

Tip # 1 - Preventing the Troubled Project: A Checklist For Managing Projects Effectively By Frank P. Saladis, PMP

With just a small amount of effort it is possible to create a quick checklist for your projects, helping minimize the number of problems you may experience as you manage your project or projects. To create a check list just review your project planning methodology, refer to the PMBOK® Guide for some useful planning tips and details and then customize your list based on your organization's project management processes and support system. Check lists can always be modified and improved and should be developed based on the type of project. The intent behind a check list is to help minimize the omission of critical items and to ensure everyone has provided their key planning components. Basically, the project check list is another form of risk management. Below are a few items that may be common to many project check lists.

- The environmental factors associated with the project have been identified
- The organizations standard processes and procedures have been reviewed and communicated to the project team
- A clear, concise project charter defining the project has been prepared
- Performance objectives using SMART criteria have been written (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time based)
- A project scope statement clearly defining the boundaries and constraints has been developed
- A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) has been developed to the required level of detail by the project team
- Deliverables have been identified by phase
- Roles And Responsibilities have been defined using a RAM or RACI chart
- A project schedule has been prepared and approved
- A network diagram has been developed to ensure logical dependencies have been defined appropriately by the project team
- A risk management plan and process has been established for the project.
- Project activity durations do not exceed the 80 hour (or 40 hour) rule
- A Change control process has been developed and communicated to all stakeholders
- Expectations have been clearly communicated to all stakeholders (including expectations from the sponsor)
- A recognition plan has been developed for the project team
- Back-up plans are in place for critical resources
- The required subsidiary plans have been developed
- A project communications plan has been developed

The project check list details depend on the type of project, the methodology in place and the project management maturity of the organization. There are dozens of websites that provide checklist templates and additional information to help you plan you project effectively. Take the time required to develop a good plan, utilize the expertise of your team and check your work frequently. Simple steps make the difference between success and failure in any project.