Design a Project Dashboard

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"A project management dashboard is a visual display of a small number of critical

metrics or key performance indicators such that stakeholders and all project personnel can see

the necessary information at a glance to make an informed decision" (Kerzner Ph.D., 2013,

Location 5191).  Based on the project design, key performance indicators reflect the

organization's central concept of the project and solidify project responsibility across

administrative divisions ("FloridaTechOnline," n.d.).  There are several types of dashboards

available for project use.  Which dashboard is chosen is dependent upon the project subject

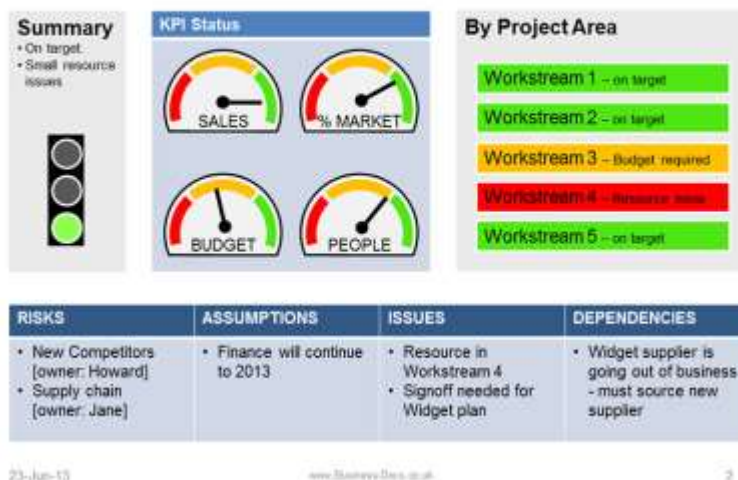matter and the audience for which the dashboard is intended.



*Figure 1.* Dashboard Sample #1

*Figure 1* provides a sample dashboard snapshot in which sales, market, budget, and

manpower are graded.  Additional information related to risks, assumptions, issues, and

dependencies provide insight into the project as a whole and how these items might affect the

project in the future.

Depending upon the intended audience, dashboard construction and the types of data used will vary.  Utilizing the bicycle project as an example, the project evolves from concept to design, from design to production, from production to testing, and from testing to completion.  Each phase of the project life cycle deals with a different or expanding audience.  During the concept to the design phase, the primary stakeholders are the intended audience, and dashboard design is based upon the requirements of cost and time, rather than individuate task or labor efficiency.

As a project develops into production, multiple dashboards will be utilized.  Primary stakeholders expand their concerns to more than cost and time; the addition of risk becomes an important matrix in their dashboard designs.  Similarly, reports to the project team are equally as important.  Dashboard data related to cost and time are important, but so too is manpower efficiency.  This added dimension aids team leaders in the monitoring and controlling of their particular segment of production.

*Figure 2.* Sample Executive Dashboard

     *Figure 2* represents an executive level dashboard.  The data represented is an overall

view and not a task-by-task view.  Executives are interested in the larger picture and how that

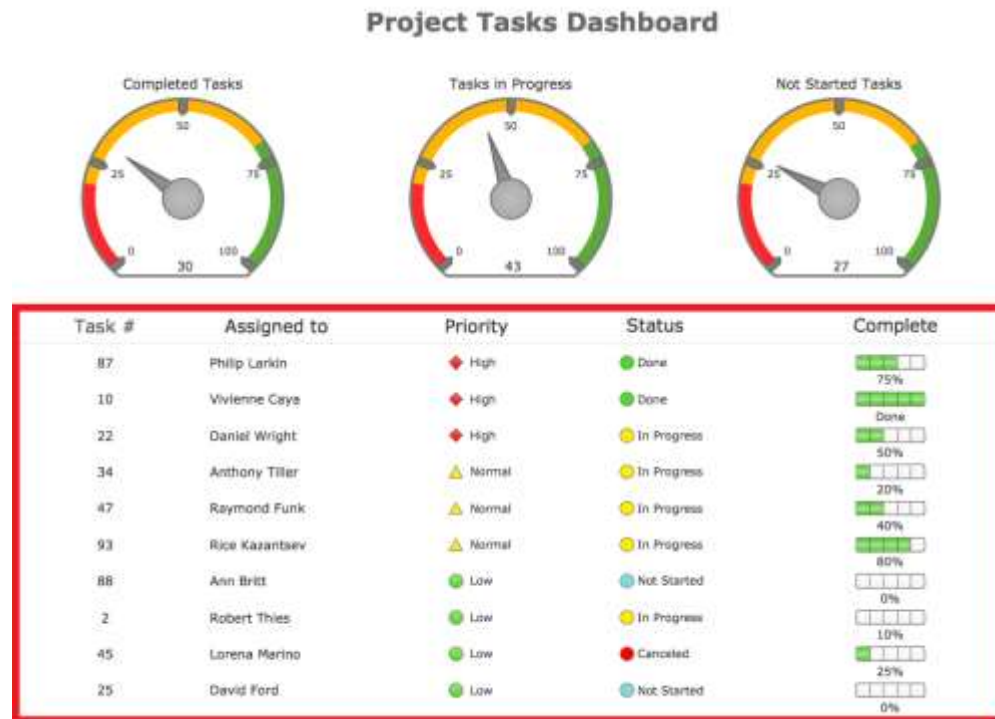overall performance affects their strategic plan.

*Figure 3.* Sample Manpower Dashboard

Note that figure three represents project tasks in an easy to understand dashboard. The assignment, status, priority, and progress are represented and displayed in a speedometer type format. This data is meant for project leadership to aid in monitoring and controlling project performance.

In conclusion, dashboards take information from a variety of sources and integrate that information into one easy-to-understand reporting screen (Hollingsworth, 2011, p. 1). Each project stakeholder benefits from project dashboards, but require differing sources of information. Understanding how project information drives dashboard design and for whom the dashboard is intended makes it possible to derive the greatest benefit from this communication tool.

References

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