

PROJECT SELECTION METHODS

Introduction

One of the biggest decisions that any organization would have to make is related to the projects they would undertake. Once a proposal has been received, there are numerous factors that need to be considered before an organization decides to take it up.

The most viable option needs to be chosen, keeping in mind the goals and requirements of the organization. How is it then that you decide whether a project is viable? How do you decide if the project at hand is worth approving? This is where project selection methods come in use.

Choosing a project using the right method is therefore of utmost importance. This is what will ultimately define the way the project is to be carried out.

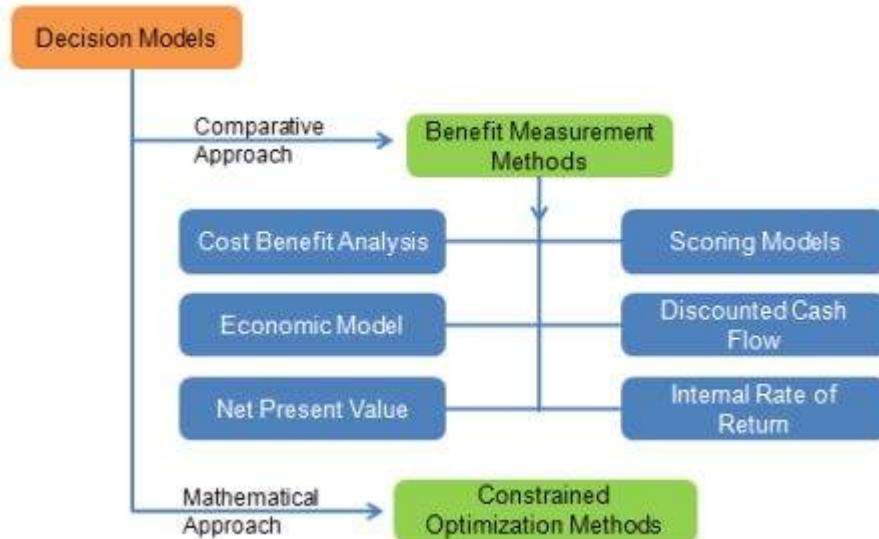
But the question then arises as to how you would go about finding the right methodology for your particular organization. At this instance, you would need careful guidance in the project selection criteria, as a small mistake could be detrimental to your project as a whole, and in the long run, the organization as well.

Selection Methods

There are various project selection methods practised by the modern business organizations. These methods have different features and characteristics. Therefore, each selection method is best for different organizations.

Although there are many differences between these project selection methods, usually the underlying concepts and principles are the same.

Following is an illustration of two of such methods *Benefit Measurement and Constrained Optimization methods*:



As the value of one project would need to be compared against the other projects, you could use the benefit measurement methods. This could include various techniques, of which the following are the most common:

- You and your team could come up with certain criteria that you want your ideal project objectives to meet. You could then give each project scores based on how they rate in each of these criteria and then choose the project with the highest score.
- When it comes to the Discounted Cash flow method, the future value of a project is ascertained by considering the present value and the interest earned on the money. The higher the present value of the project, the better it would be for your organization.
- The rate of return received from the money is what is known as the IRR. Here again, you

need to be looking for a high rate of return from the project.

The mathematical approach is commonly used for larger projects. The constrained optimization methods require several calculations in order to decide on whether or not a project should be rejected.

Cost-benefit analysis is used by several organizations to assist them to make their selections. Going by this method, you would have to consider all the positive aspects of the project which are the benefits and then deduct the negative aspects *or the costs* from the benefits. Based on the results you receive for different projects, you could choose which option would be the most viable and financially rewarding.

These benefits and costs need to be carefully considered and quantified in order to arrive at a proper conclusion. Questions that you may want to consider asking in the selection process are:

- Would this decision help me to increase organizational value in the long run?
- How long will the equipment last for?
- Would I be able to cut down on costs as I go along?

In addition to these methods, you could also consider choosing based on opportunity cost - When choosing any project, you would need to keep in mind the profits that you would make if you decide to go ahead with the project.

Profit optimization is therefore the ultimate goal. You need to consider the difference between the profits of the project you are primarily interested in and the next best alternative.

Implementation of the Chosen Method

The methods mentioned above can be carried out in various combinations. It is best that you try out different methods, as in this way you would be able to make the best decision for your organization considering a wide range of factors rather than concentrating on just a few. Careful consideration would therefore need to be given to each project.

Conclusion

In conclusion, you would need to remember that these methods are time-consuming, but are absolutely essential for efficient business planning.

It is always best to have a good plan from the inception, with a list of criteria to be considered and goals to be achieved. This will guide you through the entire selection process and will also ensure *that you do make the right choice*.

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