

# How to Improve your Project Management Processes in 5 Steps

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You're a project manager with a lot of hats to wear; you need to be a confident and persuasive communicator, an organised and multi-tasking perfectionist, and an advocate of agile and adaptable working, all whilst delivering a project on time and in budget. So essentially, you're a bit of a superhero.



Even the most experienced project managers will meet obstacles at some point throughout any project, and it's those obstacles which could mean the difference between finishing a project just in time, or failing to deliver within the constraints.

Projects that fail to meet strict deadlines and budget can all be traced back to the same problems; lack of resources, miscommunication, differing expectations, delegating tasks to the wrong people, and being inflexible to change.

A project manager will typically have a set of tools and defined strategies for minimising these risks, but they can be difficult to put into practise when so much focus and attention is needed on the project itself.

[How can you alleviate the pressures of these common problems, so that you can concentrate on getting your work done?](#)

In this e-book, you will find a 5-step plan to minimising the impact of project management issues, improving your project delivery, and getting the job done.

## 1. Be agile and adaptable

Even the best laid plans can go awry, but this doesn't necessarily have to be a problem. In fact, it can be a hindrance to persistently stick to a plan just because it's there, which can in turn create more problems that it solves. Plans that don't allow for flexibility will not be able to adapt to changes and challenges that will inevitably crop up along the way.

Adopt an agile and adaptable approach to working, where available resources can jump in and out of a project when they're needed, meetings can be rescheduled to accommodate requirements at the time, and ultimately, be open to listening to new ideas that could help the project. By allowing for the possibility of project changes, there is less risk of a project overrunning, because the space to breathe and adapt has already been accounted for.

Being adaptable also allows you to assess the highs and lows of a project. By taking a periodic step back, it gives you a chance to review areas of improvement for future projects.



## 2. Plan your resources effectively

A common complication in project management is failing to involve all necessary resources that are needed to deliver a project, causing severe delays, staff shortage, and endless frustration. If a project is lacking support from certain departments or team members, then it can be difficult to involve them at a later stage in the project, either because they are not available, or because a specialised role was not recruited for in good time. If project roles and priorities are not clearly defined from the outset, then the road to project delivery is going to be very difficult indeed, as aims and objectives are going to be too vague to be contributed to productively.

Organising a presentation or workshop with your team at the beginning of each project or sprint will allow you to plan your resources effectively, as roles and responsibilities will be defined from the beginning providing a clear indicator as to who is needed and why. This will also allow you to assess if there are any gaps in skills or experience, giving you ample time to recruit or select a suitable and available resource from another team.

By dedicating this time, it provides your team members with a space to communicate their ideas on how they can contribute to a project's success, and what the project manager can expect from them. It also allows them to recommend colleagues from other teams who could be a great asset to the project.



### 3. Communicate and check-in regularly

Miscommunication can affect all areas of work (and life!) and project management is no exception. Highlighted as one of the biggest pitfalls in the project management lifecycle, lack of regular communication can obstruct projects from progressing effectively.

Ensure that you check in regularly not just with your project team, but with the client as well. Weekly catch-ups with team members ensures that everyone is clear about their responsibilities, and they can voice any concerns that could be hindering the project. If open communication is promoted, issues can be caught early and addressed in good time, rather than waiting until the damage has already been done. Meeting regularly also allows the project to flow naturally and productively, as project progress is more visible and tangible.

Regular check-ins with the client is also good practise to ensure that the project delivery is aligned with their own vision of the end product. It gives you and the client a chance to make suggestions, improvements, and re-assess the requirements if needs be. Doing this along the way will be much more fruitful than letting issues and changes accumulate then rear their head the day before the deadline, when it will be too late to resolve.

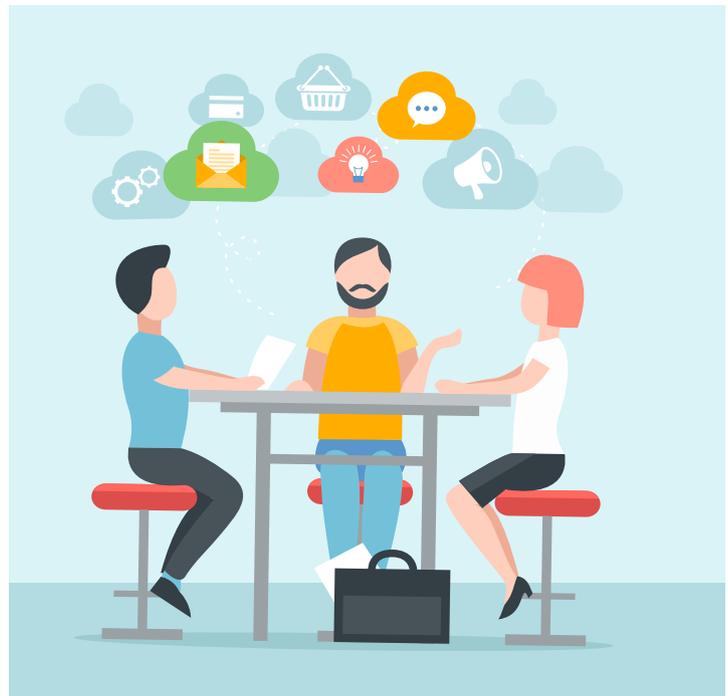


## 4. Define expectations

It can be all too easy to promise to deliver a huge project in a tiny space of time, just to keep a client happy. But that happiness will turn sour when the deadline is inevitably missed, or the project did not fulfil all the requirements. The last thing a project manager needs is a client who cannot trust them to deliver, which may in turn lead to long-term frustration and a tarnished reputation.

Outlining expectations from the start will make everyone's life a lot easier, and this certainly shouldn't equate to a disappointed client. By explaining in detail the scope of the project, which team members will be on board, what they will be doing, and when they will be doing it, it reassures the client that everything is in hand and taken care of. Allowing a bit of extra time for each stage of the project lifecycle will also ensure that any unexpected issues will not impact on the deadline; and if that extra time is not used, then you can enjoy boasting that you delivered the project early.

Defining expectations early on also ensures that the client is delivered what they expected. The most dreaded six words a project manager will hear are "that's not what we asked for", and this can be avoided if both parties are clear about the project requirements from day one.



## 5. Allocate tasks based on skills research

Allocating project tasks to resources shouldn't be a quick job; careful planning and research is needed to ensure that tasks are assigned to the appropriate people, and unless you are working on a duplicate project and know everyone's CV off by heart, then sufficient time is needed to ensure that this part of the process is handled effectively.

Assigning tasks without knowing if the team member has the required skills to complete it is just asking for trouble, and will almost certainly delay a project due to a higher level of mistakes, increased support, and impromptu training. Allocating tasks based solely on availability may be a quick fix, but it's not sustainable in the long term. Instead, invest some time researching your team member's project background, specifically if they have done something similar before, if they have the expertise, and if they have a particular interest in the task at hand. Not only will you feel safe in the knowledge that the best people are on board, team members will feel more engaged and inspired working on a task that they feel confident and passionate about.

### What's next?

If you're looking to improve your project management processes, why not take a look at our [Project Management Platform](#), download our [brochure](#), or [get in touch](#)?