

Project Plan Coverage Checklist

Does your project plan include each of these items? Answering “no” to any of the following means that an important element of your project plan is missing.

YesNo

Project justification

An explanation of “why” the project is being done helps to keep the team focused and will also provide guidance when trade-offs are necessary.

YesNo

List of project-specific success factors

On time, within budget, and according to spec may not be sufficient. If there are other objectives which must be met, the plan should identify them.

YesNo

Deliverable-oriented Work Breakdown Structure

“Deliverable-oriented” means that the WBS is composed of measurable, tangible, and verifiable deliverables that provide clear completion criteria. The discipline of a WBS helps to ensure that all the necessary work has been identified.

YesNo

Appropriately sized, experience-based range estimates for each activity

The larger the activity, the higher the degree of uncertainty. But smaller activities mean more overhead. Activities planned for the first part of the project should be smaller than later ones. The most accurate estimates are based on past experience. Range estimates help communicate the degree of uncertainty involved in an individual activity.

YesNo

Separate budget for project management

Project management deliverables (e.g., status reports) and activities (day-to-day management) can consume 10–25% of a project’s labor hours. Even the low end of this range is a significant figure that must be planned and managed separately.

YesNo

Cost and schedule reserves

Cost and schedule reserves come in two flavors. Management reserves accommodate unknown, unpredictable events that change the amount of work to be done (e.g., natural disasters, regulatory changes). In the absence of a reserve, a scope change will be necessary. Contingency reserves accommodate elements that you can predict in total but not in detail (e.g., sick time, vacations).

YesNo

Major milestones

Key external deliverables should be identified separately for ease of reference.

YesNo

Activity dependencies

Projects are often delayed when one activity cannot begin because another is not finished. Larger projects should have a project network diagram maintained with project management software. Smaller projects can identify required activity sequences manually.

YesNo

Resource-driven critical path

Most projects are resource constrained. The critical path must be based on resource availability or it will not present an accurate picture of the project.

YesNo

Contingency plans for high probability risks

There should be a documented contingency plan (what will be done if the event comes to pass) for each risk with a high cost and a high probability of occurring.

YesNo

List of pending issues and decisions

Definite answers for all questions are unlikely at the start of the project — that is a natural outgrowth of the project environment. To minimize the probability that open items will slip through the cracks, they should be listed and reviewed regularly.

The following documentation should be in your project files:

YesNo

Approved project plan

Supporting documentation for plan