# Project Management Strategy

Esteban T. Lopez

San Jose State University

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Dr. Sean Gaffney

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In order to keep a project on track and improve the probability of success can be by focusing on scope, key metrics, and risk management. There are many lists and recommendations but these three focal points can streamline the project across obstacles to completion. While other strategies need to be understood and incorporated, these 3 are focused enough to provide laser precision while still allowing for breadth. Using an established framework or customizing a framework to be used as a starting point over and over should prioritize scope, metrics, and risk.

## Scope

The most important aspect of project management is scope management. Carefully formulating and adhering to the scope will give the project manager a deep understanding of the project to be delivered. Clarizen asserts, "it is the responsibility of the project manager to ensure it stays on track the entire time. The simplest way to do so is to define the scope of the project" (Team Clarizen, 2020). A significant amount of time should be dedicated to formulating the project scope and there needs to be a robust plan to manage the scope throughout the life of the project (Kashyap, n.d.).

The project scope is necessary in order to have a clear communication of the project between all stakeholders up front. It is understood that in order for the project to even get approved and off the ground a well formulated scope statement needs to be compiled. A project manager needs to understand the scope in terms of three different project scope management processes: planning, controlling, and closing (Team Clarizen, 2020). The planning process needs no explanation; it involves information gathering and clarifying project requirements and resources. The controlling process involves being vigilant of scope creep and having a change

control process (Team Clarizen, 2020). The third process of closing is an interesting take on project management. Closing "includes an audit of the project deliverables and assessing the outcome of the original plan" (Team Clarizen, 2020). Closing is necessary for the current project; It is also useful to inform and plan future projects, whether they are related to this project or not.

## Metrics

There are many metrics to measure a project around. A place to start is by understanding the different types of metrics. One suggestion is to start by using SMART goals, productivity metrics, and quality project metrics (McHale, 2019). Some people use SMART objectives rather than SMART goals, but that is something that would have to be defined up front to make sure everyone is on the same page. Some examples of productivity metrics include: milestones, billable hours, and project change rate (McHale, 2019). Examples of quality project metrics include: planned hours vs actual time spent, and number of time/budget changes (McHale, 2019).

The importance of project management metrics can be distilled as providing quantitative methods for the following:

- To analyze the overall health of the project.
- To determine the critical factors that need attention.
- To evaluate the current status and make informed decisions.
- To evolve, adapt, and forecast better during uncertainties.

Metrics act as a warning system and, hence, are the backbone of any project (Rao, 2021). Rao also gives 5 basic rules to follow: 1)Stick to timelines, 2)Stay within budget, 3)Maintain quality of delivery, 4)Deliver effectively, and 5)Analyze project closure (2021). It is interesting to note that much of this is similar to project scope management, except these are the qualitative

means to measure project success. Project closure can be analyzed using metrics and support the project scope management process of closing addressed in the scope section above.

## Risk Management

In tandem with project scope management and with the help of qualitative metrics a project risk management system will round out the big picture of the top 3 strategies to keep a project on time and successful. Risk assessment and mitigation plans are important from personal life to professional life, but are especially important in team efforts like projects. If a project is especially complex then "[w]ith a risk management plan, you can ensure the project stays within the project scope and, ultimately, succeeds" (Martins, 2021).

Not all risks are the same, some types of risks to look out for are cost, schedule, and performance (O'Connor, 2019). Just like with metrics, you should identify different categories of risk. This way you can develop contingency plans before they are needed. 6 steps to manage project risks are: 1) identify, 2) analyze, 3) prioritize, 4) assign, 5) monitor, and 6) respond (Martins, 2021). One interesting point is to assign ownership of each risk very early on in the analysis to specific individuals and groups so they have a deep understanding of the risk and mitigation (O'Connor, 2019). While a project manager should be aware of all risks, it really does make sense to have sentinels with granular familiarity in order to help the team more effectively cut off risks.

## Conclusion

In order to have a successful project finish on time it is essential that at the minimum a strong project scope management and risk management strategy is in place bolstered by metrics that help ensure the success. A project management framework can be customized or selected by ensuring that these 3 strategies are included. Scope management ensures the project is clearly

defined, metrics can objectively show whether the project is on track or if risk mitigation needs to be invoked, and finally risk management should be implemented early in forming the project scope and identifying the metrics needed.

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