

Project Initiation and Planning

Chapter 7 Contents

READING 1: How to Create a Clear Project Plan in Six Easy Steps

READING 2: Gaining Visibility and Commitment on Technology Projects

Chapter Overview

AQ1

Activities related to project initiation and planning are actually part of the Integration Management area. However, this topic is so important for achieving project success that it has been selected for special focus. In Part I.3, this book presented information showing that a major source of project failure is a lack of a rigorous and formalized project initiation process. Poor planning and inadequate requirements contribute to such failures. The validity of this statement may not be obvious to many at this point. For now, recognize that an initiative started without consensus of the stakeholders will likely result in future disagreements and high risk of less-than-desirable results. One might ask, "What is the big deal in getting started and letting the requirements evolve?" Why is it not reasonable to bring together dollars and human resources and expect the desired output to result? In reality, poor planning and inadequate requirements are common in project ventures. From project initiation, the negative effects of these early issues can persist throughout project duration and contribute to project shortcomings or failures.

One of the underlying villains in project confusion is the pressure to quickly begin working on the deliverables (and therefore finish on time). This action is often accompanied by securing quick management approval for a level of budget and human resources from a friendly and often hurried sponsor. The problem that often occurs with this approach is that the resulting project scope does not fit the allocation level. In turn, this approach causes a combination of the triple constraint set (time, budget, and functionality) to get out of kilter. Project stakeholders have different interests in the outcome of the project. Some are concerned about budget; some schedule; and many others functionality. The definition of project satisfaction then is a compromise between these various points of view. A

consensus among stakeholders should occur before the project gets started and not dynamically along the way. Failure to achieve consensus yields future frustration for the groups that do not get what they want. A second possible imitation scenario is the creation of a “shadow” project that does not have proper management approval. After a time period, this type of project becomes visible, yet management does not support it. Both approaches are fraught with failure potential that can be avoided by a reasonable initiation process. In all project situations, it is important for the business users, IT, and senior management stakeholders to approve the schedule, budget, and general functionality of the envisioned project, recognizing that early schedules and predictions are more target estimates than bull’s-eyes. Employees using good project management practices will review these expectations along the way and make adjustments in an orderly manner.

Initiation is the first *PMBOK*[®] *Guide* knowledge area and is designed to start the project off on the right foot. First, it uses a project charter definition to formally authorize the defined initiative; this action links to subsequent management steps in the project. In this initial step a link is established between the project and strategic and tactical objectives of the organization. In this step, a formal leader is also identified and provisions made for acquisition of team members. One subtle point about project initiation is that the process also applies to multiple stages within the project life cycle. This point is described in the *PMBOK*[®] *Guide*, which states that there should be key evaluation points at which status is reviewed and official management approval granted before the project moves forward to the next step. In other words, projects that have begun do not have a lifetime contract and should be cancelled if the projected cost-benefit proposition goes awry during development. These secondary decision points are often called stage gates or go/no-go points. The preparation process for these reviews is similar to the original justification for the project, except that in the follow-on stages project documentation is updated rather than begun.

There are two key process artifacts produced at the completion of the two steps described here, as follows:

Initiation creates a project charter that minimally contains a description of the business need, the desired deliverables, and a formal approval to proceed by appropriate management.

Planning creates an integrated plan outlining in greater detail the various projected aspects of the proposed effort. Articles in this section will deal with these topic areas in more detail.

A major point in this chapter is that the initiation process and its related planning activities are fundamental activities that should not be shorted to save time.

Articles

The first article in this chapter is “How to Create a Clear Project Plan in Six Easy Steps,” by Elizabeth and Richard Larson. In this article, you will find a prescription for the steps in the process and some key vocabulary. As the authors indicate, this is an easy process but one often neglected in the rush to get started.

Douglas Arnstein provides a good overview of the initiation and planning stages in his article, “Gaining Visibility and Commitment on Technology Projects.” He walks through the entire initiation and planning process from the first day a project manager is given the task. Note in this article that IT was not involved in the initial planning process, or in the sizing activity. Rather, the project manager was given a vague specification, complete with due date and no defined resources. We have named initiation processes of this type *Project Titanic*. Keep in mind the key point here: A project should be formulated with involvement from all key knowledge (stakeholder) sources, and a resulting Project Charter should represent a feasible plan based on requirements scope being balanced against schedule and resource availability. Failure to accomplish this balance early in the life cycle places the project under great stress through the rest of the cycle.

We leave this chapter with one parting thought—as Yogi Berra, the great Yankee catcher, is reported to have said, “If you don’t know where you are going, that’s where you will end up.” Whether Yogi actually said this or not, the point is that management principles require that you have a goal, and the concept of control is based on a plan that defines the goal. This principle is manifested here in the form of a Project Charter or a Statement of Work (usually for contracted work). Don’t underestimate the value of this step!

How to Create a Clear Project Plan in Six Easy Steps

ELIZABETH LARSON, PMP, AND RICHARD LARSON

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One of the critical factors for project success is having a well-developed project plan. Here is a six-step approach to creating a project plan. It not only provides a roadmap for project managers to follow, but also acts as the project manager's premier communications and control tool throughout the project.

Step 1: Explain the project plan to key stakeholders and discuss its key components.

Unfortunately, the "project plan" is one of the most misunderstood terms in project management. Hardly a fixed object, the project plan is a set of living documents that can be expected to change over the life of the project. Like a roadmap, it provides the direction for the project. And like the traveler, the project manager needs to set the course for the project, which, in project management terms, means creating the project plan. Just as a driver may encounter road construction or new routes to the final destination, the project manager may need to correct the project course as well.

A common misconception is that the plan equates to the project timeline, which is only one of the components of the plan. The project plan is the major work product from the entire planning process, so it contains all the planning documents. For example, a project plan for constructing a new office building needs to include not only the specifications for the building, the budget, and the schedule, but also the risks, quality metrics, environmental impact, etc.

Components of the project plan include:

- *Baselines:* These are sometimes called performance measures because the performance of the entire project is measured against them. They are the project's three approved starting points for scope, schedule, and cost. These provide the stakes in the ground, and are used to determine whether or not the project is on track during execution.
- *Baseline management plans:* These include documentation on how variances will be handled throughout the project.
- *Other work products from the planning process:* These include plans for risk management, quality, procurement, staffing, and communications.

Step 2: Define roles and responsibilities.

Identifying stakeholders—those who have a vested interest in either the project or the project outcome—is challenging and especially difficult on large, risky, high-impact projects. There are likely to be conflicting agendas and requirements among stakeholders, as well as different slants on who needs to be included. For example, the stakeholder list of the city council for which a new office building is being constructed could differ from that of an engineering consulting firm. It would certainly include the developer who wants to build the office complex, the engineering firm that will build the office building, citizens who would prefer a city park, consultants to study the environmental impacts, the city council itself, etc. The engineering firm may have a more limited view. It is important for the project manager to get clarity and agreement on what work needs to be done by whom, as well as which decisions each stakeholder will make.

Step 3: Develop a scope statement.

The scope statement is arguably the most important document in the project plan. It is used to get common agreement among the stakeholders about the project definition. It is the basis for getting the buy-in and agreement from the sponsor and other stakeholders and decreases the chances of miscommunication. This document will most likely grow and change with the life of the project. The scope statement should include:

- Business need and business problem.
- Project objectives, stating what will occur within the project to solve the business problem.
- Benefits of completing the project, as well as the project justification.
- Project scope, stated as which deliverables will be included and excluded from the project.
- Key milestones, the approach and other components as dictated by the size and nature of the project.

It can be treated like a contract between the project manager and sponsor, one that can only be changed with sponsor approval.

Step 4: Develop the project baselines.

Scope baseline. Once the deliverables are confirmed in the scope statement, they need to be developed into a work breakdown structure (WBS) of all the deliverables in the project. The scope baseline includes all the deliverables produced on the project, and therefore identifies all the work to be done. These deliverables should be inclusive. Building an office building, for example, would include a variety of deliverables related to the building itself, as well as such things as impact studies, recommendations, landscaping plans, etc.

Schedule and cost baselines.

1. Identify activities and tasks needed to produce each of the deliverables identified in the scope baseline. How detailed the task list needs to be depends on many factors, including the experience of the team, project risk and uncertainties, ambiguity of specifications, amount of buy-in expected, etc.
2. Identify resources for each task, if known.
3. Estimate how many hours it will take to complete each task.
4. Estimate cost of each task, using an average hourly rate for each resource.

5. Consider resource constraints, or how much time each resource can realistically devote to this one project.
6. Determine which tasks are dependent on other tasks, and develop critical path.
7. Develop schedule, which puts all tasks and estimates in a calendar. It shows by chosen time period (week, month, quarter, or year) which resource is doing which tasks, how much time each task is expected to take, and when each task is scheduled to begin and end.
8. Develop the cost baseline, which is a time-phased budget, or cost by time period.

This process is not a one-time effort. Throughout the project, you will most likely be adding to and repeating some or all of these steps.

Step 5: Create baseline management plans.

Once the scope, schedule, and cost baselines have been established, create the steps the team will take to manage variances to these plans. All these management plans usually include a review and approval process for modifying the baselines. Different approval levels are usually needed for different types of changes. Not all new requests will result in changes to the scope, schedule, or budget, but a process is needed to study all new requests to determine their impact to the project.

Step 6: Communicate!

One important aspect of the project plan is the communications plan. This document states such things as:

- Who on the project wants which reports, how often, in what format, and using what media.
- How issues will be escalated and when.
- Where project information will be stored and who can access it.
- What new risks have surfaced and what the risk response will include.
- What metrics will be used to ensure a quality product is built.
- What reserves have been used for which uncertainties.

Once the project plan is complete, it is important that its contents be delivered to key stakeholders. This communication should include such things as:

- Review and approval of the project plan.
- Process for changing the contents of the plan.
- Next steps—executing and controlling the project plan and key stakeholder roles/responsibilities in the upcoming phases.

Destination Success

Developing a clear project plan takes time. The project manager will probably be tempted to skip the planning and jump straight into execution. However, the traveler who plans the route before beginning a journey ultimately reaches the intended destination more quickly and more easily than the disorganized traveler who gets lost along the way. Similarly, the project manager who takes time to create a clear project plan will follow a more direct route toward project success.

Gaining Visibility and Commitment on Technology Projects

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Introduction

I have seen it too often. A technology project gets off to a rocky start, jumps into the middle of a solution, and limps along while all parties hope that it will eventually get straightened out. What results are delays, changes in direction, re-work, cost increases, and occasionally project cancellation. Depending on the size of your institution, your technology project is vying for attention with hundreds of others within your organization. Most likely, the resources assigned to your project are also working on other projects for other project managers. Throw in daily distractions such as production problems, management fire drills, projects that need just 'a little bit' of attention, and dozens of e-mails and voice messages, and it is easy to see how your project can get lost in the 'noise'. I am going to present some practical suggestions as to how you can gain visibility for your project, and how you can obtain commitment from project Stakeholders and participants by using the project planning process and the Project Plan as tools for success. This presentation will provide tips, tool examples, and real-world experiences for differentiating your project from its start to help you meet your ultimate objective: to get the right project done right.

Getting Started: Using the Planning Phase to Gain Visibility and Commitment

The first step in gaining visibility and commitment is to develop a Project Charter and Scope Statement with the Project Sponsor. This document is the vehicle by which you start gathering data about the project, aligning the project with organizational goals, and defining the boundaries of the project. If your organization is high on the Project Management Maturity Model, it is likely that the sponsor organization will have developed a Project Charter and Scope Statement. If that is not the case, your first objective is to interview the Project Sponsor and have him/her articulate the business drivers, project mission, project objectives, other internal organizations with a stake in the outcome, and his/her definition of what constitutes completion of the project. There is much written about this document in project management literature which I will not reiterate here. Here is what I have found to be effective for technology projects.

Keep the document short and direct. Start with the following sections: Introduction, Project Description and Justification, including Business Drivers, Constraints, Stakeholders, Deliverables, Project Objectives for Time, Cost,

Quality, and Scope, Project Resource Roles and Responsibilities, Preliminary Resource Identification, Assumptions, Dependencies, and Issues. This information allows you to begin to coordinate with groups needing to participate on the project. As you assemble the project Core Team, use group work sessions to solicit their input to expand the document beyond the information provided by the Project Sponsor. A tip for the Project Charter and Scope Statement is to use numbered lists for all sections other than the narrative Introduction and Project Description and Justification. These lists provide the relevant information in an easy-to-read manner that facilitates group review of the document.

Review the document first with the Project Sponsor and Sponsor Division Management. This forum gives them the opportunity to validate the project mission and objectives. It engages their support and participation to direct the project from its inception. It lets them know that their input is valued, raising their level of tangible and intangible project ownership. After updating and refining the document with the Sponsor feedback, the second review is with the Project Sponsor and other primary Stakeholders outside the Sponsor Division. It is their first opportunity to hear some detail about the project, understand the impact to their respective areas, and provide feedback to the project about any aspect of the Charter and Scope. This review also presents the opportunity to identify critical success factors for working with their functional areas. This information will prove invaluable as you continue the planning process and design the project.

The next step in developing the Project Plan is to conduct a Stakeholder Analysis. It is an excellent way to engage the project Core Team and elicit their commitment to the project by having them participate. According to the *PMBOK*: Stakeholders are individuals and organizations who are involved in or may be affected by project activities. It is important to the success of the project to understand what they think about the project and how they define success. I have yet to conduct a Stakeholder Analysis without learning something unexpected from an individual Stakeholder that altered some deliverables or affected the project scope of work. What I want to know from each Stakeholder is:

1. Does he/she agree with the project objectives as defined in the Charter and Scope Statement?
2. What does he/she define as the project scope?
3. What does he/she view as project risks?
4. How does he/she define Critical Success Factors for the project?
5. How would he/she define project quality?
6. What, how, and how frequently does he/she want to hear about the project?

Talking to Stakeholders is just that. This is not an e-mail exercise. If you are unable to sit face-to-face with a Stakeholder, use the telephone. Assign each Core Team member several Stakeholder interviews. There are no rules other than to get their feedback. I have used group and solo, directed and non-directed interviews successfully. For non-directed interviews, I merely ask the questions above. For directed interviews, I create an interview sheet with the lists of Project Objectives and Project Scope from the Charter and Scope Statement, share it with the Stakeholder, and solicit concurrence and

feedback. For the question topics above that were not part of the Charter and Scope, I ask the open-ended questions. To assist with the evaluation of the feedback, it is important to obtain the same information from all interviewees.

Upon completion of the Stakeholder Analysis, the Core Team evaluates the data and determines whether any Stakeholder feedback should be assimilated into the Project Charter and Scope Statement. The rest of the information will be used to design the project and build the Project Plan. Specifically, Stakeholder feedback will be used in the Risk Management Plan, Quality Management Plan, and Communication Plan sections of the Project Plan. Between developing the Project Charter and Scope Statement and conducting the Stakeholder Analysis, you have given your project visibility, engaged key participants, gained consensus, and started building the Core Team's commitment to the project.

The Project Plan

According to the *PMBOK*, the Project Plan is a formal, approved document used to manage and control project execution. It defines the 'What, Why, Who, When, Where, and How' of your project. It is a text document not to be confused with the Project Task Schedule or Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). Some organizations seldom produce one. This would be true of organizations that skip directly into requirements definition upon starting a project. It is a major oversight to skip this deliverable because regardless of the size of your project, it documents the manner in which the project intends to achieve its objectives. It also helps other internal and external organizations understand what they will need to do and when to support the project.

There is much available literature about Project Plans that I do not intend to survey here. I will present what has worked well for me [when] managing technology projects. The Project Plan should include the following sections: Introduction, Project Charter and Scope Statement, Milestones, Resource Plan, Scope Management and Change Control, Quality Management, Communication Plan, Communication Matrix, and Deliverables Responsibility Matrix. In addition, it could also include sections on Risk Management, Funding, Issues, as well as a preliminary Project Task Schedule or WBS. Any information that you as the project manager feel is relevant to the management and control of the project should be included. The contents of the Project Plan should be controlled by the size and complexity of the project. However, anytime you consider skipping a section, you should rationalize your decision based on what the project could lose by omitting it.

Although the project manager has primary responsibility for producing the Project Plan, it is an excellent team-building exercise for the Core Team. Participating in the Project Plan development gains their commitment early in the project because they can contribute to and influence project processes. Include staff from the Project Sponsor organization and other key functional areas impacted by your project if they are not already members of the Core Team. The Project Plan will be more readily accepted if it is developed as a partnership between the business and technology organizations.

Project Plan Components: Their Purpose and What They Accomplish

THE INTRODUCTION

It is useful to include a short Introduction to the readers of the document that details the Background and Purpose of the document, its structure, the Intended Audience, and the reader's obligations. One of the obligations should be to require formal approval from project Stakeholders, and that should be directly stated.

PROJECT CHARTER AND SCOPE STATEMENT

The Project Plan will be distributed to a wider audience than may have participated in the Project Charter and Scope Statement and Stakeholder Analysis exercises. I have found it beneficial to incorporate the completed Project Charter and Scope Statement in its entirety as the next section. This gives project newcomers a brief, comprehensive overview of the project and sets the stage for the rest of the Project Plan.

MILESTONES WITH PROJECTED DATES

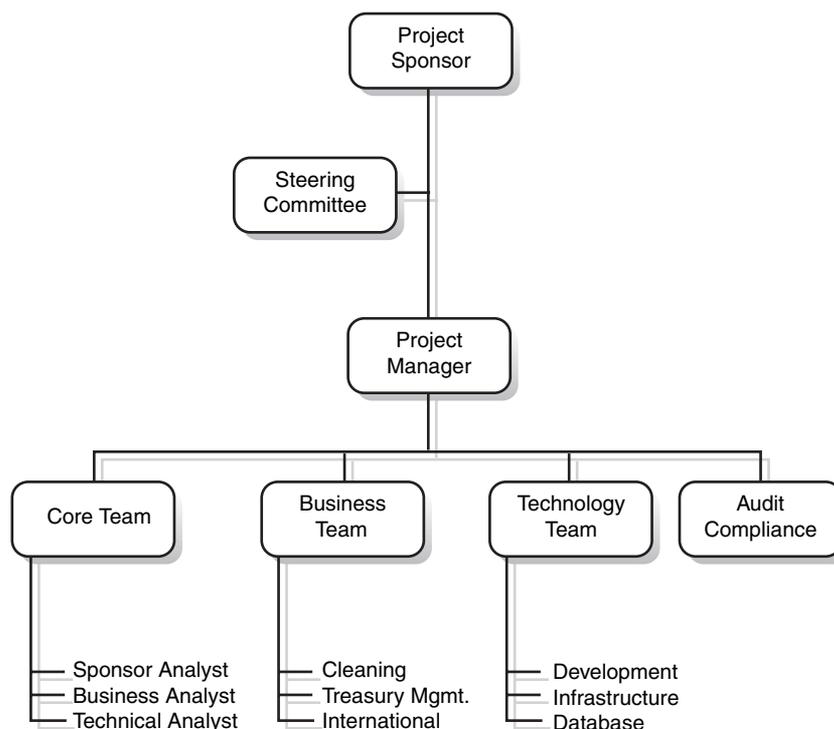
This section uses a combination of significant events and the list of key deliverables developed in the Project Charter and Scope Statement and sets forth projected beginning and ending dates for each. This information sets expectations as to when components of the project work are to be started and completed. At this early stage of the project, these may merely be best estimates based on the Project Sponsor's required implementation dates. Regardless, this information is helpful to project Stakeholders as they begin thinking about resources they will have to provide and when.

RESOURCE PLAN

This section identifies project resource roles and responsibilities. It describes the project organization and how the project will interact with the day-to-day organization. Every organization is unique in the way it organizes projects, and this section will reflect the particulars of your organization. At a minimum, one should provide specific role and responsibility information for the Project Sponsor, the Project Manager, the Project Core Team, any Management Oversight or Steering Committees, and specific Business and Technical resources known to be required for the project. This information should also include project reporting hierarchies and matrix relationships developed for the duration of the project. The more information that can be provided, the more likely you will obtain resources with the correct skills to support the project. I list each role, the responsibilities of the role, the skills required, and the projected start date for the resource. In many projects, the Project Sponsor and/or Project Manager know which individuals are critical to the project's success and have already assigned them to the effort. In these cases, it is appropriate to name the specific individuals.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION CHART

As an adjunct to the Resource Plan, a visual representation of the project team is a helpful tool. It clearly and succinctly communicates the relationships

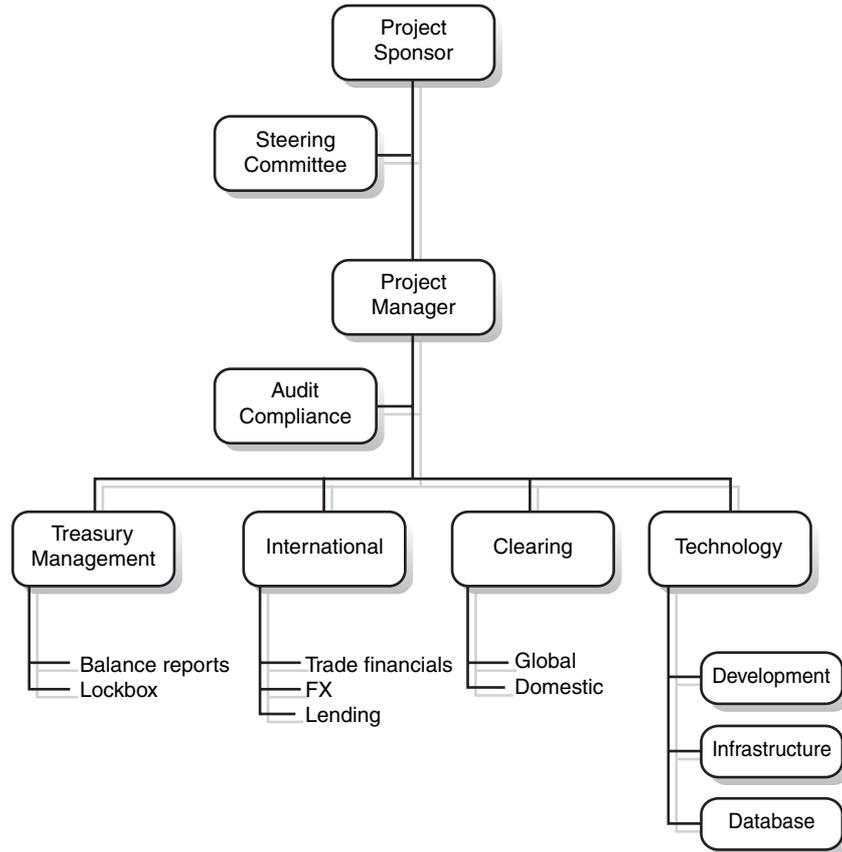


7-1 Project Organization Chart—Team View

between the project players [7-1]. Your project may have two views of these relationships. Often the Project Core Team views their roles and relationships somewhat differently than other internal or external organizations. In this case, two project organization charts may be in order, one representing the internal project view, the other representing the external view. For example, the Project Core Team may align itself by the functions that the individuals play on the project, but to the external view [7-2], those same individuals represent business interests of different areas within the financial institution. Having two views of the project is often the best way to communicate these differences.

SCOPE MANAGEMENT AND CHANGE CONTROL

Change is inevitable. Change can hurt your project. The Scope Management and Change Control section documents how your project will manage change. There is much industry literature about Scope Management that I will not present here. I will address the 'how to' of Scope Management. It is critical to identify your project's process for submitting, logging, approving, and adopting Change Requests. By defining this process now, you are communicating the same rules to all project participants and Stakeholders. By including the Core Team members in defining the process, you are also reinforcing that this is their project. All change is not created equal.



7-2 Project Organization Chart—External View

Projects deal with both trivial and significant change from day one. Projects must also keep moving in order to accomplish the ultimate objectives in the scheduled time, and it is often difficult to engage critical Stakeholders quickly to address every Change Request that is submitted. A tool that I have used successfully to address this issue is to use a Change Control Variance to manage scope.

A Change Control Variance is a set of measurements applied to Project Cost, Schedule, Scope, and Quality. These measurements can be used to define a 'two-tier' process to approve Change Requests. For any Change Request that does not exceed the variance criteria, the Project Core Team is empowered to make the approve/deny decision. Anything that exceeds the variance criteria requires Management to approve/deny the request. An example of a Project Cost Variance would be, 'if the Change Request requires additional staff exceeding one-half staff month (\$7,000) in order to meet the implementation date'. An example of a Project Scope Variance would be, 'any Change Request reduces the scope of the project or eliminates tasks'. Defining this two-tier process proved to be another

beneficial planning task that brought the Core Team together and engaged Management's support by letting them finalize the variance criteria.

QUALITY PLAN

There has been much focus on project quality lately. Sometimes in a technology project, the definition of quality can be elusive; however, quality can be found and defined. During the Stakeholder Analysis you received feedback from Stakeholders regarding project quality. The Core Team should be able to come up with other ideas. Generally, quality can be defined for an end deliverable, such as the software product, or it can be applied to a process. From a product perspective, quality can be measured in several ways. It can be developing reusable code, defining throughput performance, or integrating the software with organizational infrastructure standards. As for process quality, it can be defined as how the project will conduct a given process so as to produce quality project results. For example, in a Y2K testing project, one financial institution defined quality as having the end users participate in the test planning effort and conduct the actual testing since they knew the system and how they used it best.

The Quality Plan is where your project defines its quality objectives, and its plan for achieving them. These objectives can be defined in Quality Categories. For example, individual deliverables may have their own Quality definitions. In the example above, one could define a category for 'Conducting a quality test of the final software product'. Within this category, it is essential to define how the project will measure testing quality. These measurements can be objective or subjective, which should be noted. In addition, each quality definition must have a Responsible owner for ensuring that it is accomplished. These concepts are illustrated in [7-3] Exhibit 3. The final component of the Quality Plan is scheduled reviews to ensure that the project followed the quality directives. For example, in the definition of a quality testing effort, the project may want to review the quality definition measurements after completion of the Test Plan and Test Scripts, and then again after the completion of the actual Test Execution [7-3].

RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

This section articulates the project's early understanding of risk. I will not delve into the specifics of risk assessment, but I would like to discuss the appropriate level of activity to spend on it at this point in the project life cycle. Naturally, the project size and complexity will be the main drivers of this activity. The objective at this stage is to identify the risk response development that you want to formally build into the project execution processes. In order to do so, the project team must identify and quantify the risks as normal. In the quantification step, it is important to develop common probability and severity criteria so that all risks can be objectively evaluated to the extent possible. This facilitates the use of a Risk Matrix on which you can plot the identified risks in a 3 by 3 (Low, Medium, High) grid with an x axis of Severity and a y axis of Probability. Once plotted, focus the early risk response development on the Medium-High and High-High risks. These risks may require additional planning or the design of tasks built into the WBS. Include the Risk Matrix and a summary of the findings in this section of the Project Plan. Bear in mind that this is

Category and Quality Definition	Measurement	Responsible
1. Developing and executing a meaningful test of...		
a) User involvement in testing scope and planning	Objective	John B.
b) User involvement in test execution	Objective	Susan F.
c) Clearly documented tests scripts including: Inputs, Outputs, and Expected Results	Subjective	Paul G.
d) Measure actual test results against expected results	Objective	Paul G.
e) Script-level test sign-off (tester, separate reviewer)	Objective	Maria S.
f) Test plans document "who/what/where/when/how"	Subjective	Paul G.
g) Acceptance criteria clearly defined and measurable	Objective	Susan F.
h) Maintain a problem-tracking system	Objective	John B.
i) Acceptance criteria measured and met	Objective	Paul G.
j) Progress measurement	Objective	John B.
k) Instituting a formal review process	Objective	John B.

7-3 Quality Plan Category and Definitions

not a substitute for continuing your Risk Management activities throughout the project life cycle [7-4].

COMMUNICATION PLAN

If you want your project to succeed and be visible throughout its life cycle, communicate, communicate, communicate, and then communicate some more. The Communication Plan section documents the information that you intend to capture and disseminate about project activities. Depending on the practices within your organization, some of it may be pre-defined, yet other forms may be dictated by the wishes of the Stakeholders or developed by the Core Team. Information captured may include task schedule status, action items, issues, milestone progress, deliverables, deliverable status, meeting minutes or outcomes, and vendor communications. Information disseminated may include deliverables, status reports, current project task schedules, status meeting materials, milestone progress reports, and vendor communications. Certain information loses timeliness quickly, so thought needs to be put into the frequency of distribution for all of your project's communication vehicles. In today's distributed world, there are numerous viable options for receiving and distributing information. When choosing the ones appropriate to your project, listen to what the recipients want. Give them what they want the way they want it. It will elicit their support for the duration of the project. It is a Core Team exercise to define the

Probability	H	RA6		RA8
	M		RA1, RA2, RA4	RA5, TA2
	L	RA7	TA3, TA4, TA5	RA3, TA1
		Severity		

7-4 Risk Matrix

proposed audience for each vehicle, the frequency of distribution, and the distribution media. After reviewing the completed Project Plan, you can expect that some project participants and Stakeholders will request changes to the Communication Plan. These changes should be accommodated.

Define your project's document standards in the Communication Plan. These include: how you will differentiate document drafts from approval copies, how you will manage version control, how you will identify revisions from prior versions of documents, where you will store hard copy and electronic document versions, how you will prevent unauthorized updates to completed documents, and what you will do with the document repositories after the project has ended. Having the Core Team define these standards makes this another activity that contributes to team commitment.

COMMUNICATION MATRIX

This matrix is a visual representation of the information collected and documented in the Communication Plan. It is a simple tool to develop, easy to read, and it conveys a significant amount of information on one page. The information presented is the Stakeholders, the communication vehicles, the frequency of the distribution, and the media on which the information will be distributed. The Stakeholders are listed along the top of the x axis, and the communication vehicles are listed along the y axis. For each row along the y axis, list the frequency and media of the vehicle and then place an 'X' in the column for each Stakeholder receiving the information [7-5].

DELIVERABLES/RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

This matrix has the same format as the Communication Matrix, but is focused solely on the Deliverables. Like the Communication Matrix, it is easy to read and conveys a significant amount of information. However, it is not quite as easy to develop because there can be conflict over Deliverable ownership

	Frequency	Media	Name Project Manager	Name Project Sponsor	Name Product Management	Name Information Technician
1. Status Reporting Meeting Outcomes Action Item Log Issue Log Project Task Schedule	Weekly	Electronic	X		X	X
2. Milestone Progress Report	Bi-weekly	Electronic	X	X	X	X
3. Vendor Communications	Upon receipt	Paper	X	X	X	
4. Status Meeting	Weekly	Conference	X		X	X
5. Steering Committee Meeting	Monthly	Conference	X	X		

Figure 7-5 Communication Matrix

and approval responsibilities. The purpose of this matrix is to document for each Deliverable the project participants responsible for creating the deliverable, actively supporting the creation, reviewing it, and approving it. Stakeholders are listed along the top of the x axis, and the Deliverables are listed along the y axis. For each row along the y axis, list the target date for Deliverable completion and then place one of five values in the column to identify each Stakeholder's responsibility for the Deliverable. These values represent Primary responsibility for deliverable creation, Support responsibility, Review responsibility, Approval of the Deliverable, or 'blank' for no responsibility.

There can be honest disagreements about Deliverable responsibilities, especially for Approvals. Negotiating acceptable outcomes for the Stakeholders involves engaging their participation in resolving the issue. In respect to assigning responsibilities to individual Deliverables, there should be only one Primary owner for creating a Deliverable. I recommend keeping the number of Approvers for a Deliverable to the essential minimum. Too many Approvers can stall the project at critical times, and collecting Approval signatures gets exponentially more difficult the more Approvers there are. However, do not exclude Stakeholders who have a legitimate need to Approve a Deliverable [7-6].

PROJECT TASK SCHEDULE/WBS WITH PRELIMINARY RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Depending on how much is known about the project at this stage, include the Project Task Schedule or WBS in the Project Plan. In many projects the objectives are to implement known technologies within well understood

Key: P = Primary creator A = Approver of outcome R = Reviewer of outcome S = Supporter of delivery creation	Target Date	Name Project Manager	Name Project Sponsor	Name Product Management	Name Information Technician
1. Project Plan	1/15/00	P	SA	A	A
2. Business Requirements	2/28/00	R	A	P	A
3. Technical Design	4/15/00	R	R	A	P
4. Code and Unit Test	7/31/00	R		A	P
5.					

7-6 Deliverables Responsibility Matrix

environments and the scope of work is clear from the beginning. In these situations, it may be straightforward to work with the Core Team to construct the Project Task Schedule or WBS at this stage and present it with identified resources or responsible functional areas for each task. If you are in a situation that is not well defined, document what you know about the schedule or WBS to the extent possible. The more information presented, the better Stakeholders will understand the impact to their respective areas.

FINALIZING THE PROJECT PLAN

Congratulations, you have accomplished a significant amount of work producing the Project Plan. Once your review draft has been completed, distribute it to all project participant groups and Stakeholders and schedule group reviews. Depending on the number of project participants and Stakeholders, you may need to conduct several reviews to cover the entire document with everyone. During these reviews, listen carefully to the feedback and negotiate appropriate changes to the document. Upon completion of the reviews, update the document, identifying the revisions as you defined them in the document standards section of the Communication Plan and re-distribute the Project Plan for approval. All Stakeholders should approve the Project Plan in writing. Post the signatures in the project repository.

It is now a matter of executing the plan. I carry the Project Plan with me and refer to it often throughout the project. I use it to keep participants focused on the agreed-upon project mission and objectives. When disputes arise about scope or deliverables, the Project Plan is an excellent source for revisiting the planning decisions. If a request falls outside the agreed-upon scope, a quick review of the Scope Management and Change Control section sets forth the project’s defined process for addressing new requests.

Wrap Up

I have described the project planning process that I have effectively used on technology projects to produce a Project Plan. I have demonstrated how the project planning process can engage project participation and commitment from the Sponsor, Stakeholders, and direct participants. I have described a collaborative planning process that encourages input and ownership from groups affected by the project outcomes. These activities are not complicated. Conducting them gives your project early visibility with the organizations that will be instrumental in achieving your objectives. When you are through with this process, all interested parties will have a clear understanding of the What, Why, Who, When, Where, and How of your project. Happy project planning!

Author Query

AQ1: For consistency, we did not insert 7 here. Is this OK?