IFPPM.org

Deeply Practical Project Management
(Smaller Projects)

The core thread of PM processes applicable to any kind of project.

1 - Initiating

Baseline the objective and initial business case

~ 1% of project effort

- Sponsor / Customer — S2.2.1
- Need: Problem or Opportunity — S1.1.4
- Stakeholders — S2.3
- Project Objective — S2.4.1, S2.4.2
- *Schedule & budget accuracy +/- 100%*
- Business Case — S2.5
- Project Manager — S1.7
- Project Charter — S2.7

Project Manager Essentials

- Project managers should have project management training, organizational skills, domain experience, and soft skills.
- The project manager should have the title "Project Manager", because only that title signals to everyone that they have the two "A" words: the Accountability and Authority to make the project succeed.
- Accountability is a great thing, because it gives you courage, and it gives you a lot of power: you will be the one people will ask if things go wrong.
- Therefore, only the accountable PM can say "If we want this project to be successful, then I need X..." and be listened to.
- Then always send a polite putting on record email for any critically important request.

S1.7, PMLL 1

Do not pass this line until Objective is agreed and Project Charter is approved by the Sponsor

2 - Planning

Determine the scope, schedule, budget, and risks within +/- 10% before you start

1% to 5% of project effort

Iterate & optimize as needed

- Core Project Team (CPT) — S3.1.3
- Requirements — S3.2, S6.3.3
- Work Breakdown Structure (Deliverables) — S1.6.3, S3.4
- Precedence Diagram — S3.5
- Estimates — S3.6
- Gantt Schedule (Critical Path) — S3.7
- Cost Rollup — S3.9
- Risk Budget — S3.11
- Project Management Plan — S3.13
- *Schedule & budget accuracy +/- 10%*

Planning Essentials

After agreeing the objective, the most important step in baselining the project scope is interviewing everyone and baselining a complete set of requirements, to find all the detail behind the objective, ensuring there is no missing scope and minimizing later scope creep.

After the core team creates the WBS of deliverables, everything in project management gets easy. The entire project is broken down into smaller, more manageable pieces, clear work outputs allocated to a single team member, and all the project manager cares about after that.

The precedence diagram is your most important project management tool. Creating the precedence diagram with the core team is what ensures all the work and dependencies are identified, the schedule and critical path will be accurate, and the project plan is realistic and as simple as can be.

The schedule critical path is gold for the Project Manager to know, because any slips on the critical path will delay the entire project, so the PM can focus their attention on managing the deliverables on the critical path.

"A project plan with an insufficient risk reserve, both time and money, is already late and over budget... and it hasn't even started yet!"

S2.4.1, S3.2, S3.4, S3.5, S3.7, S3.11, S3.13.2

Project Management Fundamental

"Just like changing the side of a triangle, changing any one of the three constraints of scope, time, or cost will cause a change in one or both of the others."

S1.5

Do not pass this line until Project Plan is triple constraint balanced and approved by the Sponsor

4 - Monitoring & Control

Manage as close to the plan as possible

Monitoring & Control Fundamental

When the risk budget is being burned too fast, ask for guidance in the most constructively positive way: "What is most important to you, the scope, schedule, or budget?"

S1.5, S5.10.3

- Weekly Issues Status Meetings (Under 1 hour) — S5.2
- Monthly Project Reviews — S5.10
- Triple Constraint Rebalancing — S1.5, S5.10.3
- Change Control — S1.6.3, S5.3

PM Priority

Your second priority is to succeed. Your first priority is to T3: "Tell The Truth".

S.5, S5.10.3

3 - Executing

Create the product, service, or result

- Full Project Team — S4.2
- Kickoff Meeting — S4.4.1
- Designs / Drafts / Mockups / Prototypes — S1.6.3, S4.5.1
- Builds / Increments / Iterations / Versions — S1.6.3, S5.8.3
- Event / Implement / Launch — S6.3

*Agile / Iterative with lots of reviews **

Top 3 Drivers Of Project Success

1. Scope Definition. First get your scope in ORDer, by baselining the Objective, Requirements, and work breakdown structure of Deliverables, so then the planned schedule and budget will be accurately sized.

2. Manage Scope Change. Implement rigorous change control, ensuring every requested change to the planned scope is written down, getting team wide input on the impact, estimating the additional schedule, budget, and risks, making a recommendation on whether it should be done now, later, or not at all, and then always obtaining Sponsor approval of the additional schedule and budget required before proceeding.

3. User Reviews. Ensure the development is "agile", with multiple builds / drafts / increments / iterations / versions, with customer / user reviews in between, to catch any errors or omissions and obtain redirection as early as possible when it is least disruptive and costly. *

Key trick: Whenever scope increases, whether you just missed it during planning, or a user review found something you had not realized, try to find some existing scope you can trade out of the project to balance it off, instead of constantly increasing the overall budget and schedule.

S1.6.3, S2.4.1, S3.2, S3.4, S5.3, S4.5.1, S5.8.3, S5.3.3

*** See IFPPM reference: *"Project Development Methodologies: Waterfall, Incremental, Iterative, Spiral, Lean, Kanban, Agile, Scrum, and the rest"***

5 - Closing

Wrap up in an organized fashion

Lessons Learned Essentials

Lessons learned gathering is the highest ROI process in the PM life-cycle. Ideally, lessons learned should be gathered as the project proceeds, such as after major reviews or events, facilitated with an online tool like a shared Wiki.

Make sure you brief the team, "No names or blame, this is about all of us getting better", and "Let's capture both things that did not go well that we want to avoid, and things that did go well that we want to repeat."

For live lessons learned gathering events, make sure you use a laptop and monitor or shared document so everyone can see the lessons as you type, to make the meeting half as long and twice as effective.

S6.4

- Lessons Learned Report — S6.4
- Team Closure / Celebration — S2.3
- Project Final Report — S2.3
- F

Deeply Practical Project Management

This flowchart identifies the essential thread of PM best practices, for smaller projects in any domain.

For more information see the *Institute For Practical Project Management* at IFPPM.org, also providing the following completely free resources:

- The 250 page standard *Deeply Practical Project Management*.
- The companion book *Project Development Methodologies: Waterfall, Incremental, Iterative, Spiral, Lean, Kanban, Agile, Scrum, and the rest*.
- The book *How To Plan Your Project With MS Office*.
- The $44M example project *Magical Devices Version 3*, including a project charter, work breakdown structure, precedence diagram, Gantt schedule, cost curve, risk register, and project plan.
- A complete set of MS Office project management templates.

The IFPPM also provides online self-paced courses, and administers the certification *Deeply Practical Project Manager* (DPPM).

Always free for non-profits, see IFPPM.org/non-profits

Download this flowchart and one for larger projects from IFPPM.org/dppm
Print shops can print this version on A1 size paper

Institute For Practical Project Management – IFPPM.org
"As simple as possible, but no simpler."

Indicates Sponsor / Customer involvement

SX.Y = DPPM book section
PMLL X = PM Lessons Learned course
(Many objects are clickable)

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