

PROJECT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Quality Glossary Definition: Project planning tools

Project planning tools are defined as a series of systems and methodologies designed to ensure teams are able to accomplish both short- and long-term projects. Project planning tools include charts and graphs designed to track progress, repetition-based approaches to testing and adjusting everyday processes, and other actions that allow organizations to manage and improve important projects.

The project implementation, planning, and execution tools listed below can help your organization manage an improvement project, test various iterations for a project, and successfully track a project's tasks and components from start to completion.

Gantt chart: A Gantt chart is a bar chart that shows the tasks of a project, when each must take place, how long each will take, and each task's completion

What Are The Top 10 Project Management Tools?

Now that you know the process to selecting the top project management tools, let's get down to the royal rumble.

Who's going to come out on top?

Luckily, **all** of these project management tools all bring something different to the table, and there's something for everybody in this list.

Here are the best project management tools:

Long-term and Short-term Plans

When you decided to attend college, you had a long-term plan in mind. You would spend the next four or five years preparing to become a teacher, a businessperson, or perhaps an ecologist. Or, you may have committed two or three years to become a nurse, a medical technician, or an electrician. Your long-term goal was necessary to make sure that your daily activities would help you achieve your desired outcome. You could have just enrolled in a school and taken classes that looked interesting, but then where would you be in four years? You most likely would not have taken the courses required to qualify you for the job you want. An organization, especially a business, is not so different. It also needs a long-term plan to make sure that the daily activities of its employees are contributing to the mission and value statements of the organization.

- **Policies** provide broad guidelines for the smooth operation of the organization. They cover things like hiring and firing, performance appraisals, promotions, and discipline. For example, a company may have a policy to encourage recycling in the workplace or a policy that prohibits personal cell phone use in manufacturing areas.
- **Procedures** are steps to be followed in established and repeated operations. Procedures should reflect the policies of the company and support the organization's long-term goals. Procedures may also detail steps that should be followed to ensure employees are disciplined in a fair and unbiased manner. For example, if employees feel that other employees interacted with them in an inappropriate manner, then they should follow the procedure for bringing this to management's attention.

The Role of Budgets in the Planning Process

Refer to the “Organizational Plan Hierarchy” figure earlier and locate the box labeled “Budgets.” Notice that budgets are examples of single-use, short-term plans. An organization’s budget is a document that details the financial and physical resources allocated to a project or department. They are single-use plans because they are specific to a particular period or event. For example, departments may have a hiring budget that allocates a certain number of positions and a total salary value for a calendar year. Next year, that budget may be the same or it may change, depending upon conditions in the organization. But it cannot be assumed that the budget will stay the same. Zero-based budgets look at each budget as if it were brand new and require managers to justify each of the budgeted items. This process ensures that budgets are closely tied to the latest organizational goals.

Budgets are a very important planning tool, and organizations take their budgeting process very seriously. Some managers spend most of their time making sure that the expenses and projects they control do not exceed authorized spending limits. To routinely “go over budget” is a sign of a poor planning—and planning is one of the basic management functions. In some cases, to routinely come in under budget is also viewed negatively, because with more accurate budgeting those committed resources could have been allocated to other projects. Often, projects compete for limited resources so the best budget is the one that most closely projects actual expenses and revenue.

Forecasting, Scenario Planning, and Contingency Planning

Forecasting is simply making a prediction about the future. Anyone can make a forecast—the trick is to be right or close