

Creating Project Business Cases

OVERVIEW

Workshop duration: 1 day.

It is generally acknowledged that the Business Case is probably the most critical document to be found in the Project Management Plan. Despite this there remains considerable confusion over why it is required, its content and who should create, approve and maintain it. Accordingly Business Cases are all too often poorly prepared, if indeed they are prepared at all.

The purpose of this workshop is to develop a detailed understanding of this critical document and its value in project related scenarios. The workshop will ensure delegates can create and use the Business Case, in practical terms, to ensure the right projects are approved and also guide their actions in effectively managing any size or complexity of project.

Please note: This is not a persuasive writing skills course – it focuses instead on the fundamental content headings and overall approach, rather than the styles of writing to be used.

The workshop is based around a 'live' case study project which requires delegates to work in groups to create an Outline Business Case in the 'Concept' phase, followed by a refined Full Business Case created in the 'Definition' phase. Delegates will fine tune their skills as the Full Business Case is completed and will then use the document to help them manage the project scenario. The workshop is highly interactive with a skilled and experienced trainer taking the part of the Project Sponsor, to ensure delegates are directed and supported through the completion and use of the Business Case.

IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

Suitable for anyone in a project scenario that needs to write, co-write, approve, maintain or use a Business Case to justify, run or report on a project. Those who need to learn the fundamentals of the wider range of project tools and techniques (e.g. Milestones, Gantt Charts, Network Diagrams, Risk Procedures etc) should consider "An Introduction to Effective Project Management".

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

By the end of this workshop you will be able to:

- Understand how a Business Case is developed and used throughout a typical project lifecycle
- Recognise the difference between an Outline and a Full Business Case
- Appreciate the various roles that will need to be involved in a Business Case
- Create an effectively structured Business Case containing the correct information
- Understand the connection with the Benefits Management Plan
- Know what to do if the Business Case needs to change
- Take appropriate action if the on-going justification for a project no longer exists
- Use the Business Case to help run and report on the success of the project

PRE-COURSE ACTIVITY

In order to maximise the learning, delegates are provided with some reading prior to the workshop, so they can familiarise themselves with the project scenario they will be using.

WHAT WILL IT COVER?

What is a Business Case?

- Definition of a Business Case
- Why are Business Cases required?
- What is the reality?

The Different Levels and Types of Business Case

- The three levels of public sector investment
- The Five Case Model
- The Strategic Outline Programme
- The Strategic Outline Case
- The Outline Business Case
- The Full Business Case
- The Business Case for private sector projects

The Business Case and the Project Lifecycle

- Creating the Outline Business Case in the 'Concept' phase
- Refining the Full Business Case & link to the Benefits Management Plan
- How to use the Business Case at phase/stage gates
- Using different Business Case versions for Post-Project reporting
- Benefits realisation and the Business Case

The Business Case - Roles and Responsibilities

- How a Project Sponsor should contribute
- User & Supplier Representatives – their value
- The involvement of the Project Manager & Project Team
- Project Support Offices and their part in the Business Case
- The other key stakeholders involved

Structuring a Business Case

- A more appropriate format for private sector projects
- Success Criteria, Success Factors and KPIs
- The importance of Requirements Management
- The typical content of a private sector Business Case

The need for a Benefits Management Plan in parallel

- Benefits and dis-benefits – their importance in a Business Case
- Why benefits realisation should demand more attention
- The structure and content of the Benefits Management Plan
- Benefits realisation and the Business Case

Changes to the Business Case – how to handle them

- Change Management and the Business Case
- Recording changes – why, what, when, who and where

Losing business justification – the required actions

- The causes of lost justification – what to watch for
- Reporting when justification disappears or is in doubt