

Appendix 2.1 Taxonomy of Project Definitions

GLOSSARY

Here are definitions of some commonly used project management terms:

Vision Statement - A statement that expresses the high-level intention of a project (often with lofty or unachievable goals).

For example,

- a school may aim for perfect pupil attendance or
- a company may strive for 100% customer satisfaction.

Business Goals - A company creates these to describe the overall outcomes it wants to accomplish in a certain time frame. Business goals are captured in business plans.

Goals - A high-level, broad, non-specific, and long-term definition of what the group or organization wants to accomplish. Goals are not measurable, and several discrete projects may be needed to achieve a goal. Some people say that project goals do not need to be defined, so long as a project manager understands the business goals. However, project objectives are always needed. In a business, project goals are influenced by business goals.

Objectives - Influenced by goals, an objective is a low-level description of the specific and measurable outcomes desired from a project. Activities and most likely deliverables will contribute to achieving the objective. The project and its objectives must always contribute to the goal, otherwise the project should not be attempted.

Bottomline: Goals are high-level, *general statements* about the aims of the project, while objectives are *detailed statements* about what the project should accomplish.

Activities - This is what your team will do to achieve the objective. An activity can be a *specific action* or a *process*, and many activities will likely be involved to meet objectives. As with everything in project management, the key consideration for activities is that they contribute directly to achieving the objective, and thereby the goal.

Deliverables - A specific, tangible product or thing, like a report or a software app. One or more deliverables may contribute to achieving an objective, but it is important not to define the objective as a deliverable. In other words, if the objective is written at too low a level, you risk creating the wrong deliverables. Rather, the objective is there to guide you and the team to determine what products or processes are needed.

For example, say you have difficulty falling asleep each night. You may decide that your objective is to buy relaxing chamomile tea. Drinking the tea might help, but if your objective had been to ensure at least seven hours of sleep a night by the following month, you might have explored other solutions that would have greater benefits, such as making sure to get an hour of exercise every day.

Requirements - A description of features and functions. Objectives should not include features and functions.

GOALS vs OBJECTIVES

The words “objective” and “goal” are sometimes used interchangeably. However, goals and objectives are actually separate items that have their own unique and important roles.

Goals	Objectives
High-level statements	Lower-level statements
Vague	Specific
<i>General statements</i> about the aims of the project.	<i>Detailed statements</i> about what the project should accomplish
Provide <i>overall context</i> for what the project is set to achieve	Describe results that the project will produce.
There are different types of goals, such as <i>performance goals</i> , <i>time goals</i> and <i>resources goals</i> .	The project and its objectives must always contribute to the goal, otherwise the project should not be attempted.
Goals are not measurable, and several discrete projects may be needed to achieve a goal.	Objectives must be measurable as they will decide whether a project is a success or not. Therefore, objectives contain KPI metrics, such as budget, quality and project deadline/duration..
E.g., <i>Increase the overall satisfaction level for customers submitting support tickets through the website</i>	E.g., <i>Implement a new online ticketing system by 1 August 2020 to achieve ticket response time of no more than 1 hour.</i>

TIPS FOR WRITING GOOD PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Objectives are usually expressed as succinct, one-sentence statements.
 - There is some discrepancy between how specific the verbs may be. Some guides insist that only general quality and quantity verbs be used (increase, decrease, improve), while community groups and nonprofits seem to tolerate looser expressions (develop, educate, setup, estimate).
- An objective should not specify how something is done
- Do not define the objective as a deliverable.
- Objectives should not include features and functions.
- Be brief; it increases the chances of objectives being read and understood.
- Be clear; don't give a list of options or a range of target numbers. Ask for what you need and what you expect.
- Use plain English, not jargon so everyone can understand your objective.
- Make sure your objectives are things you actually can control.
 - For example, “*I will send out 50 letters of interest by next week*” describes something you can achieve. “*I will book 15 jobs by next week*” is not something you can control, because it's up to someone else to hire you.

Examples of Poorly Written Objectives

- Personal: Earn more money.
- Personal: Go to university.
- Nonprofit: Help children read better.
- Business: Create a new app.
- Business: Install a new system.

Examples of Well Written Objectives

Type	Goal	Objective
Personal	To buy a house	To get a condominium for under \$250,000 with two bedrooms by August.
Business	To build up the company in the near future.	To increase sales of Super Widget by 10 percent by the second quarter of next year.
Business	To make existing customers happier.	To improve customer satisfaction rates by 50 percent by June 30 through training of customer service team.
Nonprofit	To restore a native habitat around the retention pond near the Old Road to encourage native bird and animal species to visit and improve water filtration.	To support residential homeowners around the pond to remove and replace non-native plants on one-third of the designated area by December.
Nonprofit	To ensure that homeless women have access to regular meals.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To locate a kitchen and eating space on a bus route that can serve 30 women by December 15. 2. To recruit volunteers who will staff the kitchen for breakfast and dinner by December 30. 3. To organize a regular donated food supply for breakfasts and dinners from local organizations and restaurants by December 30.

Adapted from:

<https://www.projectmanager.com/training/how-to-write-effective-project-objectives-every-time>
<https://www.smartsheet.com/how-write-smart-project-objective>