

# UAB LEARNDEVWHISPER

*A Weekly Publication of Learning*

## Initiate and Define a Project in Challenging Times

Projects can be hard to get off the ground under the best of circumstances, and the difficulty has only grown in our current environment. The initiation and definition stage of a project is critical to a project's overall success. It is asking the fundamental questions and coming to an agreement as a team around those answers. Individually, and as teams, we often neglect this important step in the project management process.

Sometimes, the temptation to "do something" is great, especially during this quarantine. However, remember when you run into problems, go back to the basics.

The initiation stage of the project management process consists of the following elements:

- The WHY: Understand and clearly define the project's purpose and what led to the project's inception – even though sometimes out of our control.
- The HOW: Understand and explore all available options. Usually, there are several ways to accomplish the same objective, but like the "Why," it may be out of our control. Failing to clearly define the "How" early in a project can lead to scope creep in later stages.
- The WHAT: Begin to define the resources needed and the broader actions required to complete the project even though the "What" is expanded upon in later project stages, the inception stage is where to start laying the groundwork.
- The WHEN: Seek to layout the broader project timeline and estimate the time the project will take to complete with the project team. The "When," like the "What," can include developing a more detailed timeline during the planning phase.
- The WHO: Identify key stakeholders early in the project management process. This step is critical to a project's success. Understanding who will be affected by the project, who's support is essential, and who's inclusion will be essential greatly increases the chances of the project's success.

### KEEP ON LEARNING\*

- ▶ Please join us for the virtual session, "[Initiate and Define a Project in Challenging Times](#)" on April 29, at 10:00 am.
  - ▶ Explore the resources on the Project Management Institute website: [www.pmi.org/](http://www.pmi.org/)
  - ▶ For a deep dive, consider purchasing a copy of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK)
- Explore a variety of Project Management courses and videos on LinkedIn Learning. [www.uab.edu/linkedinlearning/](http://www.uab.edu/linkedinlearning/)

If you have any questions, please contact Jeremy Wass at [jwass@uab.edu](mailto:jwass@uab.edu).

### CALL TO ACTION:

- Consider using a project scope document to initiate your next project.
- When defining the "Why," consider using the [Nine Why's liberating structure exercise](#).