

# 7 Steps to Project Implementation Success

By Naseem Mariam

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ABSTRACT: Once you know how to gather requirements and create a good design, the next phase is the implementation phase of the project. It is here that the things a person does and does not do and what he manages and what he does not decide the success or failure of the project. Here is a Seven Point programme that will lead you to project success.

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Here is a Seven Step Guide to implement projects and programs successfully.

## 1. Determine Key Environmental changes

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Take a good look at the big picture, the context in which the project is being executed. Is the deliverable time critical? What are the risks associated with this project? Read the article "Risk Management Reduces Project Fires" for a more detailed look at risks. What are the drivers, which mandate the completion of this project?

What is the market context in which the project executes? Is there any anticipated change in the external environment by

the time the project completes? Will these changes affect the project output favorably? How would the project deliverable enhance life for the customer? What are the explicit and implicit expectations of the customer from the product or service? Read the article "5 Steps to Better Manage Your Customers' Expectations".

## 2. Access the target audience

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Who will benefit from the product that you will create in your project? Who needs the enhanced features that you plan to add to your project? Is the project output to be consumed or used by the person requesting for the project? Or does he have an end user in mind? Get a clear picture of the scenarios in which the project output will be used.

Read articles "10 Tips to Gather Business Requirements" and "5 Keys to Better System & Software Design" for tips on defining your target audience for the project deliverable.

## 3. Form key partnerships

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Project Management definition: "The exercise of responsibility and decision-making about a project, the authority to execute within the boundaries of the project, and the accountability to deliver the results of a project in the context of agreed-upon customer expectations, commitments and constraints." ~ Mark Mullaly, president of Interthink Consulting Incorporated

Sometimes the manager of the project is not given the authority to take decisions; he is asked to consult his boss for approval. At other times his role and accountability boundaries is not well defined. In such cases, there should be a good buy-in from all those connected with the project. These are the key partnerships: customer-project lead, customer company-company executing the project, project lead-team members, project lead- peer groups, project team support team.

The people who need to interact with each other, when and even maybe the format of the reports that need to be exchanged should be defined up front so that progress is tracked, risks mitigated, issues handled in a timely manner. Very often it is this lack of well-defined communication channels that irritates and confuses the customer, team members and the project lead as the project progresses.

## 4. Set measurable goals

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Goals should be defined in quantitative terms. The metrics that will measure how much of the goal is achieved should be defined at the start of the project. Re-look at these just after the design phase of the project.

It is a good practice to define a set of goals for delight and a separate set of goals for satisfying the customer. Mandatory and optional goals with priority also help the project team concentrate and focus on the essentials.

## 5. Select tools

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Often tools help the project get completed faster, with better quality. Some tools have a cost associated with their usage: cost of software notwithstanding, there may exist training costs, learning curve, costs of mistakes while using the tool wrongly etc. All these need to be taken into consideration when deciding the tools that will be used in the project.

## 6. Implement program

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A successful Project Manager must simultaneously manage the four basic elements of a project: resources (equipment, manpower), time and schedule, money and costs, and project scope. Refer article "Project Management Definitions" for further details.

## 7. Monitor metrics

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Periodically keep track of the project progress, manage the risks. Also remember to manage the explicit and implicit expectations of the customer. Measure the metrics. Evaluate whether you are meeting your goals. Are you nearer delighting the customer or driving him mad? What does your customer say? Be ready to listen and adapt your processes and project methodologies to satisfy and delight your customer.

## Related Reading

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### 1. "Risk Management Reduces Project Fires"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/project-risk-management-fires.html>

### 2. "5 Steps to Better Manage Your Customers' Expectations"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/crm-expectations-management.html>

### 3. "10 Tips to Gather Business Requirements"

<http://www.123projectmanagement.com/project-management-gather-requirements.html>

