

Software Project Management

Develop Project Charter

The very first thing that's done on a new project is the development of the project charter. That's the document that authorizes you to do your work. But you're not always involved in making it—oftentimes it's handed to you by the sponsor.

Project Description:

The purpose of the project

This is a high-level description of the goals of your project. It's usually a few sentences that describe the project's main purpose.

Project Requirements:

Describes the product your project has to make

Anything you know that the customer, stakeholder, or sponsor expects to get out of the project should go here.

Assigned Project Manager and Authority Level:

Who the project manager is and what he has to do

This is where you're assigned to the project. If it's known who is going to be the project manager, the name of that person is noted. Otherwise, you may just have a department listed that you know the PM will come from. This is also where any specific decision-making authority you might need can be described.

Summary Milestone Schedule:

A list of dates that your project needs to meet

Business Case:

Why your company has decided to do this project

This section lists the reasons why it makes sense for your business to do this project. You might note the return on investment, building infrastructure, goodwill with clients, or anything else that will help people understand why this project is important.

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Example

The charter assigns you the authority to use resources, like people on your team, computers, office equipment, conference rooms—the things you need to get the job done.

Acme Travel

Project Charter

Project Description: World vacation in 4 weeks
A group of teachers from Minnesota wants to take a trip around the world, starting with Mumbai, India, and ending somewhere in Europe. They have contracted Acme Travel Agency to make their dream a reality.

Project Requirements:

- Trip should be planned to coincide with good weather.
- Need to see famous monuments at each point of destination.
- Restaurant recommendations and nightlife information on request.
- Need assistance for missed flights, lost luggage, and other issues in transit.

Assigned Project Manager and Authority Level:
You have the authority to use dedicated money and resources to accomplish this goal.

Summary Milestone Schedule

June 13–20—Mumbai	June 20–23—Hong Kong
June 24–29—Shanghai	June 30–July 4—Rome
July 5–8—Barcelona	July 9–14—Paris

Business Case:
This project will be a sound investment for Acme. Provided it is planned and executed properly, we should receive around \$700 per person in profit.

SIGNED,

CEO, Acme Travel

Larry should have paid attention to this information.

As the project charter officially assigns the PM, it can be written before the PM is even involved.

This is just a summary of the important points of the business case that were used to decide to pursue the project.

This project has one sponsor, but it's OK if a project has more than one.

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Project Requirements:

Assigned Project Manager and Authority Level:

Summary Milestone Schedule:

Business Case: