PRO⚙JECT SUCCESS

5 KEY METRICS FOR MEASURING YOUR PROJECT'S PROGRESS WITH ITS MANY MOVING PARTS

1. Milestones

✓ If your project is fairly substantial with interdependent parts, it needs to be implemented in a specific order, like when building a house, the foundation comes first, followed by framing and then the roof is built.

✓ When implementing a fairly large project, you will have developed a plan. You may be tempted to include with your plan a timeline based on your time estimate to implement each task. However, the best way to build your timeline is to use a "Critical Path method or Gantt Chart". The critical path is simply the alignment of all tasks that determine the end date in your project schedule.

Why? Because If one of those critical tasks is late by one day, then your project end date will automatically be extended by one day. Oftentimes, there will be tasks that are not on the critical path; this is due to the slack in the project schedule. If you refer to your current schedule, you can examine your Gantt chart, quickly identify the tasks that have some float time compared to the tasks that have no slack, and make a course correction.

Note: *You may want to use a Gantt cloud service for the duration of your project. It will take you a couple hours to learn its application, but it will reduce your workload needed to manage your projects' deployment, it will be easier to avoid a run-away budget and help you avoid over tasking one employee over others.*

2. Scope

Know what needs to get done within a specific time frame. As the project manager, make sure you have a very good understanding of what are your project key (critical) tasks and their sub-tasks. Incorporate those tasks in your Gantt chart and keep an eye on things. Avoid project add-on, unless you are convinced the new add-on will drive success.   Add-on often result in time delays and an exploded budget.

3. Budget

It is often the most important factor of a project. "Did you stick to the budget?" You may work 20-hours a day managing your project but if you deliver a finish project at much higher costs than your initial estimate your client relationship will likely suffer, it may even end your relationship. If you are implementing your own project, your bank account will suffer or perhaps your banker will be knocking on your door? It is something you will want to avoid.

4. Customer satisfaction

Often clients are not be able to articulate exactly what they want. This is when you need to put on your '*creative cap'* and figure out what the client is looking for. You may need to provide guidance between the "Must" and "Should Have". Budget or timeline may not accommodate the implementation of "Should have" (or nice to have). It's for you as the project manager to help the client examine the cause and effect of some of the "Should Have". Solid reasoning will likely help ensure the client's satisfaction with the end-product.

Project managers often devote many extra hours to the implementation of a project. However, despite your busy schedule, time needs to be set-aside each week to track client satisfaction. Provide the client with a solid update, review budget and milestones, be ready to discuss a possible deviation and to propose course corrections. Also bring forward any key issues that may affect the project. Be open and transparent, if the client isn't happy with the process, you've failed. Communicate, communicate and communicate to avoid negative situations by seeking constant feedback.

5. Quality of work

There are many factors that drive the quality of a project. Obviously the skill and experience of the project manager and her close attention to details is the underlying strength to ensuring quality. The project manager must be aware of the project risks and must have the capability of managing risks.

Let's remember that the quality of one project often affects another, it's important to always track quality and make adjustments to future projects accordingly.

Remember, recommendations are like free advertising. If you deliver a strong product, your client may tell some people about it, but if you've missed the mark the world will likely find out about it.

Good luck with your next project

Guy Dancause, CCO

Idea Connector.net

April 20, 2017