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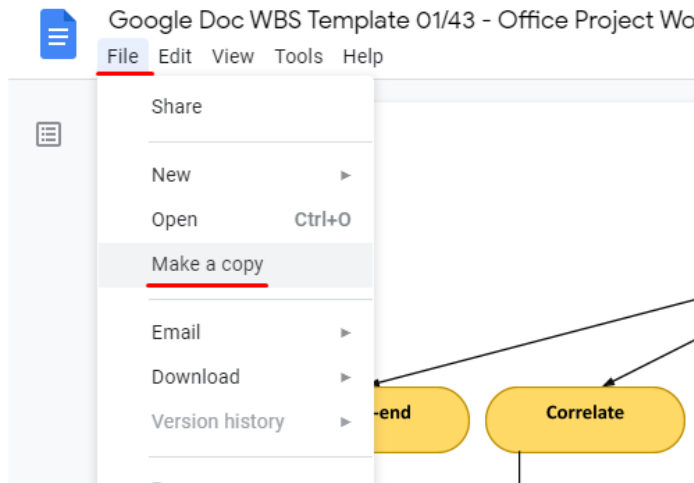
Lesson Learned Report

<Project Name>

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1 Introduction

Capturing lessons learned is an integral part of every project and serves several purposes. While the finalization of a formal lessons learned document is completed during the project closeout process, capturing lessons learned should occur throughout the project lifecycle to ensure all information is documented in a timely and accurate manner. The lessons learned document serves as a valuable tool for use by other project managers within an organization who are assigned similar projects. This document should not only describe what went wrong during a project and suggestions to avoid similar occurrences in the future, but it should also describe what went well and how similar projects may benefit from this information. This document should be communicated to the project sponsor and Project Management Office (PMO) for inclusion in the organizational assets and archives as part of the lessons learned database. If the organization does not have a PMO then other, more formal means of communicating the lessons learned should be utilized to ensure all project managers are included.

The purpose of the lessons learned document for the [Project Name] is to capture the project's lessons learned in a formal document for use by other project managers on similar future projects. This document may be used as part of new project planning for similar projects in order to determine what problems occurred, how those problems were handled, and how similar issues may be avoided in the future. Additionally, this document details what went well with the project and why, so that other project managers may capitalize on these actions. Project managers may also use this document to determine who the project team members were in order to solicit feedback for planning their projects in the future. This document will be formally communicated with the organization and will become a part of the organizational assets and archives.

2 Lessons Learned Approach

The lessons learned approach describes how the document should be created, what it should consist of, and how lessons should be categorized. It is important that the lessons learned approach is covered in the initial stages of project planning, mainly because a methodology, along with an appropriate set of tools, should be established to capture these lessons throughout the project's lifecycle. A project journal is one example of a tool to

capture these lessons. If no thought is given to lessons learned until project closeout, it is likely that many lessons and details will be omitted from the document. The contents of the lessons learned document should also be determined ahead of time. The information should be detailed enough to provide value for future use and the contents should be consistent with other lessons learned documents or organizational standards. The categorization of lessons learned is another consideration. Many organizations categorize lessons learned by project lifecycle phase or by related knowledge area.

The lessons learned from the [Project Name] are compiled from project journal entries throughout the project lifecycle. Lessons learned were also gathered from both realized and unrealized risks in the project risk register, as well as through interviews with project team members and other stakeholder as necessary. The lessons learned from this project should be used as references for future projects, and should contain an adequate level of detail so that other project managers may have enough information on which to help base their project plans. The lessons learned in this document are categorized by project knowledge area. These knowledge areas consist of: procurement management, risk management, integration management, quality management, time management, cost management, scope management, human resource management, and communications management. NOTE: Some knowledge areas may not contain lessons learned if none were documented throughout the project lifecycle.

3   Lessons Learned from this Project

The lessons learned must be communicated in a consistent manner. In addition to the categorization and description of the lesson, it is important to state what the impact was and provide a recommendation for project managers to consider on future projects.

The following chart lists the lessons learned for the [Project Name]. These lessons are categorized by project knowledge area. Descriptions, impacts, and recommendations are provided for consideration on similar future new construction projects. It is important to note that not only failures or shortcomings are included but successes as well.

Category	Issue Name	Problem/Success	Impact	Recommendation
Procurement Management	Contract Requirements	The Project Manager (PM) was not fully engaged in the contract process.	All requirements were not included in the initial contract award. A contract modification was required which added a week to the project.	PM must be fully engaged in all contract processes. This must be communicated to both PM and contract personnel.
Human Resources Management	Award Plan	There was no plan for providing awards and recognition to team members.	Toward the end of the project morale was low among the project team. There was increased conflict and team members were asking to leave the project.	The PM should institute and communicate an awards/recognition program for every project.

Scope Management	Scope Creep	Stakeholders continuously tried adding to the project scope throughout the project lifecycle.	The PM did not have a plan for addressing scope creep and allowed some requirements to be added until the sponsor stopped it. Overall project delay of 3 weeks was the result.	The PM must have an approval process for any proposed scope changes and communicate this process to all stakeholders.
Quality Management	Building Material	A process for determining acceptable building material quality was planned into the project.	This allowed the project team to work with the contractors to smoothly ensure all materials were of acceptable quality and avoided any re-work and delays associated with substandard material.	Always plan quality standards and allowances into the project plan. This helps avoid delays and cost overruns.

Risk Management	Zoning Approval	A risk was identified that there may be delays in receiving approval from the county zoning board. This was a success because it was identified early and planned for.	Impact was minimal because the PM included potential zoning delays into the project schedule.	Always consider external impacts on the project cost and schedule. This must be continuous throughout the project lifecycle.

Table 1: Lesson learned

4   Lessons Learned Knowledge Base / Database

The Lessons Learned Knowledge Base/Database contains historical information from previous projects. It is part of the organizational project assets and provides a valuable source of information to be used by similar projects in the future. All project lessons learned and other historical information need to be transferred to this knowledge base/database in order to provide one centralized repository for ease of use. This should also include information on issues and risks as well as techniques that worked well which can be applied to future projects. Most lessons learned knowledge base/databases contain large amounts of information, so it is important that there is a system for cataloging this information.

The lessons learned for the [Project Name] will be contained in the organizational lessons learned knowledge base maintained by the project management office (PMO). This information will be cataloged under the project's year (2015) and the type of project (New Construction) for future reference. This information will be valuable for any project manager assigned to a new construction project in the future.

5   Lessons Learned Applied from Previous Projects

The lessons learned document might also state which historical lessons learned were used on this project. This information not only shows the value of the documentation of such lessons, but it also shows which lessons are consistently applied by other similar projects. It

is important to reference not only what the lesson was but from which project it was associated with.

The [Project Name] utilized several lessons learned from past projects:

- The addition of a risk associated with planning cost and schedule based on external dependencies (i.e. zoning approvals) was determined during the planning process by consulting the lessons learned from the Building #3 expansion project from 2009.
- The planning of acceptable quality standards was based on lessons learned from the Startup Site Construction Project of 2007. By planning for quality standards the project team was able to avoid schedule and cost overruns by clearly communicating acceptable quality standards to all contractors involved with the project.

6 Process Improvement Recommendations

As lessons learned are collected and documented, the organization should approve and implement any process improvements identified. It is important for organizations to strive for continuous improvement and this portion of the lessons learned process is an integral step.

As indicated in the lessons learned chart above, the [Project Name] did not have a process for reviewing and approving requested changes in requirements or project scope. This is a lesson learned for similar future projects, and the organization must ensure that all project managers are aware of the need for this process to be included in the planning of all future projects. Therefore, it is recommended that prior to work beginning on any new project, the project manager must brief the project sponsor on the process for requesting and approving changes to project scope.

Appendix