

10 Tips for Project Success

1. **Starting out:** Make sure that when you start out your customer defines their requirements in depth. You need to know exactly what it is that must be delivered, to who and when. Make it specific, write it up formally and get them to sign it off. This document will become the basis upon which to measure your success.
2. **Customers:** Involve your customers throughout the entire project life cycle. Get them involved in the analysis and planning, as well as execution. You don't have to seek their approval, just keep them informed. The more you involve them, the greater their level of buy-in and the easier it is to manage their expectations.
3. **Timeframes:** Keep your delivery timeframes short and realistic. Never agree to lengthy timeframes. Split the project into "mini-projects" if you need to. Keep each mini-project to less than 6 months. This keeps everyone motivated and focused.
4. **Milestones:** Break your project timeframe into "Milestones" which are manageable pieces of work. Add delivery deadlines to your milestones and try to deliver on every deadline, no matter what. If you're late, tell your customer about it as early as possible.
5. **Communications:** Make sure you keep everyone informed by providing the right information at the right time. Produce Weekly Status Reports and run regular team meetings.
6. **Scope:** Only authorize changes to your project scope if there is no impact on the timeline. Get your customers approval to important scope changes first and then get their buy-in to extend the delivery dates if you need to.
7. **Quality:** Keep the quality of your deliverables as high as possible. Constantly review quality and never let it slip. Implement "peer reviews" so that team members can review each other's deliverables. Then put in place external reviews to ensure that the quality of the solution meets your customer's needs.
8. **Issues:** Jump on risks and issues as soon as they are identified. Prioritize and resolve them before they impact on your project. Take pride in keeping risks and issues to a minimum.
9. **Deliverables:** As each deliverable is complete, hand it formally over to your customer. Get them to sign an Acceptance Form to say that it meets their expectations. Only then can you mark each deliverable off as 100% complete.
10. **Your team:** Great projects are run by great teams. Hire the best people you can afford. Spend the time to find the right people. It will save you time down the track. Remember, good people are easy to motivate. Show them the vision and how they can make it happen. Trust and believe in them. Make them feel valued. They will work wonders.