



Back to Basics: PM Foundation for Success

Know Your Value Drivers and Requirements

- ◆ Start with the “end in mind” – use the Target Product Profile as a strategic alignment tool to gain functional inputs once the customer value drivers are known..
- ◆ Define and prioritize requirements and make them measurable.
- ◆ Design for value and design for “x”.

Identify Constraints & Resolve Trade-Offs

- ◆ What’s most important to achieving the best value for the customer and business?
- ◆ Map out impacts and build scenarios.

Understand, Document and Validate Assumptions

- ◆ Document the planning assumptions that your team uses.
- ◆ Validate, validate, validate... and inform stakeholders if/when assumptions change and what the impact is to the project.

Base Time Duration Estimates on Total Effort and Actual Availability of Resources

- ◆ Help your team members understand “effort” vs. “duration” and how to consider both when giving you estimates.
- ◆ Develop a resource-loaded schedule, considering the affect of other projects and operational priorities on resource availability.

Understand Cross-Functional Interdependencies and Link Tasks Accordingly

- ◆ Be sure your schedule depicts all key interdependencies and milestones.

Factor in Risks

- ◆ Keep your risk register current with clear owners, triggers and responses.
- ◆ Integrate risks into the schedule as needed (i.e., define appropriate risk buffer and/or use 3 point estimation).
- ◆ Make risk management a regular practice within your team! Always look forward!

Set Up an Effective Change Control Mechanism

- ◆ Baseline your plan (3 project baselines: scope, schedule and cost). The 4th one is the Business Case!
- ◆ What you baseline is what your team believes it can realistically deliver.
- ◆ After baselines are locked, you’ve committed! Now deliver.
- ◆ Use project and product change control!

Know Your Stakeholders and What’s Most Important to Them

- ◆ Adverse stakeholders don’t go away – they look for ammunition.
- ◆ Make stakeholder communications a part of your team process.
- ◆ Have a communications plan and make sure your team follows it.
- ◆ Clarify key messages so that what you communicate is consistent regardless of who does it.

Get Your Team Focused on What Matters the Most

- ◆ Get everyone to own the product claims and project outcomes.
- ◆ Clarify roles, expectations and ownership.
- ◆ Define vital practices that keep you on track.
- ◆ Follow the plan: If something is not in the plan, why are you doing it?

Be Vigilant About Project Progress

- ◆ Set up a few key “in-progress” metrics, and the right outcome measures.
- ◆ Measure the entire team with the same metrics.
- ◆ Look for early signs of trouble; ask tough questions. Apply fast resolution.
- ◆ Do not overcompensate for non-performance or lack of follow-through. Confront it and it. If it goes on, get the functional manager involved.

And Remember:

If you don’t use your project plan daily to manage the work, you don’t really have a plan! (Go back to #1.)