

Review: the only way an organisation can learn

Individuals learn from their mistakes (hopefully!), but organisations find it much more difficult; how many of the mistakes made have been made before? How many of the problems have happened before?

The only way that a person or an organisation can learn from experience is to review:

- What went wrong, and how can we prevent a repeat?
- What went well, that we can use again next time?
- What could we have done *even better*?

The organisation then needs to find a way to make sure that everyone who needs this information can get access to it the next time that it is relevant.

Many companies believe:

- No time for review
- Can't do reviews because client won't pay for them
- No need for review since project went well
- It's best to quickly forget a project that was a disaster
- Do a review because witch-hunts prevent repeats of mistakes

Actions:

- ☞ Keep a folder of brief project reviews: good ideas / pitfalls / pointers to remember
- ☞ Refer to this folder when listing the tasks for your next project, and when doing your risk analysis for your next project
- ☞ Ask the customer how they felt the project went, and what they would like to be different next time.
- ☞ Opportunity to praise: always find something good done by each person.
- ☞ The team leader stays in the group and selects one of the team members to chair the discussion - this prevents the leader from stifling ideas, and allows their decisions to be criticised.

