

Steps to successfully defining Project Scope

The Project Scope Statement defines the project scope and the deliverables that need to be produced by the end of the project. Defining what Project Scope means at the beginning of a project is crucial. If you have not done a good job of defining scope, managing scope will be almost impossible. Thus, creating a scope statement is the key to ensuring everyone understands the boundaries of the project.

Consider the following when creating a clear and comprehensive Project Scope Statement:

- Examine information from the Project Request Form as the starting point for defining the Project Scope Statement. There should have been an initial set of objectives and deliverables defined.
- Work with the Project Sponsor to gather additional information about the project. The project scope will be defined by understanding the needs and expectations of your project stakeholders and then prioritizing those results accordingly.
- Describe the types of deliverables that are in scope. However, only describe final and client focused deliverables. For example, the Business Requirements Document could be listed as a project deliverable, but there would not be a need to mention internal documents such as Test Cases.
- Detail other in scope conditions. For example, types of data (financial, sales, employee), data sources (Billing, General Ledger), organizations impacted (Human Resources, Accounting), and major functionality (decision support, data entry).
- Identify out-of-scope conditions. For example, the organizations that will not be impacted (Manufacturing) or features and functions that are not included (management reporting).
- To help you organize and define the overall project scope, develop a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) that is focused on project deliverables, rather than the associated tasks.
- Gain formal acceptance of your project scope by the appropriate stakeholders.

Scope management is one of the most difficult parts of managing a project. However, once you've finalized your project scope statement, you will find it invaluable when making future project decisions and maintaining a common understanding of the project goals.