

A Project Sponsor's Warp-Speed Guide: Improving project performance

Appendix K – Project manager position description

Introduction

This appendix contains a position description for project managers. It's intended to help project sponsors:

1. Assess the project manager's work to ensure they are addressing all necessary tasks or have appropriately delegated them.
2. Coach the project manager if some tasks require more attention or if distractions from project work are evident.
3. Select the best available candidate for the project manager position through an understanding of the work in conjunction with the description in Appendix C – Characteristics of a successful project manager.
4. Confirm a decision to replace the project manager and avoid a capricious decision based on an unfortunate incident.

Summary position description

Project managers, along with their teams, leverage their project management expertise and experience to execute and deliver projects that turn brilliant concepts into tangible realities. They are responsible for planning and overseeing project execution. They ensure projects are

completed on time, to the defined scope, within budget, and to the required quality standards to the greatest extent possible¹. Throughout the project's duration, project managers:

1. Coordinate and monitor the project team's work.
2. Manage resources.
3. Report project status and outlook regularly.
4. Maintain open communication with stakeholders.

Detailed position description

Project managers are responsible for the following components of their position. On many projects, they don't perform all the listed work. Typically, they supervise and collaborate with team members to complete this work.

Project planning

The project manager's role in project planning includes:

1. Defining project goal, objectives and scope. View related details in Appendix F – Project charter table of contents.
2. Creating a detailed project management plan. View related details in Appendix G – Project management plan table of contents.
3. Allocating resources to tasks.
4. Calculating the project schedule based on task effort estimates.
5. Setting the project budget.

¹ These four concepts are explained in more detail in Appendix I – Triple constraint.

6. Achieving a consensus on the project characteristics with the project sponsor and stakeholders.

Team leadership

The project manager's role in team leadership encompasses:

1. Assembling project teams.
2. Leading the work.
3. Providing direction and motivation.
4. Fostering collaboration.
5. Facilitating creative problem-solving.
6. Mentoring project team members.

Resource management

The project manager's role in resource management includes:

1. Recruiting, interviewing, selecting and orienting project staff and contractors.
2. Optimizing resource allocation.
3. Managing the project budget.
4. Procuring necessary resources.

Risk management

The project manager's role in risk management includes:

1. Identifying potential risks.
2. Developing mitigation strategies.

3. Managing issues as they arise.

Communication

The project manager's role in communication includes:

1. Maintaining clear and consistent communication with stakeholders.
2. Reporting project progress, issue resolution and outlook to the project steering committee and project sponsor regularly.
3. Managing stakeholder expectations.

Quality management

The project manager's role in quality management includes:

1. Ensuring that project deliverables meet stakeholders' requirements.
2. Ensuring that team members perform quality control and quality assurance tasks.
3. Reviewing project deliverables to ensure that they meet quality standards.

Monitoring and control

The project manager's role in monitoring and control includes:

1. Monitoring task and deliverable progress².
2. Tracking project progress against the planned schedule and approved budget.
3. Defending project scope to minimize scope creep and to defer additional scope to subsequent projects.
4. Ensuring project work and deliverables are adequately documented.

² See Appendix J – Work breakdown structure (WBS) for definitions of these terms.

5. Identifying variances and taking corrective actions.

Once a project is approved, monitoring and control work is the component of the position description that consumes the most effort for the project manager.