

The Project Charter & Starting Your Project Right

Critical to project success is how we initiate and plan this endeavor. Unlike a process that is a continuous effort, a project is a temporary venture with a definitive beginning, a definitive end, and a specific objective. As it is estimated that approximately 39% of projects fail due to poor planning, how we begin a project is important to improving the likelihood of success.

A project charter serves as a foundational document that identifies and outlines essential information and parameters of the project. It is also a historical document that can be used to onboard new staff and leadership, as well as a valuable resource for historical schedule and budget information on similar future projects.

What's in a project charter?

The charter clearly defines the project's **objectives, goals and scope** so that all team members and partners understand the purpose and expected outcomes of the project. Through **stakeholder alignment**, it identifies and lists key partners/shareholders and their roles and responsibilities to ensure all involved clearly understand their contributions and expectations.



The **project scope** identifies what is included and excluded in the project, helps prevent scope creep, and ensures the projects remains focused on the intended goals. The charter also establishes **authority and boundaries** of the project sponsor, project owner, and project manger and provides the framework for decision-making and conflict resolution.

The **risk assessment** is a combination of risks, issues, assumptions and constraints and results in minimizing the likelihood of issues impacting the project's success.

Resource allocation identifies the required resources including human, financial, and material and ensures effective allocation and management of resources throughout the project lifecycle. A high-level **timeline and key milestones** aids in scheduling and progress monitoring to make sure the project stays on track and deadlines are met.

The **communication plan** defines how information will be shared among team members, organizational leadership and partners and promotes collaboration and progress monitoring throughout the project. The basis for evaluating the project's performance and whether it has achieved its intended outcomes is identified by the **success criteria**.



As a reference document and historical artifact, the project charter can be consulted throughout the project lifecycle and helps in maintaining a shared understanding of the purpose and parameters of the project. As a crucial tool for initiating and planning projects, it provides a solid foundation for successful project implementation and completion.

References

- Attached is a link with sample project charters and additional information for the next time you're beginning a project: [6 Free Project Charter Templates with Expert Tips | Smartsheet](#)

About

Kaizen Corner is a project management and continuous improvement article you can read each month to learn more about practices that will help you organize, track, and manage change.

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