**Project Reporting Dashboard**

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Project Dashboards come in three basic types, creating these dashboards depends on the type of project and the intended audience for the dashboard. Understanding the project type often shapes that dashboard type. Another thing that should shape the design of the dashboard is the intended audience.

The first step to creating a dashboard is to select a purpose for the dashboard. This will eliminate a lot of possible things that could go into the dashboard which could make it confusing or even a failure. Questions need to be asked, is it supposed to be an operational dashboard, an analytical dashboard or a strategic dashboard. This will prevent the design from trying to satisfy everyone all at once, this would lead the dashboard from being confusing.

Strategic dashboards are designed to provide a snapshot of the organization to the managers and executives, to determine how well projects are operating. The dashboard will provide information that is needed to understand the status of the project’s health for the upper managers to observe. Strategic dashboards do not have all the detailed information to make difficult decisions, but they do show opportunities for further analysis. Strategic dashboards are supposed to be simple, but contain aggregate metrics that show the overall health of the organization. They often portray multiple organizational projects, so that decisions can be made about a single project in comparison to others. (Stanley)

Operational dashboards ae used to keep track of real-time operations and alert viewers on deviations from the schedule which could be a detriment to the project. Operational dashboards must be updated often to keep the information in a real-time status. Very often this kind of dashboard has less information than the other types, this allows them to be less cluttered and easier to read. This dashboard may be more useful to middle management than upper in its design, to provide them with information which can get operations back to normal as quickly as possible. This dashboard is often used in manufacturing or construction process, it is easier to see where the process is real-time by middle management. (Stanley)

Analytical dashboards provide viewers with information needed to understand trends and why things are happening while making comparisons across time and multiple variables. Analytical dashboards usually contain more information than both the strategic and operational dashboards. Understanding is the goal of an analytical dashboard, so if your viewers are the upper management then this may be the correct format for the dashboard. This format is important to this viewer as they are looking for increased detail of a project or multiple projects. Analytical dashboards give interactions with the data, they include that compares across a timeline and multiple variables. If this is not accomplished, then the analytical dashboard cannot accomplish its goal, proper information across a timeline. Because of large amount of information, this is often used by large organizations with multiple projects going at the same time. (Stanley)

Organizing the dashboard takes thought on how much of the metrics do you put into the page and where. Determine who the view is will help decide which dashboard type to create. Will it be viewed by the CEO and/or upper management? Will the Foreman on the shop floor be the viewer? Are the downstream workers the target viewers of this information? Just inserting graphs into the dashboard causes the reader to just get lost. Decide which measurements need to be seen and provide that to the target viewer. Marketing does not need to see what the HR department is interested. CEOs would require a lot more data and pages with access to those reports using multiple tabs, therefore that dashboard will require a lot more information than many other dashboards. Whatever the type of dashboard, keep it as simple as possible, and include information that the kind of stakeholders viewing the dashboard will want to know about the project and its progress. (Few)

Reference:

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