the Assupol Call centre training project, starting with the project initiation which presents the business problem and context of the project in question. An outline of the scope indicating how it relates to the company's goals will be presented. We will further discuss the planning phase which will include the Project life cycle, a description of Stakeholders, followed by the projects Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), the Responsibility RAM and the Schedule of work presented in the form of a graph and table. The execution phase will provide a work through process of delivering the project's deliverables; followed by the description of the monitoring and controlling process. The essay will unpack the final phase of the project known as project closure and in conclusion, personal reflections on my learning journey are presented.

1.1 Project

PMBOK define a project as “a temporary endeavour started to create a unique product or service”. (Petersen, 2013:10). Some of the factors that distinguishes a project from normal business activities is that a project is exclusive, has time limits, limited resources, is allocated funding, is prone to risk and it requires specialist skills and tools (Method123:2020).

The Assupol Call centre training project I will be engaged in is a temporary effort starting from 1 April to 6 May 2020. It aims to empower Call center agents working from home with the organizational skills to enable them to increase their productivity levels. The project Sponsor will be funding the project and has allocated a budget of R150 000.00.

1.2 Project Management

PMBOK defines Project management as “the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques” (Petersen, 2013:11). By using Project Management in the Call centre training project, we will be practically applying the knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques of project management to complete a training project for Call centre agents. Some of the tools that will be used include the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and the Responsibility Attainment Matrix (RICA). The

Project Manager (PM) possess the competency to use the best methods of managing projects by selecting the right tools such as Project lifecycle and developing professional standards to manage a successful project (IPMA, 2015:53).

2 Project Initiation

2.1 Business problem and business case

Covid19 pandemic changed the way business is conducted at Assupol. Before Covid19 Lockdown, Call centre agents were attending to 90% of the incoming calls per day between 8am and 4pm (Assupol business hours) Monday to Friday and customers call waiting time was between 3 to 5 minutes. However, when the agents started working from home due to lockdown restrictions, the percentage of calls answered reduced to 50% per day and the call waiting time increased to 15minutes. The company experienced a productivity reduction of 40%. The business problem and business case are indicated in the Project Charter, refer Appendix 1.

The Head of the Call centre have tasked me with the responsibility to organize online training for Call centre agents to equip them with organizational skills to manage their work better when working from home. The agents have never performed their role as Call centre agents in a home environment, therefore this new normal found them unprepared.



Before training
project



After training
project

2.2 Stakeholders

Projects are not performed in isolation but are achieved in collaboration with different people who have interest in the project. According to Burke (2017:101) stakeholders include the actively involved, those impacted by the project before and after and those who can contribute to the project. In our Assupol training project, the Stakeholders are indicated in the Project Charter, Appendix 1. The power and interest competence assisted the Assupol Project Manager to be aware of the impact of personal and group ambitions of different stakeholders in the project (IPMAICBN4, 2015:56). She could therefore manage and allocated responsibilities in a way that everyone contribute to the success of the project according to their strengths, power, and interest.

Needs Analysis: - Call centre agents need to be empowered with the necessary organisational skills to improve their efficiency when working from home by attending to 90% of the calls and ensure that customers wait for no longer than 5 minutes for the call to be picked up. By doing this, they will be aligning their service standards with to the organisation's standards.

User Analysis:- An analysis of the Call centre agents working from home revealed that they are between the ages of 20 to 34, they work on a 10 hours schedule with two breaks in between and their preferred learning method includes written notes and video recordings. It also indicated that they preferred ongoing assessments to monitor progress instead of one final examination at the end of the project.

Skills analysis of Call centre Agents:- The staff have experience in performing their duties in a corporate office environment but have never worked from home before; therefore, they need to be equipped with the necessary organizational skills to perform their responsibilities efficiently in a home environment.

2.3 Deliverables:

Deliverables are components of the scope delivered at different stages of the project. The Assupol project deliverables are clearly indicated on the Project Charter, Appendix 1.

2.4 Purpose and requirements of the project

The purpose of this project is to increase productivity levels of Call centre agents working from home by 40% and reduce the call waiting period of customers to 5minutes. Below is an outline of the objectives of different Stakeholders.

Sponsor: - The Sponsor aims to improve the business confidence of their customers by providing an efficient service to customers who engage with the call centre agents. The Sponsor's purpose is to ensure that customers who make a call to the Call centre receive the service in the shortest time possible. This training will equip call centre agents with the skills to work efficiently in a home environment by answering a set target of answered calls.

The User: - Call centre agents need is to meet the service level targets of answering 90% of calls and reduce the call waiting period of customers to 5 minutes as set by the Sponsor. Their objective is to be empowered with the skills to work without supervision in their home environment in order to meet set targets.

Project Manager:- The aim of the PM is to ensure that training is given to Call centre agents in an efficient manner, and that agents are able to use the knowledge gained from the training to improve their productivity and reduce waiting time to attend to calls.

2.5 The Project Scope

According to Nicholas and Steyn (2017:350) the scope indicates the range of the project and what it will accomplish. The Assupol project scope is outlined in the Project Charter, Appendix 1. For the team to remain on track, the project manager will use the Gantt chart, WBS and schedule to monitor progress.

2.6 Key Milestones

Key milestones for the Assupol training projects are outlined in the Project Charter, Appendix 1.

Assumptions:

- Users and the subject matter expert have laptops and telephones to work from home.
- The training department has the material and resources to offer the training and the subject matter expert is skilled to transfer the organisational skills to the agents.
- The specific product knowledge will not be covered as the agents are deemed to be know their products.
- The costs and time allocated for the training is sufficient.

Constraints

Reschedule work shifts – The training of agents will be split so that when other Agents are in training, then others can take calls. It will not be possible to train all agents at the same time, thereby extending the time and costs of the project.

Attendance – Because the training is done online, should an agent not be able to connect for whatever reason and the training time passes, then they have lost out as they won't have the benefit of asking questions during live training.

Scheduled leave coinciding with training times - Call centre agents who may happen to be on leave during the scheduled training period will not benefit from the course, although the videos will be available, the period of the training project may have passed by the time they return from leave.

Unscheduled leave – Emergencies and unexpected events in the lives of the people involved in the project, particularly the Users may cause delays of the project.

Assessments – It may be difficult to verify if the assessments were done by the user or not as the training is done remotely.

Administrative requirements

Training manuals and recordings of online sessions would need to be made available to enable users to study even when the scheduled training sessions are adjourned.

2.7 Project life cycle

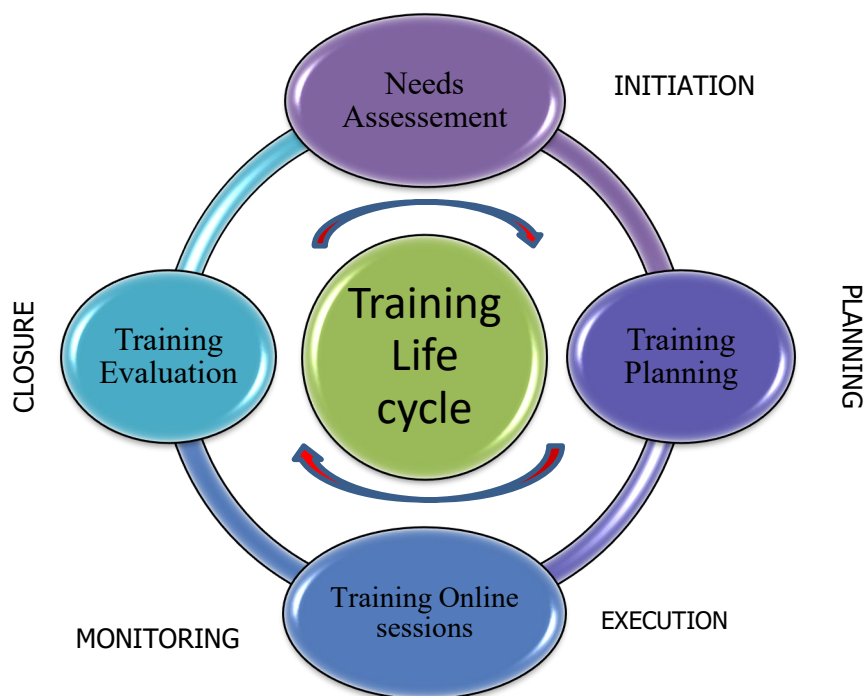
Project Lifecycle indicates different stages of the project and the sequence of those stages ((Practice Standard for Work Breakdown Structure, 2019). Because a project is conducted over a certain time span, it will develop from one stage to another to reach the end, therefore the project lifecycle provides an overview of where the project is at a particular point in time. The importance of understanding the different phases of the project is that one can better prepare for the next phase; make appropriate decisions for the current stage and see the holistic picture of the project. In this way, all stakeholders are on the same page as far as where the project is, where it is heading to and when will it end.

In our training project, the initiation phase is characterised by needs analysis. Assupol is a company which prides itself in the fact that their clients find it easy to reach their branches that are situated across the country (Assupol, 2020). However, when branches closed due to Covid19

lockdown restricted, the only means of contact for clients became the Call center. Unfortunately, the Call center agents were not trained to work remotely; therefore, productivity went down. The home environment was completely different from the office environment. It was clear that there was a skills gap on side of the Call center agents. A survey was conducted where Call center agents where requested to indicate the challenges they face in the new working environment and 95% of them mentioned lack of knowledge on organizing their day. The needs analysis revealed that they needed to be equipped with organizational skills so that they can manage their day effectively.

The planning phase is the second phase of this training project. Here, the project plan is completed; the scope and expectations are outlined; stakeholders' roles are clarified, and limitations are highlighted. The third phase is the administration of the project where all the resources are allocated to enable the project to proceed. This is the execution phase as the Trainer conducts Zoom classes and the User is trained on organisational skills. The final phase is the project closure where the User is assessed on what they have learned and issued with certificates. For those who do not pass the assessments, the Supervisors will handle the disciplinary process as per the company rules.

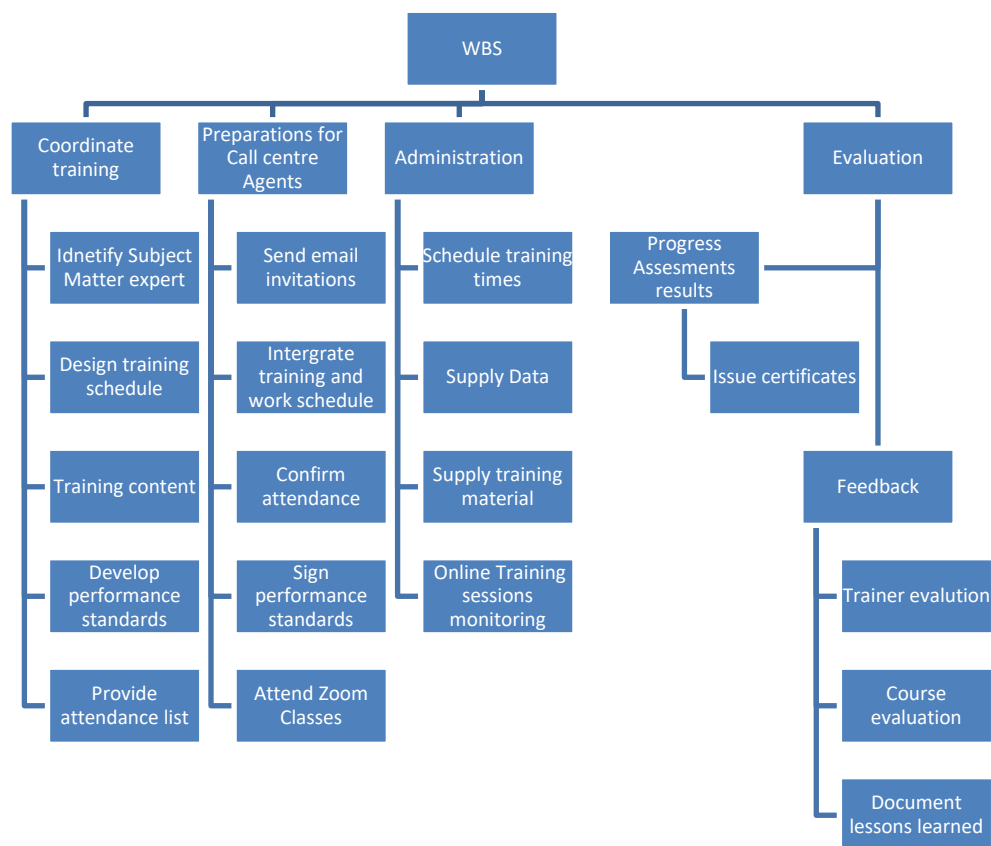
Assupol Call center Training Project Lifecycle diagram



2.8 Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

The Work Breakdown Structure serves an important method of arranging the projects activities so that those involved in the project are able to track activities and easily find ways to deal with any doubts that may arise as the project progresses (Practice Standard for Work Breakdown Structure, 2019). The training project at Assupol will take the Sub-system approach. Work packages are indicated under the deliverables.

Work Breakdown Structure



2.9 Responsibility Matrix

As a project leader, understand the personalities and working styles of my project team enabled me to allocate responsibilities based on their strengths for the benefit of the project (IPMA ,2015:57). Teamwork was achieved because of the excellent facilitation skills of the subject matter expert who facilitated the training.

The Assupol training project uses the Responsibility, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed chart known as RACI chart. This is an important chart because all the stakeholders can see who is responsible for what role. In this way, confusion and misunderstanding about what is expected of each stakeholder is avoided. The left-hand side of the chart indicates the activities as per Work Breakdown Structure. Different colours are used to indicate role.

R	Responsible
A	Accountable
C	Consulted
I	Informed

The Responsibility Attainment Matrix

Project Tasks	Project Owner	Project Manager	Users	Supervisors	Subject Matter Expert
Training facilitator					
Identify Subject matter expert	C	R	I	I	A
Design training schedule	I	R	I	I	C
Training content	C	R	I	I	A
Develop performance standards	C	R	I	I	A
Provide attendance list	I	A	I	C	R
Call centre Agents					
Send email invitations	I	R	A	C	I
Integrated training & work plan	I	C	R	A	I
Confirm attendance	I	I	R	C	I
Sign performance standards	I	C	R	A	I
Attend Zoom classes	I	I	R	C	A
Administration					
Schedule training times	I	R	C	A	I
Supply Data	R	A	C	I	C
Supply training material	I	C	I	I	R
Zoom classes monitor	I	I	R	C	A
Evaluation					
Progress assessment results	I	A	R	I	C
Issue certificates	C	R	I	I	A
Handle failures	C	R	I	C	A
Feedback					
Trainer evaluation	I	R	R	C	I
Course evaluation	I	A	R	I	I
Documents lessons learned	C	R	I	I	I

Schedule of Work (Gantt chart, estimation of time and theory)

To successfully deliver the project, it is important to have a clear schedule of work. Schedule of work according to PMBOK refers to the development and control of the tasks to be performed (Burke, 2017:176). In this project, the Gantt Chart assist with putting together the activities and identifying the time it will take to perform those tasks. Below, we indicate the projected time each task will take to be completed.

Gantt Chart

Activity from WBS	Immediate Predecessors	Time - Days
A	-	5
B	A	3
C	B A	2
D	A B C	6

2.10 Cost estimation

The cost estimates are helpful to the overall of the project. No project can start and end successfully without sufficient budget. Work activities are used to compile the cost estimate of the project. The following graph will be used for the cost estimates of the training project.

Resource	By whom?	For how long?	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost (Check after completion of the task)
Data	User, Trainer, and project manager	2 weeks	R500	R498.00
Study material	User and Trainer	2 weeks	R100	R100.00
Telephone	Project Manager	2 weeks	R300	R320.00

2.11 Resource Plan

Resource Plan is a process of clarifying how resources will be assigned to fulfil the tasks identified on the Project Plan (Practice Standard for Work Breakdown Structure, 2019). The types of resources required for this training project are computer, telephone, electronic study material, data. Teaching will be conducted remotely using Zoom classes. The User and subject matter expert require these resources for the project to take place.

2.12 Risk management plan

The purpose of the risk management plan is to help the project team lessen the prospect of risk from happening. It will enable the project team to anticipate risks and put preventative measures of preventing them from taking place (Method123, 2020). Assupol project risks include electricity blackouts occurring during scheduled training sessions. This risk can be mitigated by recording the training sessions so that they can be made available later.

A competence required at this stage is the responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders are committed to the risk and opportunity management process (IPMA, 2015:141).

2.13 Quality Plan

The quality plan is a plan which indicates the requirements of the Customer. For an end product/service to meet customer requirements means that it is fit for the intended purpose, does not have defects and it is a good enough quality in the customers eye (Nicholas and Steyn, 2017). In the Assupol project, the Call center agents will be able to apply the organisational skills learned during training to answer 90% of the calls coming through and reduce the call waiting time to 5minutes.

3 EXECUTION

Execution is the third phase in the project life cycle, where the plan is worked out and put into reality.



Picture – Assupol Training conducted via Microsoft Teams.

Execution is the third phase on the project life cycle and brings to life the deliverables. The following management processes are used to monitor and control the project (Method123, 2020:10).

3.1 Contract administration

Sign offs: -As milestones are achieved during the project implementation, the customer and sponsor are informed and requested to sign off on completed tasks. This process allows the Sponsor and Customer to keep track and updated on where the project is (Method123, 2020:77).

Crisis management: - Conflicts in projects should be expected, but what makes the difference is the approach and strategy used to handle conflict.

3.2 Communications management with Stakeholders

To keep stakeholders informed about the progress of the project communication management become important. A project Status report is issued weekly indicating how the training of Users is moving. Communication in our Assupol project is a two-way process where everyone is sharing their ideas, call for info, and obtaining feedback (Petersen, 2013).

In project reporting, the competence of personal communication is critical. “Personal communication includes the exchange of proper information, delivered accurately and consistently to all relevant parties” (IPMA, 2015:69).

A list of important meeting for the Assupol project was the kick off meeting with all stakeholders for project plan outline by the project manager, team weekly meeting to check project progress against Critical Path, new change requests, previous weeks activities and new weeks activities, formal review meetings at milestones and status review meetings to evaluate and provide an update on the status of the project(Petersen, 2013:76, Nicholas and Steyn, 2017)).

3.3 Quality assurance

Quality assurance refers to the element that the condition of the end product meets the specifications as indicated in the quality plan (Nicholas and Steyn, 2017:363). In the Assupol project, quality assurance is an ongoing process conducted at every stage of the key milestones by the PM and Sponsor.

4 MONITORING AND CONTROL

Monitoring and control is an ongoing process which happens from project inspection to closure. The following management processes are used to monitor and control the project (Method123, 2020:10).

4.1 Time management

It is important to record the amount of time spent on the project tasks as it has a direct impact on the project budget, resources, and schedule. During team meeting, trainer, and Call center Supervisors will provide a report on the time spent on the activities as per work packages.

4.2 Team management

The leadership competence assisted in ensuring that the project team is well guided, and the project is properly represented internally and externally (IPMA, 2015:76).

4.3 Cost management

Each week, the Call centre supervisors will give the project manager an update on the cost of data used during training sessions. The project manager will validate the information and allocate it in the Project cost accounting system (PCAS). The PCAS is a system used by the PM to track costs (Nicholas and Steyn, 2015:597).

4.4 Change Management

In the Assupol training project, all changes are communicated with the project manager. The person initiating the change will complete the Change Request form Appendix 1 and send it to the project manager via email.

After the first training session was completed, the trainer requested that the Zoom platform should be changed to Microsoft Teams for security reasons. The project manager received the change request form which clearly indicated the reasons, affected persons, cost implications.

People affected by the change – The project manager has the responsibility to inform all stakeholders affected by the change. Communication can be done via WhatsApp but should be followed by a formal email within 24hrs of sending the WhatsApp. The email is regarded as the formal means of communication which will be presented and archived with the project documents.

Cost implications of the change - If the cost of the change goes above the estimated activity cost, the project manager should convene a meeting with the project Sponsor and the stakeholders affected by the change for full review of the project. However, if the change does not affect the estimated activity cost or has a minimal effect of less than 10%, then the project manager can decide without consulting the project Sponsor.

4.5 Quality management

Quality management is the method used to evaluate the deliverables against the customer requirements by using quality assurance and quality control techniques (Method123, 2020:11).

4.6 Risk management

As the project progresses, risk management methods are used to identify, measure, and control the project risks (Method123, 2020:12).

5 PROJECT CLOSURE

This is the last phase of the project, when all the deliverables and activities have been completed and the project objectives have been met.

5.1 Acceptance

The acceptance is done by the Customer and Users to ensure that their needs and objectives have been met.

5.2 Final project reporting and handover

A Project Closure Report is submitted to the Customer for sign off. The PM convene the closure meeting where all the project documents are presented to the Customer. The Assupol trainer will provide a list of Call centre agents who have successfully completed the training test and the list of those who failed the test. Certificates of competence is issued to those who passed and remedial action is outlined to those who failed the test. The Supervisor and Users will complete an evaluation form to assess the trainer and the content presented. The customer will formally present their feedback on the overall project.

5.3 Review Project Completion

The following checklist was used to review performance of the training project at Assupol: -

REVIEW PROJECT COMPILATION CHECKLIST	YES	NO
Benefits achieved as outlined in the business case	✓	
Objectives stated in the charter have been achieved	✓	
Functioned within the Project Charter	✓	
Deliverables meet the Quality Plan standard	✓	
Deliverables are delivered within schedule	✓	
Project is within budget as per Financial Plan	✓	
Project is within Project Plan Schedule	✓	

5.4 Lessons learned

Lessons learned include identifying areas where the baseline plans differed with what transpired, analysis of the risk management results, and identifying positive and negative results (Petersen, 2013:78). Assupol training project baseline plan was achieved, the scope, objectives, deliverables, and milestones were realised as per schedule and within the budget.

6 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

On reflection, my biggest key learning was how the Baseline Plan affects the overall project. I realised that a clear and precise Baseline Plan provides direction, clears possible misunderstandings, boost morale, and gives one the confidence to approach any project with a winning attitude. Although nothing is guaranteed, having a good Baseline Plan is the best thing a person can do before engaging in a project.

My second key learning was how Project management can be applied in every area of my life. The group assignment where we projectized the module was an eye opener to the idea that we are daily engaged in projects. This affected how I approach my daily responsibilities, be it at home, church, or work. I gained perspective on how I can projectize my academic journey through and through.

I also appreciate how the module interlinked with other modules of the Post Graduate Diploma qualification. The principles of this module were also addressed in modules such as Operations Management, this made it easy to grasp similar concepts.

The global standard for individual competence outlined in the IPMA Individual Competence Baseline is a framework I will forever be grateful to have come across. These global standards serve as a continuous inspiration in my professional environment and I feel personally enriched by them. I am now able to identify deficiencies in my abilities, skills, and knowledge. Knowing which areas need improvement and where I am doing well has allowed me to understand myself better.

Doing this module helped me to understand how I learn. I observed how it was easy for me to understand the processes and concepts of project management by looking at pictures. It was a bit of a challenge to work with the group as we all had different styles of learning. However, this made me understand the importance of appreciating people the way they are, therefore regardless of our different learning styles, we all want to contribute and our contribution matters and adds value to others.

Before doing this, I presumed that learning from the past was something we only do in certain environments but not in others. I underestimated the importance of writing down the negative and positive lessons learned from doing an activity. After doing this module, I realise that keeping a written record of the lessons learned, good or bad, is significant and provides an opportunity to not reinvent the wheel, making life easier and less stressful.

Lastly, I have always regarded myself as an ethical person, therefore when the subject of ethics was discussed highlighting the importance of an ethical culture in projects, I got excited. I noticed that although one may be doing business in a culture that is unethical, that should not change one's values because of the environment instead, uphold ethical behaviour to positively influence the environments. Ethics remains a contentious issue because our world does not promote ethical culture.

7 REFERENCE LIST

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APPENDIX 1

PROJECT CHARTER				
General Project Information				
Project Name	Assupol Training Project			
Project Sponsor	Head of Call centre			
Project Manager	Cynthia Mofokeng			
Email address	clmofokeng@projects.com			
Phone number	5 556 667 777			
Organizational Unit	Customer Contact Centre			
Process Impacted	Daily Incoming Calls			
Expected Start Date	May 2, 2020			
Expected Completion Date	June 5, 2020			
Expected Savings	R150 000			
Estimated Costs	R50 000			
Quality assurance	Sponsor and Project Manager			
Stakeholders	Users, Project Sponsor, Project Manager, Call center Supervisors			
Descibe the Problem, Goals, Objectives and deliverables of the Project				
Problem:	The Call centre productivity levels reduced from 90% to 50% when the agents started working from home and the customer wait for 15 minutes before the call is answered which is the increased time of 10mintes.			
Purpose of Project:	The Call center is the backbone of Assupol's business, it is the convenient way for customers to receive service irrespective of their location. Lack of urgency from the Call centre to answer calls and long waiting times is negatively affecting Assupol’s productivity as customers feel neglected then move their business elsewhere. This project attempts to solve this problem by closing the skills gap and empower Call centre agents with the organisational skills to efficiently work from home.			
Business Case	Business confidence is going down due to increased call waiting time and unanswered calls. To demonstrate that Assupol care for its customers and is committed to efficient customer service, online training will be provided to all Call centre agents. The main benefit of this project has to do with increasing efficiency and business confidence.			
Goals	Train Call center agents with organisational skills to work from home. Increase productivity levels to 90% and reduce call waiting time to 5 minutes.			
Expected Deliverables	Coordinate training programme, preparations for the User, administration of the project and evaluations of the Users, training content and trainer.			
Define the Project Scope and Schedule				
Within Scope	The project is limited to training Call center agents on organisational skills.			
Outside of Scope	The project will not cover telephone etiquette and specific product information.			
	Key Milestones		Start	Complete
	Appoint subject matter expert		1/4/2020	3/4/2020
	Issue training notices		5/4/2020	10/4/2020
	confirm training dates and attendance		11/4/2020	15/4/2020
	Distribute training material		15/4/2020	17/4/2020
	Training sessions		20/4/2020	30/4/2020
	Assessments		2/5/2020	3/5/2020
	Issue certificates		6/5/2020	6/5/2020

APPENDIX 2

Change Request Form

Project Name: Work from home Call Centre Agents Training

Change description		
Reason for change		
Scope		
Cost		
Delivery		
Benefits		
Risks		
Date		
Approved	Project Sponsor	Date
Declined	Project Sponsor	Date