

# How To Define Your Productivity Project

## Good project definition:

‘A project which aligns with your organisation's strategic goals, priorities and direction will contribute to long-term success’.

Projects create value by addressing key strategic initiatives such as operational excellence, market expansion, sustainability, or process efficiency.

It's important to clearly define the project's objectives, deliverables, and the scope of work to be completed. Do this by setting realistic expectations and laying out a clear vision for the life cycle of the project.

Explain the problem the project aims to solve or the opportunity it aims to develop.

## 1. Plan the project

### Timeline:

Establish a timeline for the project, including:-

- Start and end dates
- Important milestones
- Deadlines for key deliverables

### Resources:

Identify the resources required for the project, such as:-

- People
- Equipment
- Facilities
- Materials
- Financial

How and where will you secure and utilise these resources?

### Costs and budget availability:

Determine the estimated costs associated with each task, such as:-

- Resources, and deliverables
- Direct costs (e.g., labour, materials)
- Indirect costs (e.g., overheads, administrative expenses)

### Risks and contingency planning:

Identifying risk is a useful consideration because it aids in contingency planning. Think of the last time something you did went 100% according to plan. That rarely happens, so heading off problems at the pass is a crucial factor to on-time and on-budget delivery.

Identify potential risks and uncertainties that could impact the project's timeline such as:-

- Costs, or quality
- Include contingency plans in the cost estimation
- Establish mechanisms and ways to monitor the project progress
- Track actual costs and compare them against the budgeted costs
- Implement control measures to ensure that the project stays on track and deviations are addressed promptly
- Develop strategies to mitigate these risks

## 2. The project impact

### **Input costs:**

How will the project optimise or reduce your input costs to enhance overall profitability?

- By streamlining processes?
- Improving resource/people utilisation?
- Implementing more efficient procurement processes?
- Using technology to automate?

### **Process and efficiency gains:**

How will your project identify and target process improvement and efficiency gains?

- By Identifying bottlenecks?
- Eliminating unnecessary steps?
- Implementing streamlined workflows?
- Utilising innovative technology?

### **Outputs and deliverables:**

Will your project aim to produce high-quality outputs and deliverables that meet or exceed existing expectations?

- Introduction of new/improved products and services
- Faster production times
- Reduced waste
- Reduced carbon emissions
- Quicker delivery times

All of these can positively impact customer satisfaction, brand reputation, and market competitiveness.

### **Impact on people and operations:**

Explain the benefits that the project/investment will bring to the business regarding people and operations such as:-

- Enhanced people performance
- Smaller teams
- Best utilisation of people according to skills by eliminating or reducing unskilled tasks
- Improved communications leading to a reduction in mistakes and misunderstandings
- A happy workforce is a productive workforce

#### **Impact on revenue:**

By aligning project objectives with revenue generation goals, projects can have a direct positive impact on the organisation's revenue streams.

How does the project directly impact revenue generation both now and in the future?

- By introducing new/improved products and services?
- By improving existing products/services?
- By identifying new market opportunities or increased market share?
- By Expanding into new markets including export?

#### **Customer experience:**

Projects that focus on improving the customer experience can lead to Increased customer satisfaction loyalty, and retention which in turn impact the organisation's reputation, customer relationships, and long-term profitability.

- Understanding customer needs
- Implementing user-centric design principles
- Enhancing customer support systems

### **3. The Original 7 Wastes**

Identifying the wastes in a business will help to streamline processes but will also allow you to put a cost saving to that waste in terms of time, materials, wages etc.

#### **Defects/re-works:**

- An example can be anything from a re-worked part to missing information to missing deadlines

#### **Overproduction:**

- Doing too much too early on or making to 'just in case philosophy' – producing more than is needed

#### **Waiting:**

- Work not being processed or moving, in a queuing system waiting for the next operation (bottlenecks)

#### **Inventory/stock:**

- Excess inventory increases lead times, consumes productive floor space, hides problems and inefficiencies in the business

**Transport:**

- Excess movement of product, paperwork, electronic data, people, vehicles etc.

**Inappropriate or unnecessary processing:**

- Often termed as taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut, overcomplicated equipment, duplication, etc.

**Unnecessary/excess motion:**

- This waste is related to ergonomics as in bending, stretching, walking, lifting, office layouts, etc.

\*There will be wastes specific to your industry. Look them up and see where they might occur in your business and how they might be eliminated by your project.