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SIMPLE TRICKS
WHEN
MANAGING QUALITY

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FIRST TRICK

QUALITY is a weird thing. It is so essential to what we do in projects and still it seems to be the subject which is the least approachable for a lot of project managers.
As it stands it is far from being as complicated as people make it sound.

The first thing to understand is that you have 2 focuses on quality : The Quality of Processes and the Quality of PRODUCTS.

Here we focus on the Quality of PRODUCTS.

A Product is whatever is created during the course of a project. It can be something tangible or intagible, a service, a document, a procedure or even a person
(*a trained staff member can be a product of a project for instance*).

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SECOND TRICK

QUALITY OF PRODUCTS is all about to what level of "refinement" a product needs to be delivered.
You first need to define a reference against which you will be able to compare the produced products.

Then you define and describe the products themselves.
What they need to look like, what colour, what weight, the speed at which they deliver their throuhput are only a few examples.
You define globally what the users will need to make the project a success and define those in measurable terms so there is no hesitation at the end of what success actually mean to all those involved in the project.

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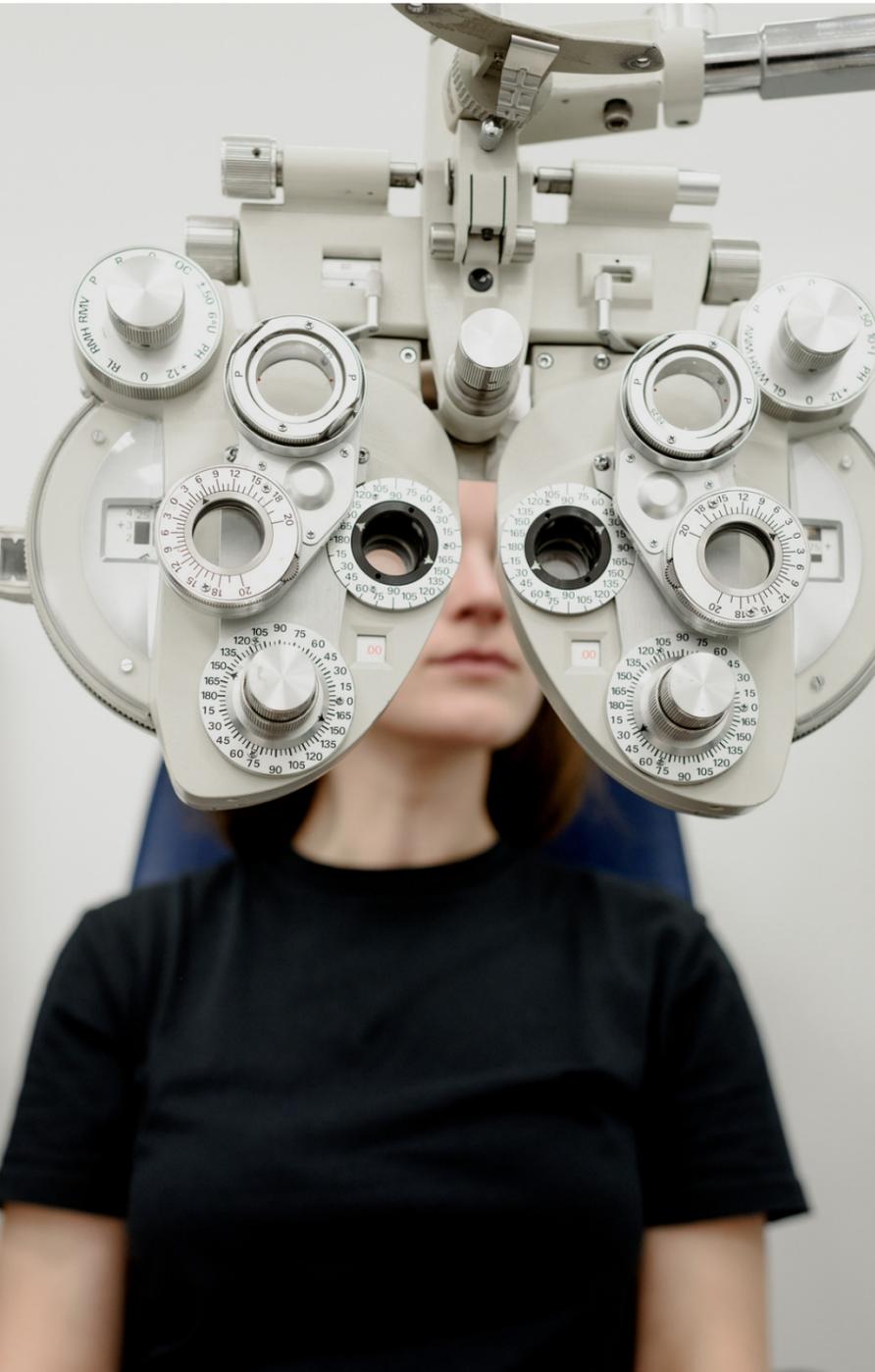
THIRD TRICK

The next step is to define and describe each item that make up the final product in more technical terms and make sure the teams who will need to produce them have a clear and unambiguous understanding of what they need to create which once assembled with the other parts of the project will make the project a success.

This part is essential because you can only expect from a team that it delivers what is described.

Once created those products will be tested against the description you have made. These tests are made by independent observers who will confirm that the product is correct.

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FOURTH TRICK

Finally, the products have to be accepted but those who will use them. This final step confirms that the products are in line with what was expected at the beginning of the project. This also means that users can start using the products which will in turn enable the organisation to earn the rewards of the efforts made by the project.

Some products will be accepted during the course of the project (in a phased delivery) but some others, in particular the final product of the project will only be delivered as the project is closing during a hand-over activity. This is when the Budget Owner with the user representative confirm they are happy for the last bills to be paid to external suppliers for instance.

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FIFTH TRICK

Tests are a necessary part of any production and project delivery of products is no different.

Care needs to be taken to clearly define which tests will be applied to the products once they are ready for validation.
The teams will create the products not only based on their description but also according to the type of test they will be validated against.

Make clear what tests will be used to validate products to avoid any surprises after production.

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REMINDER

Define the requirements for the final product of the project.

Analyse all the components of that product and describe

each one with precision and using measurable criteria to avoid

any misunderstanding.

Let the team create the product based on those criteria and

the type of test they will endure once ready and available.

Get user representatives to validate and accept the final

products at the end of the project.

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ESSENTIALLY

Quality of products is about ensuring both users and suppliers have the same understanding of what the project requires for it to be successful.

A little effort at the start of the project goes a long way into ensuring the success of the project once products are delivered by teams.

This is time well spent as all parties involved will know what to do.

Committing to quality early on helps to have an objective view of what is produced when often validation can be quite subjective and lead to judgement and disagreements.

This quality approach helps to avoids this.

ACTION PLAN

before the project

Deliverables of a project must enable the benefits to be realised.
It is key therefore that whatever is created corresponds to the needs which the project demands.

Define the measurable criteria for each deliverable AND agree with all involved the way in which they will be verified and validated.
Describe this unambiguously to avoid any discussions or disappointments.

during the project

Verify the deliverables as they are being produced.

Ensure those verifying the quality are independent of those creating the products to avoid any collusion or conflicts of interest.

Define clearly the moments at which products will be verified and plan the time required for verification in each of your plans.

after the project

Before you close your project, confirm that all products have been created, that they have been verified and that they are available for use by the organisation.

Note what went well and what did not go as well to learn from and improve in future projects.

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LIST THE KEY CRITERIA YOU WILL REQUIRE FOR YOUR FINAL PRODUCT

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BRIEFLY DEFINE HOW YOU WILL VERIFY QUALITY DURING YOUR NEXT PROJECT

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ABOUT US

BlueHAT delivers courses, coaching and consulting related to Project, Programme, Portfolio and Risk Management in view to enable organisations to bring Change and allow for deep Business and Personal Transformation.
Our goal is to elevate the owners of businesses and help them become Leaders.

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