**Tracking and communicating success criteria**
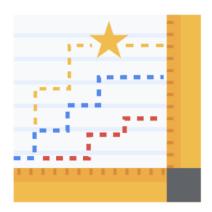


Success criteria

We recently covered the topic about launching and landing projects, and now we will turn our focus to ensuring that our landings are successful.

Recall that SMART goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound and help keep a project on track for success.

We can also determine the success of a project by the quality of the product, the ability to fulfill the needs of your customers, and the need to meet the expectations of your stakeholders. For this reading, we will discuss these particular success criteria, the metrics we use to track them, and how and why we communicate our findings.

**Product quality**

The product, or final result, of a project has its own set of attributes that define success. The product attributes that are necessary for the product's success include completeness in features, quality of features, unit cost, usability, etc. The extent that a product is complete will contribute to the product's success. This can apply to any project in which you deliver a product or tangible outcome at the end. To keep us on track for success, we can create a list of product requirements to ensure that you do not miss anything. For example, if the project produces word processing software, you need basic features like text entry, formatting, saving, and printing. Since you require each feature to have a functional word processor by today's standards, you include these features on your checklist.

To measure the success of a product, consider including these metrics on your checklist:

- Track if you implemented the product's priority requirements

- Track and assess the product's number of technical issues or defects

- Measure the percentage of features you delivered or released at the end of the project

**What is important to the customers or stakeholders**

We have to pay attention to product metrics, but we also have to be mindful of stakeholder and customer additional expectations for features and objectives. In the word processor example, a stakeholder may want to add an additional functionality to easily create tables in a document with text. Additionally, a strategic goal of the organization could be to create word processor software with more collaborative ability than the word processors currently on the market. Each component is necessary in order to meet customer and stakeholder expectations. Think about what needs the project satisfies for your stakeholders or customers. These strategic goals tie back to the business case and the reason you initiated the project in the first place. Often, you can measure the fulfillment of strategic goals via user or customer metrics. Metrics to consider include:

- Evaluating user engagement with the product

- Measuring stakeholder and customer satisfaction via surveys

- Tracking user adoption of the product by using sales data

**Document, align, and communicate success**

Understanding where we are and where we are going helps the project team determine if they are on track. As you learned in the video on this topic, you need to get clarity from stakeholders on the project requirements and expectations. There are many people involved with any project, and success will look different for each of them. You want to ask questions, such as: Who ultimately says whether or not the project is successful? What criteria will be measured to determine success? What is the success of this project based on? It is best practice to get the key stakeholders or the steering committee to review and approve your success criteria. This becomes a mutual agreement on how all parties define the success of the project.

**Key takeaway**

Remember, all projects encounter change. All parties must have continuous access and alignment to the success criteria agreed upon to avoid scope creep (uncontrolled change of the project's scope) or failed expectations at the end of the project. It's important to document success criteria upfront and continue to report on it throughout the project.