The Project Check is the ultimate tool for evaluating the effectiveness of your project approach. The Project Check helps you, as a project leader or client, to get the conversation going between the most important parties involved in your project.

Together you look at the progress of the project process:

* the contribution to the organisational goals;
* the technique of the planning and execution;
* the collaboration within the team.

With The Project Check you can be certain that each of these approaches will come up, so you can continue the good practices and improve the lesser ones. This allows you to achieve your project results with greater ease.

The Project Check contains:
* Seven sets of 26 cards, 25 with propositions and one role card
* Three cards to explain the three symbols at the bottom of the 25 cards
* A manual

When to Do The Project Check?
The Project Check can easily be applied to one of your projects. The Project Check is organised during formal moments, such as interim or final evaluations, or when you notice during the project that things no longer run as smoothly as before.
The results of The Project Check show you what the strengths of the project approach are and offer you concrete starting points for improvement: for your project and for the manner project management is integrated into the organisation as well.
The condition for performing The Project Check is that the parties involved are prepared to learn and are willing to search for less obvious causes of problems.

Who Do The Project Check?
The Project Check is performed by at least 3 and at the most 7 parties involved in the project.
They represent the roles involved in the project. You can do The Project Check with the actual role owners, in which case you could invite the users themselves to join; but you can also request the project team members to imagine themselves into another person's role.

How Does The Project Check Work?
The Project Check takes 2.5 hours to complete. In the first round of The Project Check, you look for the strengths of your project by means of propositions on cards. This allows you to view the project from the different roles, such as the project leader, the project team members, the client and the users of the project result. The second round invites you to look for points of improvement, again from the perspective of the different roles. Finally, agreements are made about follow-up. The Project Check requires no preparation from the participants.

In addition, you can also use The Project Check as a checklist for yourself. You choose a role, work through the set of cards, imagine yourself into a role and ask yourself: How would this role view the project right at this very moment? What does he appreciate, where are his concerns?
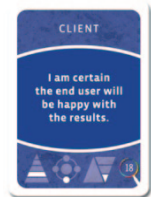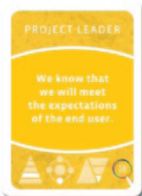
The Project Check

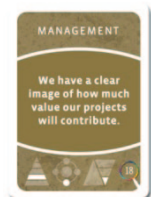## The Seven Roles of The Project Check

The user of the project result,
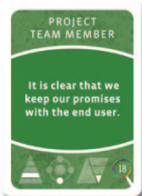who wants the result to meet his needs.

The client,
who is responsible for the long-term goals of
the project and supplies the necessary means.

The project leader,
who is responsible for producing a satisfying project result.

The management,
who determine whether the project contributes
to the strategy and goals of the organisation.

The project team members from one's own organisation,
who contribute to the realisation of the project result
from their own areas of expertise.

The project environment,
which experiences the effects of the project,
but not the benefits.
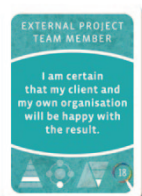
Project team members from external parties,
who (in addition to the points under 'project team members')
contribute to the goals of their own organisation.

There are 25 cards available for each role. Each card contains a proposition about project management, seen from the perspective of the role in question.
At the bottom of each card are symbols for team effectiveness, the project process and the project phasing. Each symbol indicates to which level the card relates. An experienced (external) process facilitator uses these symbols to investigate the issue further.

Initiator's preparation

Goal: To determine which roles are relevant in the project and invite the parties involved.
Who: Those who wish to evaluate the project by means of The Project Check.
Duration: Approximately 1 hour.

1. Determine which roles are relevant for this Project Check. Three roles should always be represented: the user of the end result, the project leader and the client. You could call these the core roles of each project. Often different users can be designated in each project.

2. If you have multiple clients, user groups or groups in the project environment: specify who you are talking about. For example: the residents of the Third Avenue, or: the manager of department X.

3. Determine which people will participate in The Project Check. Try to have as many people who fulfil those roles present themselves. If this is not possible: determine who will 'play' the role. Ask this person to imagine himself in the other party's shoes. Make sure there are no double roles.

4. Determine who will facilitate the meeting. It is recommended that this person will not actively participate in The Project Check - rather, they will function as a process facilitator.

5. Invite all parties involved, and inform them about their role and that of the process facilitator if necessary.

Complex situations and projects
The website www.theprojectcheck.com offers suggestions about how to deal with complex situations and projects, for example those involving multiple groups of users, multiple clients, external project leaders, etc.

Doing The Project Check

Duration: Approximately 2.5 hours.
Needed items: Set of cards per role, flip-chart, markers, post-its.

Introduction

Make sure that the reason, goal, method, duration and result of this Project Check
are clear for everyone.

Round 1: What is going well? (1 hour)

In this first round, you will investigate what everyone experiences to be strong points in the project
and what they yield.

1. Everyone receives the set of cards pertaining to their role.

2. Each participant subsequently determines which three cards they feel reflect why things are going
    well in the project. Let the cards be a source of inspiration, but reformulate when needed in your
    own words what exactly is going so well. If you feel something is really missing, then 'use' the blank
    card 25 and formulate it yourself.

3. Everyone determines which card they would like to illustrate (first) and then give a brief explanation
    of why they picked that card. The participants indicate how the point on the card influenced the
    success of the project or organisation according to them.
    For example, if the project team member chose card 18 *'It is clear that we keep our promises with
    the user'*: 'I like this way of working because you don't always have to chase everything three times,
    and a customer also expressed his appreciation for this recently.'
    Note down the points so everyone can see them.

4. Discuss: How did these become the strong points? Why are things going so well? Or: What are the
    three most important success factors of this project? An example, again for card 18, *'It is clear that
    we keep our promises with the user'*: '... because everyone in the team always has a clear overview of
    the project.'
    And: How do you work together to hold onto those success factors? For example: 'At the start of
    projects, project leaders promise to share as much information as possible with everyone. And we
    remind each other to do so as well.'

5. Celebrate this success in an appropriate way!

Round 2: What can be improved? (1 hour)

The second round is spent searching for improvement possibilities.
In addition to this, everyone will research what they can personally contribute.

1. Just like in round 1, each role gets 'its own' cards.

2. Everyone chooses three cards again.
   Now focus on: What is not going well enough? What can be improved?
   If you feel something is really missing, then use the blank card 25 and formulate it yourself.

3. Everyone offers an explanation about their most important card: Why did you choose this
   particular one? Which burden do you/the project experience from this not running properly?
   Others do not respond yet at this point, but they will have opportunity to do so later on.

4. Determine together which three cards adversely affect the success of the project the most.
   Put the chosen cards on the table so everyone can clearly see them.

5. Make an analysis of the possible causes: What has not been arranged properly or what is missing?
   Note down the points so everyone can see them.

6. Determine which causes -improvement points- you would like to tackle first.

7. Everyone can now answer questions a to d for each improvement point.
   Schedule 5 minutes per individual for this.

   a. Can strong points from the first round help improve the less strong points?

   b. Can I start with improving these points myself right away or do I think that someone else
      should do it?

   c. If you cannot deal with them yourself right away: Who could and what would you like the
      other person to do about it? Then determine what you can do yourself to ensure the other
      person will take up the improvement point.

   d. Determine if you can achieve 'quick wins': What could you and others do differently from
      tomorrow onwards?

8. Everyone tells their resolutions to the group and makes agreements.
   You note them down so everyone can see them.

9. For which points should you take action together? Make agreements about that as well.

The Project Check

Conclusion

10. Determine: To what extent are the positive and improvement points found characteristic for the project management in the organisation? Is it necessary that this will be changed? What can you do about this?

11. Everyone determines for themselves: How was it to do The Project Check? Did it produce anything new? What can be improved next time? Share this with the group.

12. Plan a follow-up meeting to exchange the results of the execution of all resolutions with each other.

Variants

You can choose from several variants to do The Project Check.

- **The Team Check**
  Take the set of cards for the project team member and put them in order (see numbers on the bottom right). The project leader reads out the cards one by one, while the project team members note down which aspects they personally experience to be positive. Afterwards the chosen cards are put on the table and everyone explains their choice. In the second round, everyone notes down which points can be improved.

- **The Client Check**
  Do The Project Check with the project team, but without the user. You can speak freely.
  Reach a result, then note it down. Afterwards, invite the user and determine his experience by means of the cards. Discuss similarities and differences between your conclusions and those of the user. You can perform The Project Check in the same way with the client.

- **The Feedback Check**
  Search through the cards for the card you feel best describes what someone's positive contribution to the project is. Give that card to this person. The same goes for constructive criticism: What could the other person improve?

- **The Role Check**
  If you would like to know more about the perspective with which someone fulfils their role, take the set of that specific role, choose the card that intrigues you the most and give it to the person who actually fulfils that role. This person then answers the questions: What does this mean in my daily practice? How do I deal with this? What choices do I make in this? Why?

- **The Project Management Check**
  Do The Project Check as described above, with a focus on the following question:
  What is characteristic for the management of project in this organisation?