

TenStep® Process View Summary

The TenStep Project Management process contains two views. One view is based on the ten most important processes for project management. Each process is described from beginning to end. The second view is a process group view where the same content is mapped into a model similar to the PMBOK® Guide. It is important to note that this view contains the same underlying content. In fact, the project management processes for both models are all implemented at the same time during the project. The difference is simply a matter of how the content is organized and structured for the ease of understanding and implementation.

Both the “ten step” view and the “process group” view are available for licensed users.

1.0P Initiate the Project

The TenStep Project Management Process (“TenStep process” or “TenStep”) describes how to proactively plan and manage projects. However, this assumes that there is a project to begin with. Every organization has processes in place to identify and authorize a project. This process generally has the following characteristics.

- Some way to identify all the possible projects that could be started.
- A funneling process to narrow down all the possible processes into the smaller number that have the most value and are most aligned to the business goals and strategies.
- A means to document the costs and benefits so that the project can be compared to other projects. This document is generally called a Business Case.
- Identification of a minimum set of high-level information required to gain final approval of the project.

The process described above is used to gain preliminary approval for a project. However, there may be a time lag between the time when a project is initially approved, and the time the project starts. Therefore, when a project is ready to begin, there are many items that must be validated to ensure that the project is ready to start.

2.0P Plan the Project

The Initiation process validates that the project is ready to start. You have ensured the project is still valid, the sponsor is ready and the project manager is in place. However, you are not ready to begin executing the project and building the deliverables. At this point you don’t know the deliverables, the resources required, the timeframe, the schedule, the risks, etc. Yes, you might know this information at a very high level from the Business Case. But you don’t know nearly enough details to be able to start project execution.

Before you begin execution, you must first plan. If you have a small project the planning may be relatively easy and short. Perhaps it is just validating the deliverables, creating a task list, understanding the client expectations and then start. On the other hand, a very large project may take weeks or months to plan at the level that is appropriate enough to begin execution. The answer to the question of “how long should you take to plan a project” is “sufficient time”.

This is a key point. You need to plan at a “sufficient” level to be confident of success. If you do not plan enough, there is a good chance you will encounter problems and not be as successful as you want to be. If you spend too much time planning you are not providing value and you are wasting time and resources that you could be spending executing.

The planning process contains many potential elements and it is important to understand which elements are of value to you. Generally, the larger your project, the more elements will be of value. For example, if you have a project that does not have a vendor component, the Vendor Management Plan will not be relevant. If you have a very large project with multiple important and integrated vendors, the Vendor Management Plan may be absolutely vital.

3.0P Execute Project Management Processes on Your Project

After the project has been planned it is time to begin executing the project lifecycle. At this point, two of the project management process groups come into the forefront to manage the project. Some of these processes are classified as “executing” and some are classified as “monitor and control”. The biggest different is that the executing processes are those that are proactively carried out by the project manager. For instance, managing issues is a proactive project management process. There is no baseline for issues. When an issue arises, the project manager needs to address it through issues management.

4.0P Monitor and Control the Project

The second project management process that occurs as the project is progressing is “monitor and control”. This set of process is more reactive. You first make a baseline plan, and then monitor the project to detect a change to the baseline. When you detect the change, you act.

For example, the scope management is a process of monitoring the project scope. IF the scope changes (from the baseline version) the project manager invokes scope change management. Likewise, you have built a schedule for your project. You need to monitor progress against your schedule. If you remain on schedule and your schedule continues to represent the path to project completion, you may not have to update it again. IF you detect a variance against your schedule, corrective actions may be necessary. This is the nature of project management activities that are in this monitor and control section.

5.0P Close the Project

Just as it is important to formally kick off a project, it is also important to successfully close the project. The value of having a planned project termination is in leveraging all the information and experience gathered throughout the project. If the solution is implemented and the team immediately disbands, you don’t have an opportunity to wrap up the loose ends, do staff evaluations, document key learnings or ensure that appropriate deliverables are transitioned to support. Of course, a project can end unsuccessfully as well. Even in this case, there are key learnings, team evaluations and other wrap-up activities to make the most of what was done on the project.