

Business Matters – Project Launch

Good project management requires team leadership, organisation capability, subject matter understanding, good project structures and protocols, communication and reporting.

The normal approach is to:

Plan ... Do ... Review ... Plan ... Do ... Review ... and so forth

With, of course, good communication underpinning all these activities.

Communication needs to be with the stakeholders, the project team, and the organisation in general, as well as customers, community, regulatory authorities etc. The importance of communication and the need for it to be regular, concise and targeted to the audience cannot be overestimated - and few guides on project management will fail to emphasise this point

A key, and frequently omitted or rushed stage, however, is **project launch**.

Key stages to project launch

Stage One: identify your key stakeholders, your project team, and other experts who will be critical to your project

Stage Two: arrange a project launch meeting. Ideally this will be a face to face but where this will add unacceptable cost or delay it can be run as a web and voice meeting.

Stage Three: plan the meeting agenda. This meeting should normally be given a half or full day (depending on the size and complexity of the project). The agenda can allow for varying attendance – e.g. stakeholders at beginning and end only. The topics that should be covered are:

- Sharing the structure of project and different roles
- Undertaking work breakdown and project phasing
- Definition of project plan with milestones, critical success factors
- Risks and potential mitigation
- Development of a communication plan
- Team building, skills mapping, agreeing working approaches
- Stakeholder analysis, identifying needs, plans for meeting the needs
- Action Planning and key next steps

Stage Four: meeting review, actions follow up

Stage Five: deliver your project!

Good project launch is an investment that will never be regretted.

It does not need to be onerous.

There are many reasons for omitting it – a propensity to action, the logistical challenge of getting it organised, an underestimate of its importance – and one reason for including it:

project launch improves the way your project works.