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The 5 Golden Rules of Project Management

By Jason Westland

If you're involved in Projects, then there are 5 Golden Rules that will help you deliver your project successfully...

The 5 Golden Rules of Project Management

Rule 1: Time Management is Critical

To deliver your project on time, you need to manage time carefully. To do this, make sure every task is listed in a Project Plan and that it's scheduled to occur precisely when it needs to.

Every week, update your plan with the time spent completing tasks and identify whether each task is ahead or behind schedule. Track the % complete of each task and if it's behind schedule, then get it back on track by assigning more resource or reducing the scope of the task. Don't let tasks slip. Be vigilant.

Rule 2: Track Costs and Manage Finances

Every element of your project incurs a cost. You need to identify all of the planned costs upfront and get them approved by your Manager.

Then record every expense as it occurs - including people, equipment and materials. Check that your actual expenditure does not exceed your planned expenditure. And if it does, then you need to cut back. If you're running over budget, tell your Project Sponsor early.

Rule 3: Ensure Quality Targets are Set

You need to specify upfront, exactly what it is that the project will deliver (i.e. the "deliverables"). Then set targets for the quality of these deliverables. Get your quality targets agreed by your customer.

Then every week, review the quality of each deliverable produced by the project. If it's not up to standard, fix it immediately. Never wait until the end of the project before fixing up quality issues.

Rule 4: Control Scope at the Micro Level

Your *scope* is defined as “the set of deliverables that need to be produced by the project”. So know that you know what your scope is, try not to let anyone change it.

Check every week that your team is working on “just” the set of deliverables agreed, and nothing more. Check that every deliverable being produced matches exactly the specification you’ve defined for it. Note: An increase in the scope of your project will make it harder to deliver.

Rule 5: Resolve Issues Early

If issues arise during the project, then resolve them early. Pounce on every issue before it delays your project. Record it formally and then track it until it’s resolved. Unresolved issues lead to delays which lead to project failure. Stay safe– resolve issues early.

About the Author:***Jason Westland****Author*

Jason Westland, CEO and Founder of Method 123, has a lengthy Project Management career. With 15 years experience managing multi-million dollar projects, building high growth companies and creating new project management products, he knows what it takes for a project to succeed. He is the author of <A HREF="

<http://www.amazon.com/Project-Management-Cycle-Step-Step/dp/0749445556>">"The Project Management Life Cycle" and has overseen thousands of projects around the world. Jason now runs a very successful project management website developing templates and training other professional managers how to reach success in the projects they manage. <A HREF=" <http://www.method123.com> ">. Jason Westland is also creator of the online project management software "Project Manager".

Greatest challenge

"My greatest challenge was managing the £1 billion Strategic Alignment project at British Rail. It was a huge project, with tight deadlines and lots of pressure, the perfect proofing ground for Method123."