

Closing: Guiding questions and tips

Project closing consists of ensuring the team completes all project work, executing any remaining project management processes, and obtaining stakeholder recognition that the project is complete.

These guiding questions and tips, compiled by dozens of project managers at Google, can help you ensure your team collaborates successfully to produce work that everyone can be proud of.

Why closing matters

Closing a project thoroughly helps you, your team, and your organization avoid potential issues. A thorough project closing provides assurance that:

- All work has been completed.
- All agreed-upon project management processes have been executed.
- Everyone involved recognizes formally that the project is complete.

Follow these tips to ensure all tasks are completed and that everyone involved understands the project has closed:

- Conduct administrative closure of the procurement process.
- Conduct a formal closing process after the final project phase or milestone.
- Complete and present an impact report.
- Document acceptance from all stakeholders to confirm that they are happy with the deliverables and outcomes.
- Formally disband and thank the project team.

Retrospectives

It's important to discuss successes, failures, and possible future improvements on the project.

Tips to help you run a retrospective

- Create a safe space for team members to share their experiences and feedback.
- Model the kind of behavior and responses you'd like to elicit from the team.
- Phrase questions in a non-confrontational way. Rather than "What went wrong?" and "What went well?", try asking, "What about this project should we start, stop, and continue?"
- Remind your team of the different milestones they reached over the course of the project to spark more discussion about the entire project.

Demonstrate your impact

In addition to closing out your project, it's important to showcase the work of your team and the impact the project had on the organization.

- Present the project's impact through storytelling, data, and visualizations.
- Invite key stakeholders and senior leadership to your impact report presentation.
- Amplify your outcome: in addition to presenting your impact to key stakeholders and senior leadership, consider other outlets for sharing your project's impact, such as at a company all-hands meeting or in a newsletter or at a meeting with another team that could benefit from the lessons learned from your project.

Celebrations

It is important to help a team celebrate the end of a project in a way that is appropriate for the project and company. Celebrations help the team feel recognized and rewarded for all of their hard work.

Some ways project managers can celebrate wins include:

- Publicizing the project's successful outcome within your company or organization.
- Requesting a speaking slot at a team or company all-hands meeting to spotlight the project and team.
- Organizing a celebration event for the project team.
- Recognizing individual contributions through awards or superlatives.
- Leveraging employee recognition programs at your company or organization.

Develop project documentation

Documenting and organizing project components provides visibility and accountability. It's common for project team members and senior stakeholders to reference and contribute to your project documents throughout the project.

Impact report

- Created for **senior stakeholders** or **project sponsors** at the end of the project
- **Demonstrates the project's value** to those who were not directly involved

What's in an impact report?

1. Executive summary
2. Results
3. What worked
4. Next steps

Closeout report

- Created **by project managers for project managers**
- A **blueprint that documents** what the team did, how they did it, and what they delivered
- Provides an **evaluation of the quality of the work**
- Evaluates the project's performance with respect to **budget** and **schedule**

What's in a closeout report?

1. Summary
2. Methodology
3. Results
4. Lessons learned
5. Next steps
6. Project documentation

 [Download a closeout report template](#)