

## 5 Tips on Project Reporting

1. **Project status:** Create a weekly Project Status Report to show your actual vs. planned effort, percent complete and actual vs. forecast spend. Specify the number of open risks, changes and issues, and state whether action by your Sponsor is required to resolve them. Also show the forecast amount of time, effort and money required to finish the project. Always try and forecast as accurately as possible. Never forecast optimistically, always conservatively.
2. **Task completion:** You need to regularly show your Sponsor your progress against the tasks listed on your schedule. Create a summarized view of your project plan and update it to reflect the percent complete for every task. Then append this summary view to your Project Status Report. This way, your Sponsor can drill down to see further information about each task, if they want to.

By offering your Project Sponsor both summary and detailed information weekly makes them feel like your project is an "open book". They will have all of the information about your project at their finger-tips. This way, you will get more buy-in from your Sponsor and more support when it's needed.

3. **Milestones:** You need to add Milestones to your project plan to show when the major project deliverables will be produced. You then need to report on the progress of each milestone to your Sponsor. Show the percent complete of each milestone, and again, forecast the completion dates.

*Here's another tip:* You will get more out of your team if you motivate them to complete milestones, as opposed to tasks. That's because people are usually proud of the things that they have achieved in life (i.e. milestones), as opposed to the things they have done to achieve them (i.e. the tasks).

4. **Getting help:** Project Sponsors don't always want to hear "we're on track and under budget" in their project reports. They just want to hear the truth. So if you're behind schedule and you need help to get back on track, then tell your Sponsor about it in your project reports.

State exactly what you need from them. Show them that you're doing the best you can and that you're the best person for the job, but that you still need their help to deliver the project. If you need more time, money or resources, then ask for it. Don't be afraid. And remember, the best time to ask for help is before you really need it. This gives you contingency, because it always takes time for help to arrive.

5. **One version of the truth:** Your project reports need to depict "one version of the truth" to your team. Keep them 100% accurate and be as open as possible about real issues that are affecting your team. Remember that if you communicate an issue to your Sponsor, then it becomes their issue to fix as well. Reporting issues is a great way to share the responsibility for fixing them.