



Summer 2009



Essential Elements of a Successful Project

There are many important elements required to ensure the successful delivery of a project. There are some things so essential, however, that a project simply cannot deliver without them. This month's newsletter asks: does your project have them?

Does your project have a sponsor?

It is virtually impossible for any project to succeed if it does not have a clear sponsor or champion behind it. Without this, funding for the project will be hard to come by and establishing momentum to ensure its success will be difficult. Typically the sponsor should be someone from within the business (even for IT & Telecoms projects) who understands the business case for the project, its alignment to business strategies and the long-term business benefits the project should deliver.

Does your project have a defined scope?

If the scope is not clear, the project will never deliver - simply because different people will end up with different expectations about what should be delivered. You might think your scope is delivered but others in your organisation might disagree – and without a clearly signed off scope document at the start of your project you will have no answer to their objections.

Does your project have defined deliverables?

These are the physical (and, often in IT, the virtual!) things you can point to at the end of the project and say – this is what we have delivered. Define them up front and gain agreement from within your organisation that this is what will be delivered – otherwise, as with the scope, it will be impossible to prove you have finished.

Does your project have a clear design to be implemented?

Many projects make the mistake of leaping straight from the idea stage to implementation, before they have a clear picture of the technical (or business) design. Don't be tempted to do this. Take the time to work with your technical teams up front to obtain a detailed design of what will be implemented. Get the design signed off so it is clear everyone is in agreement before you start to roll out.

Does your project have a schedule?

This might seem obvious but many projects make the mistake of picking an end-date without putting together a detailed project schedule of activities and timings. Without this you might eventually reach the end of your project, but it is almost certain it will be late.

If your project involves dealing with 3rd party vendors, do you have clear terms of engagement with them?

If you cannot deliver your project without a clear scope, deliverables, schedule and performance criteria, how do you expect them to?

Do you have a clear budget for the project?

Money makes the world go round and the same is true for projects. No money equals lack of delivery, no matter how good the idea is. Never be vague when it comes to budget: have you done a cost projection for the project? Do you have written business approval for the amount required? Are you clear as to who has the authority to sign-off on spending the money? How will you monitor the budget spent as the project progresses? If your project runs out of money, it will never deliver, so never let it reach that point.

Are the key roles in the project clearly identified and resourced?

People ultimately deliver projects. If you don't have the people available at the required times – then your project either won't deliver or it will be very late. Spend time working out the resourcing for the project up front. And, just as importantly, make sure there is a single, agreed role responsible for ensuring project delivery (i.e., the project or programme manager).

Project Health Check

These are just the absolute essentials – there are many more elements to successful project delivery. Complete our 30 point 'Project Health Check' today. This is FREE for the next 28 days (valued at £149 + VAT) and gives you a score of the health of your current projects plus suggestions for improvement. Complete the Health Check now and receive your personalised results within 48 hours at

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=28C6p5skvIYYCpTrNAE4Ew_3d_3d