**Handing over the project, close down and knowledge capture**

- Even when the project appears to be completed there might be as much as 25% of the original costs involved in putting things right, rework and so forth.

- The three aspects of project afterlife show how successful the project leader and manager has been in terms of:
  - Ensuring that the client organisation is linked into the project so that they can use it effectively.
  - Auditing the project life cycle and processes and building on strengths to minimise the impact of weaknesses.
  - Dismantling the project team and celebrating the success of the project.

- Letting go of a project at its winding up is not always easy.

- The project team may well go through a ‘mourning’ phase.

Towards the final stage of the development of a project it is useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the project process. Some useful questions to ask are as follows:

- Are there too many people working on too many projects?
- Do the priorities change frequently?
- Are the projects technically focused with a lack of market awareness?

With regard to specific projects:

- Were the success criteria adequately defined?
- Was the project team effective?
- Did the project control tools help or hinder the project?
- What problems occurred and how were they addressed?
- What constraints emerged that were surprising?
- Was the stakeholder management effective?
- Did the communication processes work effectively?

**Study questions:** Have you addressed the three general questions of project audit namely are too many people involved in too many projects, do the priorities change frequently and are your projects
technically focused with a lack of market awareness? Regarding your chosen project how would you answer the specific question areas?

- Creating the new relationship with the client
- Relating to other teams who are using the project in day to day operations
- Dealing with newcomers who don’t know the history of the project and its issues
- Remembering how you felt when you first encountered the project
- Remembering that your client’s people are now where you were at the start in terms of lack of knowledge.

- Involve the users at the earliest opportunity
- Build in link people to ease the handover
- Client organisation needs an implementation manager
- Bring support people into the team involved in the handover to gain all round commitment
- Build up the introduction of the project to the users
- Provide a number of short training sessions
- Provide help line support
- Use small group training with the client’s people to address initiation problems
- Build up a resource of specialist backup
- Develop a cadre of ‘leading users’ who are destined to become experts in the implementation of the project
- Create a learning centre or website to promote implementation experience and learning
- Write clear documentation and handbooks which are user friendly.

**Study questions:** To what extent have the above factors been taken into consideration in any earlier projects which you have handed over? Are there any important areas you can add which are specific to your projects?
This process is one created by a major computer manufacturer. The stages are as follows:

Create awareness of the project before its implementation

Stimulate interest in the project before its implementation

Reassurance about the new working practices involved

Introduce the system in such a way as to demonstrate the benefits

Establish formal training programmes

Practice problem solving approaches for coping with the early stages of implementation

Offer additional training once the project is underway

Review the systems strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate action.

**Study assignment:** Create your own version of the project handover process which will be relevant and work for your organisation and for your projects.

An interesting graph can be drawn of the typical emotional reactions and enthusiasm level of a project team and this has been termed a ‘moodograph’. A typical moodograph response pattern is shown in the slide.

Emotions can become significant at the end of the project process when handover takes place. In an earlier session we mentioned that project teams may go through ‘adjourning’ and ‘mourning phases’ and new members of the team drafted in shortly before handover may result in a ‘reforming’ stage. In the slide we show what typically happens to the enthusiasm of the team members. We can see that enthusiasm increase as the project develops and then it dips and can become quite negative at the time of handover. However, as new projects emerge and the teams reform then the enthusiasm returns.

**Study questions:** To what extent have you noticed the Moodograph effect with any project teams which you have led or of which you have been involved? What steps can you take to manage this mood swing of enthusiasm level?

Much has been written about the learning organisation which is relevant to the project team. In particular the concepts of knowledge capture and knowledge transfer from one project to another is important.

In 1990 Peter Senge published his book ‘The Fifth Discipline’ which identified five issues relevant to the learning organisation and these are equally relevant to the ‘learning project team’:

Firstly, systems thinking – thinking outside the ‘box’ of one’s own job role and considering the impact of any changes you make in terms of your working practices on the project as a whole
Secondly, personal mastery – being as good as you can be at what you do and this means competence analysis and development both for your current role and your work in the future both individually and as a member of a project team

Thirdly, mental models – remembering that it is positive beliefs that drive effective behaviour

Fourthly, building shared vision – developing emotional alignment in the team and ensuring that everyone is supporting the work in every way based on a common vision

Finally, and perhaps most important, promoting team learning – capturing the learning which the team has acquired and transferring that learning to future projects

Overall we need to developing a positive culture which will handle new challenges based on shared assumptions of what is important in terms of how the team works.

**Study questions:** If you were to assign marks out of ten for each of Senge’s five factors of the learning organisation how would your project team fare? What steps can you take to promote a positive culture within the team based on the ideas of the underpinning assumptions of what is important in terms of how the team works?

Finally some interesting issues to consider. Is the handover phase really a ‘termination phase’ or an opportunity to develop relationships which will generate new projects?

Handling the assumption that ‘delivery’ or ‘execution’ has taken place is important. There will always be outstanding issues to address.

How effective has the project process been in terms of use of resources and other key issues?

To what extent has formalising and recording the learning for the benefit of future projects taken place?

Have you captured successful improvisation as ‘emerging best practice’ and logged and recorded ‘tacit’ knowledge.

**Study assignment:** Review all ten sessions of this project and thank you for your participation in this programme.