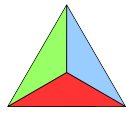


Deeply Practical Project Management **Summary Checklist** **Overview**

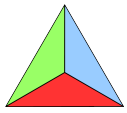
"The loftier the building, the deeper must the foundation be laid."
– Thomas Kempis, 1380–1471.

The following provides a summary checklist of the key points every Project Manager should understand:

- The main value of project management is that it helps you plan your effort very efficiently to ensure you have sufficient schedule and budget and set realistic expectations before you start, and then helps smoothly status and manage the project performance once underway.
- Project management helps manage complexity, and so is useful for any kind of effort, small or large, in any domain, in industry, government, or non-profit.
- Project management processes can be used by anyone in any role or position, since everyone is the project manager of their own work, and when institutionalized help the whole organization function as one integrated team.
- All projects should come from a documented "need", a problem or opportunity that provides a good reason to carry them out instead of doing something else.
- If there is not enough information available to initiate a project, first conduct a "Feasibility Study", "Needs Assessment", or "Opportunity Analysis".
- Project management applies well to small projects without skipping any steps, however only spend 5% of the effort in the planning stage.
- Documented processes are invaluable because they capture best practices so our limited human capacity doesn't have to remember or re-invent them.
- The Project Management Institute (PMI)® PMBOK® documents the world-wide standard PM best practices refined by experience over the last century.
- A PMI PMP® certification is usually required just for large or contracted projects, but is worthwhile at any level and respected around the world.
- Projects are temporary and deliver something, and are unique – you start out not knowing how to do them – which is when the processes are really useful.
- Programs are collections of inter-related projects, usually that interact monthly or less, and are managed as a group to optimize a program level objective.
- The five PM stages are Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring & Control, and Closing, and can repeat across multiple project phases.



- The ten project management knowledge areas are Integration, Scope, Time, Cost, Risk, Quality, Human Resources, Stakeholders, Communications, and Procurement.
- Project management uses two key techniques: (1) breaking down complex items into simpler pieces, solving the pieces, and rolling them up to solve the whole; and (2) doing one thing at a time to lay down a baseline and avoid thrashing.
- Several powerful automated software applications support various parts of the project management process, most importantly the Gantt chart tool.
- All optional programs and projects should flow from the Strategic Plan, to optimize organization achievement and maximize senior management support.
- The most important concept in project management is the triple constraint, stating that scope, time, and cost are fundamentally inter-related, and whenever one changes the other two must be rebalanced – the project manager's main job.
- The top three drivers of project success are (1) define the scope first, (2) manage scope changes, and (3) obtain user feedback as early as possible throughout the project to find the items inevitably missed when they are easiest to manage.
- The project manager must have the title “Project Manager”, with accountability and authority to ensure project success, ideally publicly assigned by the sponsor in the charter, and have direct access to the customer whenever required.
- Only the project manager known to have accountability for success can say “If we want this project to be successful, then I need...” and get the full attention of the organization since they know they are now responsible for fulfilling that request.
- Project managers need organization skills, project management skills, domain experience, and soft-skills since project teams are human systems.
- The essentials of good team communications are active listening, confirming communications, and being aware that communications overhead increases exponentially as the size of teams rise.
- All teams go through the stages of forming, storming, norming, and then performing, so be aware of the progression, hasten it with more team interaction early, and communicate the norms you want the team to adopt to help establish their identity.
- The essentials of a good team foundation are removal of interruptions, and establishing a culture of mutual trust through honesty, delegation, and formal and informal team building.
- The foundations of good team dynamics are rotating leadership, open conflict of ideas, and mutual accountability – the sign of a maximum performance team.



- The essentials of negotiation are: be optimistic and look for win-wins; know your top-line, bottom line, what you can add and give up along the way, and your BATNA; have conversations like “if I did this, could you do that” and “if you did that, I could do this”; agree the easiest items first; and aim for sustainable 55%/45% wins.
- The essentials of leadership are: ensure the goals are correct and clear; motivate the team; work constantly on increasing the level of trust, and provide the resources the team needs and solve the problems they cannot.
