

Project management checklist

Here is a list of questions that will assist you with project planning. I always tell clients to allow for a significant amount of time for planning and yet people still rush into doing without mapping out all the actions and times. I figure 20% of your total project should be taken up with planning.

A project plan is not set in concrete and will inevitably shift and move about as circumstances change and unexpected issues arise. This is especially the case in projects that are people focused like the ones in education. You have to be prepared to be flexible. Even so, I still think a plan or road map is essential.

The checklist

- Are the project outcomes clear to everyone involved?
- Is the project manager's role clearly defined? Do they have sufficient time to undertake the management process?
- Who are the project's stakeholders? How do you communicate with them? What role do they play in the project? What do they need from you? What do you need from them? How will you ensure you/they get what they want?
- Has a full project plan been developed, including a work task breakdown and a timeline?
- In terms of scheduling have you taken both duration and elapsed time into account, ie how long each activity will take (duration) and over what period of time (elapsed time)?
- Have you done a risk assessment and planned how you will manage any high risk areas?
- Have contingencies been taken into account? ie what could go wrong with this project and what can you put in place now to prevent this? What steps do you take when/if something goes wrong?
- How will you monitor the project's progress? What performance indicators are you looking for?
- What strategies can be put in place if/when the project falls behind?
- What reporting needs to be done, progressively and at the end of the project? Has this been taken into account in your schedule?
- How will you celebrate completion and recognize team achievements?