Project Post Mortem Exercise and Template

Introduction

After a project or milestone it's good to reflect on performance as both individuals and teams. Our goal here is to identify "opportunities for improvement" so that they can be acted on in future work. This helps us to actively work on getting better at what we do.

Remember, the focus here is on improving future work. **It's important to recognise what went well in addition to what didn't.** This way you can consider how to keep them going and make the most of them. Plus, it's good to acknowledge your successes!

Prompts

This is a list of areas that you might want to consider while running through this exercise. It's not exhaustive, but it should get you started.

• Issues encountered	• Planning	• Record keeping
• Communication	• Schedule and budget	• Decision making
• Workflow and processes	• Leadership	• Task prioritisation
• Time management	• Productivity	• Handling things not going to plan
• Resource allocation	• Punctuality	• Task allocation
• Skill allocation	• Team presence	• Work levels
• Tools or services used	• Distractions	• Equipment
• Client interactions	• Common errors	• Understanding of work

Reflection

We'll start by looking back over the project or milestone to identify things that went well and things that didn't. At this stage we're only looking to recognise and acknowledge those things. Treat it like a brainstorming session.

Things that went well

In this box, list anything that you or your team felt went particularly well in this project.

- [Item 1]

- [Item 2]

- [Item 3]

- …

Things that could have been better

In this box, list anything that you believe you or your team could do better.

- [Item 1]

- [Item 2]

- [Item 3]

- …

Potential improvements

Which items from your reflection do you think your team could **most** benefit from improving? List some here, and then brainstorm ideas about how you could make improvements.

Item to improve	
Improvement ideas	

Item to improve	
Improvement ideas	

Item to improve	
Improvement ideas	

Item to improve	
Improvement ideas	

Item to improve	
Improvement ideas	

[Copy/paste to make as many of these boxes as you need.]

Actions arising

We can't improve everything all at once. Instead, pick a small number of things to focus on in your upcoming work.

Select these based on a combination of how much you believe they impacted productivity and how much effort you think they might take. Keep in mind that improving on recognised issues is important, but it's also ok to focus on getting better at things you're already good at.

Focus 1

Focus 2

Focus 3

Next

As you're working on your next project make sure you keep the above in mind.

Afterwards, repeat this exercise to identify new areas to focus your improvement.

If you stay in the habit of repeating this process as you work you will find that you steadily improve over time. You will always find issues to identify, but they'll tend to get smaller and have less impact on your productivity over time. As this happens you'll spend less time ironing out issues and be able to put that into further developing skills and potentially even honing a specialty.