



## SPORTS PROJECTS MANAGEMENT



**PROF. MS. MAURICIO RODRIGUES**  
PhD level graduate in Manufacturing Engineering  
(COPPE/UFRJ – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro)  
Projects Supervisor of Sports Science  
of the Brazilian Olympic Committee

The growing professional status of the sports sector demands their managers and other related professionals – coaches, trainers, nutritionists, physiotherapists, etc – to make innovative decisions when solving emerging challenges. On this new reality of great competition, the incorporation of a greater percentage of technology, intelligence and innovation is necessary to the products and services executed, so that they can stand out and differ<sup>1</sup>. According to this logic, those individuals who cannot adapt themselves to this new reality will have low probability of achieving success and perpetuate on their current activities.

According to the literature, one of the strategies to promote changes and develop initiatives with best results and in a more controlled way would be through its conduction by means of projects<sup>2,3,4</sup>. A project may be defined as a temporary effort for the creation of a product, service and/or single result<sup>3</sup>. In general, the work performed by people may be divided in two large groups: the operations and the projects. Though both are limited to the resources available (physical, human, financing, etc) and may be planned, executed and controlled; the operations are different from the projects for being characterized by continuous and repetitive efforts, orientated to the administrative and operational needs.

According to the definition presented above, we could have as examples of projects the construction of a building, the elaboration of a software, the organization of

a sports event and, also, the process of sports training. All examples presented are characterized by temporary efforts, that is, they present beginning, middle and end, even if they last from one day to many years. All of them aim at the creation of unique results, respectively, a certain ready building and in housing conditions, a certain software that answers to the specifications of the contracting party, a sports event that answers to all of their clients (athletes, spectators and sponsors) in a proper way and, finally, a training process that develops an athlete physically and technically.

Nowadays, project management is recognized as of vital importance due to the fact that it is the way by which one can put in practice the future vision (strategic planning) of a certain organization and/or individual (figure 1). Such recognition has motivated also the publishing of an international standard, the ISO 10 006 – Guidelines for quality project management. However, the simple proposition of projects does not assure the delivery of a product, service and/or single result successfully. On the contrary, without proper management, they will rarely achieve their goals or they are concluded on the deadline and with costs within an acceptable standard, specifically those of great magnitude and/or complexity<sup>2</sup>.

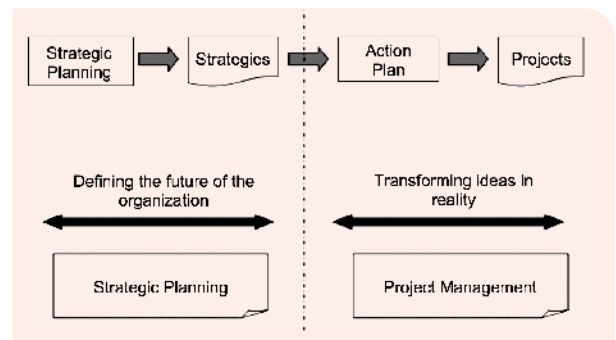


Figure 1. Relation between Strategic Planning and Project Management.

To reach success on the proposed projects, one should make use of the best practice available to perform their adequate management. Such fact would be achieved with the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to the activities of the project in order to attend their requisites<sup>3</sup>. This application has, among others, the objective of: a) identify the project's needs; b) establish clear and reachable goals; b) balance the conflicting demands of quality, scope, time and cost; and d) adapt the specifications, the plans and the approach to the different worries and expectations of the various parties.

Various institutions have reached this end, editing published pieces concentrating body of knowledge of the finest practices and disclosing different methodologies on the theme. The most diffused project management methodologies nowadays<sup>5</sup> are the one proposed by the American institution *Project Management Institute*<sup>3</sup> and by the British government body *Office of Government Commerce*<sup>2</sup>. Both of them proclaim the division of the project according to a "life cycle", that is, according to a set of sequence stages, related logically, in which specific activities are conducted and concluded by the delivery of products and/or services (figure 2). The division by stages aims to facilitate the management of the activities and to allow a better planning, execution and control of the project. The names and quantities of stages vary from one project to another and depend on their complexity and control<sup>4</sup>. A sports event, for example, could be divided on the following stages: a) conception; b) viability; c) hiring of services; d) event's performance and, e) event's conclusion (figure 2).

Besides the stages sequence, each methodology pre-

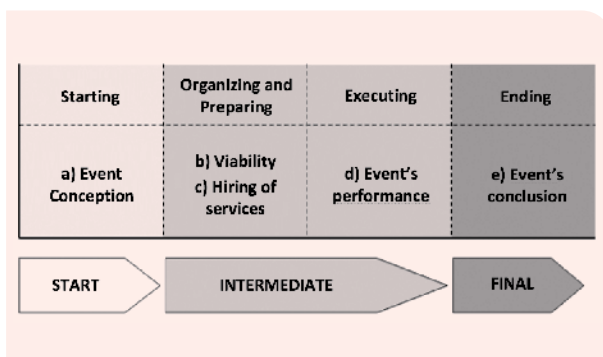


Figure 2. Life Cycle (stages) of a project

sents its systematization of which would be the processes (or groups of processes) necessary for the management of the project in different knowledge areas (or components). The *PMBOK® Guide*<sup>3</sup>, for example, defends the management of projects based on nine areas of knowledge: a) Integration; b) Scope; c) Time; d) Costs; e) Quality; f) Human Resources; g) Communications; h) Risks; and i) Acquisitions (figure 3), in five groups of processes: a) Starting; b) Planning; c) Execution; d) Monitoring and control; and e) Conclusion (figure 4).

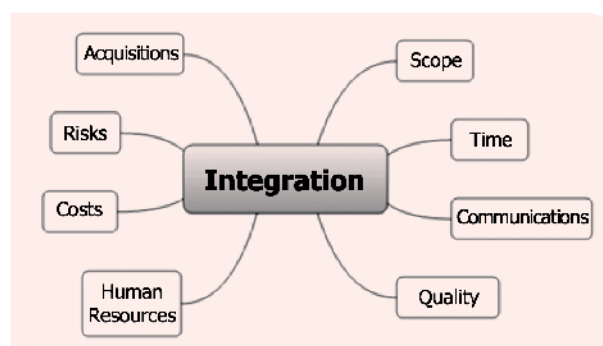


Figura 3. Relacionamento entre as nove áreas do conhecimento propostas pelo PMBOK® Guide (PMI, 2008)

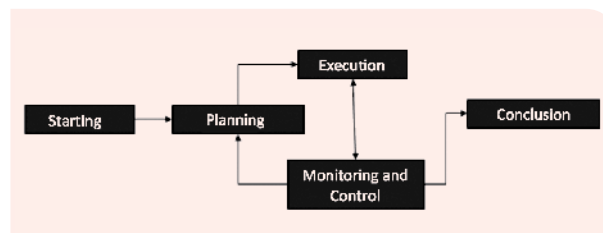


Figura 4. Grupos de processos segundo o PMBOK® Guide (PMI, 2008)

The processes and activities described on the nine areas of knowledge shall be grouped on the five groups of processes. They present dependencies among them and are typically executed on a same sequence of each project or, if necessary, on each stage of the project (figure 4). During the starting, the needs of the project shall be mapped, their objectives shall be defined, and the authorization – or awareness – of all of those involved to start it shall be obtained. During the planning, the work's scope shall be established, the objectives shall be refined and the action plan of how the objectives shall be achieved shall be defined. During the execution, the products and services shall be produced and delivered, according to the

specifications required and described on the planning. Now during the monitoring and control, the progress and performance of the project shall be followed up and regulated and the alterations necessary on the activities planned shall be identified and, when necessary, executed. Finally, during the conclusion, the activities of the project shall be finalized and the report of best practice – with all the accomplishments and failures of the project – shall be written.

On the areas of knowledge, the *PMBOK® Guide*<sup>3</sup> describes a series of processes and activities with distinctive focuses (figure 3). On the project's integration management, there are the processes necessary for the integration of various elements presented on the other areas of knowledge, which shall be identified, defined, combined, unified and coordinated on the five processes groups presented above. On the project's scope management, there are the processes necessary to assure that it includes the entire work required, and only the necessary to successfully complete the project; defining and controlling what will be and what will not be included on the project. On the project's time management, there are the processes necessary to its conclusion on the correct deadline. On the project's costs management, there are the processes necessary to estimate, calculate and control the costs, in a way that the project may be concluded within the approved budget.

*A more recent trend, contrary to the traditional methodologies, is the formulation of more agile project management methodologies.*

On the project's quality management there are the processes necessary to determine the quality policy, the goals and responsibilities in a way that the project answers to the needs it was performed for. On the project's human resources management there are the processes necessary to organize, manage and lead the project's team. On the management of the project's communications there are the necessary processes to minimize the probability of occurrence of negative events and to increase the occurrence of positive events from the identification, analysis,

planning, monitoring and answers to the project's opportunities and threats. And, finally, on the project's acquisition management, there are the processes necessary for the purchase, acquisition or rental of products, services or results and for the management of the contracts necessary to the project's team so they can perform their work.

A more recent trend, contrary to the traditional methodologies, is the formulation of more agile project management methodologies. The agile methodologies, according to their collaborators, would seek a faster adaptation to the scenery changes, a greater external interaction (with the clients) as well as internal (with the individuals of a project team) and a smaller worry with the generation of documentation. Now, the most used agile methodology is the SCRUM<sup>6</sup>. Conceived by TAKEUCHI and NONAKA<sup>7</sup> and diffused by Scrum Alliance (<http://www.scrumalliance.org/>), SCRUM is a work framework composed by a set of practices for the development of products and/or complex systems in which is not possible to predict what will happen, and through a further approach to optimize the project's prediction and to control risks.

In a very simplified way, the work's framework may be described as follows: The activities are started by a planning meeting (Sprint Planning Meeting), in which the team is in touch with the client so they can define a list of items or functionalities of the product/service to be delivered (Product Backlog). Still during the planning meeting, the list of items is divided in priorities in a way that the work that needs to be performed is estimated and the tasks that the team may perform are selected and estimated (Sprint Backlog). On the next stage, the project's team performs one or more cycles of interactive work, called Sprint for the development of the product/service or part of it, according to the prior priority definition. During the performance of the Sprints, the team controls the course of the work through Daily Meetings and using a graph called Sprint Burndown, in which the to-do activities are followed, as well as those in course, and the ones that shall be verified and the concluded ones. At the end of each Sprint, a review meeting (Sprint Review) is held, to verify if everything was really performed on the product/service delivered and the consequent validation by the client. Soon after the delivery, the work team shall hold a meeting of learned lessons (Sprint Retrospective) with the objective of improving the work's execution and/or the product/service for the next *Sprint*<sup>8</sup>.

Finally, it is important to call attention to the fact that the objective of this article was to demonstrate the importance of an adequate sports projects management so that the expected objectives and results are obtained, the established goals are met and the parties satisfied, besides briefly present how it can be performed. There was not the intention, at any moment, to judge the different exist-

ing methodologies used as example, respectively diffused by PMI and Scrum Alliance, they were chosen due to their greater diffusion as a project management tool<sup>5,6</sup>. It recommended to compare the existing methodologies in order to identify the one that best applies to the reality of each individual and/or organization and what would be the necessary adaptations for their implementation.

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