Project Request Approval

Project Request Approval—Activity Definition

Purpose:
The objective of this activity is to formalize the process by which new projects/service requests are initiated. By doing this, we can ensure that only those projects that warrant investment are actually undertaken and executed. This will also help in managing the workload of individual departments.

This process applies to all projects undertaken by the Office of the CIO of the Ohio State University.

Participants:
Initiator: Any customer or member of the Office of the CIO who submits a request
Operating Unit Manager: Resource Owner
Approver: The appropriate decision maker
Sponsor: The body or person who funds the project

Inputs:
Project Request Approval form [1]

Process:
1. The Initiator completes the Project Request form and requests approval (signature) from the appropriate person as established via the standard operating procedure of the work unit. Anyone can initiate a request. The form contains information such as:
    a. Customer name, phone, and department
    b. Description of the business need or production problem
    c. High-level business reason category for the request
    d. Goal of the project
    e. Impact on the business unit
2. The appropriate area manager reviews the request to determine a high-level work effort range for planning purposes.
3. The request goes to the Project Approver for a decision. Approval signifies authorization to invest effort.
4. The Governance Body/Process evaluates the Project Request form and makes a decision to accept or deny the request based on the following criteria:
    a. Value to organization
    b. Criticality
    c. Estimated effort and resource availability
    d. Risks
    e. Impact and/or dependence on other projects
    f. Any other criteria thought necessary and relevant to the organization/project
5. If the Governance Body grants approval, the project moves to the next stage, based upon the Project Class, where a Project Charter is created. In some cases, the creation of a separate Business Case document may be required.
6. Depending on the size and scope of the project, the Project Manager and the Core Project team may be assigned at any time after project initiation and definitely prior to project kick-off.

Outputs:
Approved or denied Project Request form

Project-- Request Approval—Guidelines:

1. Customer details: - The customer name, phone number, and customer department need to be filled out in the form.
2. Description of business need or problem or opportunity: - Why is this project required? A brief description of the business need has to be filled in. e.g. different departments of the University use different email systems. This increases the amount of training provided to people taking calls in the help desk.
   Supporting documentation (if available) for the 'Business Need' field needs to be provided by the Initiator.
3. Classify the request by type: This field will help assign priority to the project. Is this project being created to correct errors that exist? Or is this project request a result of an internal or external mandate? Is it a process improvement, a value add or a business opportunity? e.g. A change in legal requirement would be an external mandate while a system upgrade or a change that is mandated by the Department Head would be an internal mandate.
4. Goal: Describe the project goal. What does the project plan to achieve? e.g. The goal is to route all help desk inquiries through a single point. OR The goal is to ensure that all university departments use the same email system.
5. Business Impact: Determine if any area of work will be affected by decisions on the project. What will be accomplished if the project is undertaken? What will be the result if the project is not undertaken? The Initiator needs to identify related projects i.e. projects which are dependent on this initiative, or projects upon which this initiative is dependent.
6. High-level effort range: Estimate approximately how many person-hours will be required for executing the project.
7. Date Needed: This is an optional field and needs to be filled in only if there is a deadline before which the project definitely needs to be completed.
8. To grant or deny approval to the project request:
   The criteria that need to be taken into account while evaluating a project request are as follows:
   - Value to organization: Is this project aligned with the overall strategy?
   - Criticality- How critical is the project? Is the need being satisfied by a less efficient method or is it not being satisfied at all?
   - Amount of effort to be spent
   - Workload of resources- If the existing workload doesn't allow for immediate assignment, then the project priority must be reviewed with the initiator.
   - Risks
   - Impact on other projects
   - Any other criteria thought necessary and relevant to the organization/project
9. Additional approvals from the sponsor or customer may be required.