

Questions for Project Managers

Use this checklist periodically, especially when you have time on and between projects to do some serious evaluation of how you really strategize, plan and manage your projects. It will reveal the adjustments you need to make to increase your chances of success on your future projects and reveal ways to improve your current project and capitalize on those things that are working best.

- Are you aware of what is happening throughout your own organization, with the customer, and with the competition and suppliers?
- Do you network and continuously exchange information so that you can anticipate and take timely actions?
- Do you establish clear project objectives & priorities?
- Do you feel confident that you know what a successful project looks like?
- Do you develop achievable objectives, including realistic cost, schedule, and performance estimates?
- Are your project's objectives clear to you and your team members?
- Do you fashion the project in a way that stresses the importance of meeting those objectives?
- Do you develop and communicate project priorities?
- Do you insist on adequate funding and realistic scheduling for the project?
- Do you insist on adequate time to plan the project, appropriately balancing it with business needs to achieve something?
- Is your project plan simple enough to read, comprehend, and implement in the real work environment?
- Do you break project goals into manageable pieces that are represented by milestones?
- Do you ensure that all team members understand their roles and responsibilities?
- Do you understand your own role clearly?
- Do you clearly define tasks for team members?
- Do you recognize and reward team members for their contributions to your project?
- Do you insist on being involved in selecting key project team members?
- Do you have a good track record for matching people's skills to project roles?
- Do you get commitment from the outset from team members?
- Do you encourage openness and develop rapport with team members? Do they have input to project objectives and how to best achieve them, individually and collectively?

- Do you let team members set their own schedules for achieving their tasks and milestones, within the greater framework of the project schedule?
- Do you have follow-on work for your team members when the project ends? Do you do everything in your power to ensure job security for effective team members?
- Do you plan the logical sequence of tasks and the predecessor/successor dependency relationships between them?
- Do you plan for effective information flow?
- Have you developed solid reporting procedures that convey essential information? Do you avoid channels? Is your communication succinct, honest, open and non-threatening?
- Are you coordinating and maintaining a good relationship with the customer and your organization's management? Are you keeping your team members informed on priorities as well as areas of difficulty arising from these relationships?
- Do you measure your project's progress against plan often? Do you take immediate corrective actions when something is off?
- Are you willing to revise the plan to accommodate change?
- Do you consider what could go wrong and develop appropriate contingency plans?
- Do you resist temptation to do more than needed?
- Do you delegate?
- Do you set up regular monitoring meetings in which essential information is collected and disseminated? Do you avoid meeting overload that inhibits productivity?
- Do you recognize which team members are your best assets and seek their assistance in decision making and problem solving? Do you overtly respect them for their assistance?
- Are you using effective planning and control tools to support your work?
- Do you control changes effectively?
- Do you understand and accommodate behavioral patterns of key team members?
- Most importantly, do you listen?

Remember, a successful project depends on the cooperative support of many people outside of the project team. Examples include end users, executives, administrators, and vendors. Be sure that you share these questions, and your answers, with all stakeholders.

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