

# WHAT TO CONSIDER **FIRST** WHEN PROJECT PLANNING

The key to a successful project often hinges on the decisions made at its start. While there are countless factors that can influence a project's outcome, a few critical considerations stand out as the absolute starting point.



## Understanding the Project Vision

Before diving into the nitty-gritty of timelines and budgets, it's imperative to have a clear and shared understanding of the project's vision. What problem does the project solve? What value does it deliver? Who are the primary beneficiaries? What are you trying to do? These questions may seem obvious, but their answers are foundational. A well-defined vision serves as a guiding light, keeping the team focused and aligned throughout the project lifecycle.



## Establishing a Clear Project Scope

It's crucial to define the project scope clearly and concisely at the outset. A well-defined scope provides a clear boundary for the project and helps prevent 'creep'. What is going to be included? What isn't? Are there problems and/or is there value that can be recognized, but not now? Involve key stakeholders in the scope definition process to ensure that everyone agrees on the project deliverables, and **when** they will be delivered.



## Building Healthy Stakeholder Relationships

Stakeholders are individuals or groups who have an interest in or are affected by the project. Think of them as your audience; some are sitting on the front row, while others are in the cheap seats. But all of them want to know what you're doing and how it is going to impact them. Building strong relationships with key stakeholders is essential for project success. Identify and map out your stakeholders, understand their needs and expectations, and develop a communication plan. Regular and open communication will help to build trust and ensure that everyone is kept informed.



## Defining Success Metrics

Success means different things to different people. Before embarking on a project, it's essential to establish clear and measurable success criteria. What needs to happen for the project to be considered 'finished'? How can this be measured? These metrics should align with the project's overall objectives and provide a framework for evaluating progress and outcomes. Bring in stakeholders to help ensure that everyone is on the same page and that the project delivers the desired results.



## Securing Necessary Resources

A project cannot move forward without adequate resources. This includes financial backing, human talent, equipment, and technology. What do you need, and when? Does any of it need to be scheduled or ordered? Will there be contention for pieces of equipment? - e.g. is the Bob-Cat going to be used by another project for the month of June and the other team already secured it? Carefully assess the resources required for each project phase and develop a resource allocation plan. Effective resource management ensures that the team has everything needed to succeed and prevents bottlenecks and delays.