

Project Success Method

Sharpen Your Skills



If your company is a leader in its industry, you are committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of your operations. An effective way to improve through experience in managing projects is to conduct post-project management process audits. These team-based reviews concentrate on the planning and control processes used in managing the project - not on technical aspects of the project work.

Organize the audit into the six sections indicated in the table.

How well did we PLAN this project with respect to SCOPE / QUALITY?	How well did we CONTROL this project with respect to SCOPE / QUALITY?
How well did we PLAN this project with respect to TIME?	How well did we CONTROL this project with respect to TIME?
How well did we PLAN this project with respect to COST?	How well did we CONTROL this project with respect to COST?

For each section, write a set of statements that describe the way the management process should be performed based on your organization's project management policies and procedures. For example, in the section on planning with respect to time, statements might include:

- Our schedule was based on a project network.
- Activity managers were committed to the duration estimates for their activities.
- We determined the critical path of our project.

The statements form a questionnaire that is distributed to team members soon after they have completed their project. The responses are anonymous. The team members rate each statement on the following scale:

- 3 – I strongly agree that this statement describes what we did
- 2 – I somewhat agree that this statement describes what we did
- 1 – I somewhat disagree that this statement describes what we did
- 0 – I strongly disagree that this statement describes what we did



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The respondents' ratings are tallied for the project as a whole and for each of the six sections of the audit.

Then a meeting of the team is held, and the results of the questionnaire survey are presented. After reviewing the results, the team discusses what project management lessons they have learned from this experience and what they will do differently in the future. This meeting must be led by a facilitator who can keep the group focused on management issues (rather than technical issues) and prevent the meeting from degenerating into a scapegoat session. The emphasis is on professional development, not personal performance evaluation. The conclusions reached in this meeting should be recorded for future reference.

These audits can also be used in a number of other ways. For example, a project team could conduct an audit in the middle of a project to find ways to improve their management of the project at hand. Or scores for a series of projects could be plotted across time to document and motivate improvement.

Post-project management process audits can be a powerful tool for making sure that your organization continuously improves its application of project management rather than repeating the same mistakes or even falling into worse habits.