

What is Project Scope?

When a project is launched, the project team and the key stakeholders have expectations of what the project will deliver and what the project responsibilities encompass. Unfortunately, these expectations don't always align. Assumptions are made but are not voiced until the expectation is not met.

Project scope is the clear definition of the expected outcomes, or deliverables, what is NOT in the project and what are the expectations of timelines and costs. The scope should follow SMART guidelines (see over).

Scoping a project is an exercise in communication and clarification. It is one of the critical elements for project success. Having a clear scope that all stakeholders agree to can lessen debate when crises arise. A clear project scope can also eliminate, or at least greatly reduce, the amount of scope creep that enters into a project.

Scope Creep

When explaining scope creep – which is the increase in size, cost and complexity of a project from the initial plan- we often like to use an example from home life:

All I wanted to do was put up a mirror in the front hallway! This meant moving the picture that was there to the dining room, which meant moving 2 other pictures, painting the hallway, the dining room, the bathroom and replacing the bathroom sink! A job that should have cost \$50 ended up costing \$500 and instead of 10min, took 2 weeks!

The project increased to 10x the cost and taking over 2000x as long all because of scope creep.

Scoping a Project

Even before a project is approved, it is extremely beneficial to start scoping out the full extent of the project. This includes not only the productivity goals but the cost goals, timelines, safety, environmental and sanitation goals as well as HR responsibilities and overall project responsibilities. It is not a one-person task but one that needs to involve representation of all stakeholders. The following 3 steps are a high level guide to what should occur in a scoping meeting.

Define The Project Goal:

- At this point, the team would look at what the final deliverable is expected to be
 - How will success be measured?
 - Who are the stakeholders and how will each of them measure success?
 - Not all measures will be able to be met but what is the priority?

Define The Project Boundaries:

- This phase looks at what is in AND what is out of the project
 - Draw a process map or layout of the project and ask questions on where the physical boundaries are
 - What are the interfaces with other areas/people/systems?
 - What will the future operating conditions look like when this project is complete?

Identify Project Risks:

- Now is the time to look at what are potential roadblocks and talk about how the team will cope
 - What could happen if a supplier/vendor has trouble meeting deadlines? If the client changes their mind?
 - What if moving equipment/digging/etc. reveals an issue?
 - This isn't a full-blown risk analysis but a heads-up to the team to think about how the team will deal with any changes to the scope that may be required – what is the change request process?

A strong future is built on collaboration, knowledge sharing, and mutual trust. Let's build that future together!

A SMART Project Scope

Specific

- Does everyone understand the goal, including how it would impact them and how they can contribute?
- What is the process being affected?
- What is the change being implemented?
- What are the operating parameters?
- Have accountabilities and responsibilities been assigned?

Measurable

- How is success being measured? (i.e. production rate is now 1000 units/hr)
- Who is measuring the final outcome?
- How are they measuring that success? (i.e. will be measured at the end of the line by an automatic counter)
- Will the method of measuring change, and if so how? (we will be introducing a new measuring device)

Actionable

- Is the solution based on proven processes/equipment?
- Is the technical knowledge required in-house or does it have to be outsourced?
- Can the solution actually be implemented?
- Is the timeline reflective of the work required?

Realistic/Relevant

- Is the goal of the project inline with other work/goals the company has?
- Have risks identified with delays or cancellation of the project been identified and evaluated?

Timing

- What is the timeframe that the solutions need to be implemented in?
- Will the project have to be done in phases?

A strong future is built on collaboration, knowledge sharing, and mutual trust. Let's build that future together!