

INTRODUCTION: Development Project Plan

The annotated plan template starts on the following page.

What This Is

An outline for a Development Project Plan document that summarizes the project goals and the major activities across the different functional groups necessary to achieve those goals. Includes sections for describing major activities of the project, including activities that are sometimes neglected during planning, such as prototype builds, compliance testing, technical publications, service strategy, etc.

Why It's Useful

The process of creating this plan outline document should get you to think about each one of these project areas in enough depth to be able to state something about each one. This will help you identify resources and tasks as you create a more detailed plan and work breakdown.

The theme of a good project plan is to "say what you do, and do what you say." This means that, during the relatively calmer moments of the early project planning, you should state your intentions as fully as possible as you work major tradeoffs into a plan. So one major purpose of this plan is to document the rationale for including major project activities (and for excluding others). Then in later stages of the project's execution, when the heat is on and the temptation to cut corners is great, the plan will help you keep enough discipline to not raise project risk by cutting out activities that you really felt you should do during those calmer planning moments.

How to Use It

- Read the instructions (in blue font) in each section of the document, and then replace this text with text you create for your project.
- Stay high-level in this document, keeping it a readable development plan summary.
- Refer in this document to more detailed supporting documents, but don't repeat their detail.

The Annotated Template Content Starts on the Following Page.

Development Project Plan Outline

Table of Contents

DEVELOPMENT PLAN OUTLINE	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
1. DESCRIPTION OF DOCUMENT	3
2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES	3
3. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS	4
4. GOAL STATEMENT.....	4
5. PRODUCT OR SERVICE DESCRIPTION (“PRODUCT SCOPE”)	4
6. COGS	4
7. PROJECT SCOPE SUMMARY.....	5
8. TECHNOLOGY AND RISK.....	5
9. MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF PROJECT.....	6
10. PROTOTYPE MANAGEMENT.....	6
11. SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT METHODS AND TOOLS.....	6
12. SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	6
13. ALPHA AND BETA TEST PLAN OUTLINE	7
14. PRODUCT QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN.....	7
14.1 SOFTWARE QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN OUTLINE	7
14.2 SAFETY/COMPLIANCE PLAN OUTLINE	7
15. MANUFACTURING PLAN	8
16. SERVICE PLAN.....	8
17. TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS	8
18. PROJECT TEAM	8
19. PROJECT MILESTONE SCHEDULE	9

1. Description of Document

Description of the purpose of this document goes here.

The theme of a good project plan is to “say what you do, and do what you say.” This means that, during the relatively calmer moments of the early project planning, you should state your intentions as fully as possible as you work major tradeoffs into a plan. So one major purpose of this plan is to document the rationale for including major project activities (and for excluding others). Then in later stages of the project’s execution, when the heat is on and the temptation to cut corners is great, the plan will help you keep enough discipline to not raise project risk by cutting out activities that you really felt you should do during those calmer planning moments.

Depending upon the scope of the project, you may be creating several other planning documents such as vision statements, quality assurance plans, etc. This plan document should highlight and summarize each of those documents and then explicitly refer the reader to those documents for more detail.

But regardless of project scope, the planning process should get you to think about each one of these project areas in enough depth to be able to state something about each one.

The size of this document is a judgment call on the following trade-off:

- Detailed enough to guard against missing activities or not detecting variance during project execution.
- Compact enough so that it can be referred to often during the project for guidance without a stifling amount of detail.

Some areas of this document may overlap. This is OK; better to state critical project attributes twice than not at all. Project planning is not an exact science. Some judgment will be necessary in deciding what to include and where to include it in the plan.

2. Summary of Changes

In this section, keep track of revisions to this document. This document will normally be updated several times during the project as more is known. For revisions of this document, point out the major changes in the document since its last release, so that readers do not have to re-read the entire document to find them. Make an appropriate entry into this table each time this document is updated and distributed. Or, use your own document control.

Date	Author	Description of changes

3. Reference Documents

List other documents that support the Development Plan or are referred to by the Development Plan.

4. Goal Statement

Describe here in a short paragraph what the project is trying to accomplish and give at least one primary profit metric – a quantifiable measure of project success.

5. Product or Service Description (“Product Scope”)

This section describes the product scope or vision. The product vision is the “front-end” of the requirements management process for this project. Summarize the product or service that this project is developing. Include the following attributes.

- Market need: what customer problem is being solved
- Time-to-market constraints
- Major features: point out clearly the critical features without which the product or service should not be produced.
- Product cost goals and constraints
- Project cost goals and constraints

Also, state the relative priority of these attributes. For example, time-to-market may have an order of magnitude greater impact on project profitability than overspending on project cost. Such priority statements will allow trade-offs to be made more easily during the execution of the project.

If your development methodology calls out creating a vision document, then summarize the vision here and include a reference to the vision document.

6. COGS

For high-volume and/or low margin products, the Cost of Goods Sold may have critical constraints. Those constraints should be explicitly called out here to be sure that they are highly visible to all stakeholders. Assumptions such as labor hours and rates, overhead, and volume should be stated.

7. Project Scope Summary

Summarize the scope of the principal project activities. Clearly label any high-risk activities and discuss them.

- Is this a new product development, or major enhancements to an existing product? For an enhancement project, some outputs of a previous development project may be leveraged.
- Does the development include software? Will there be significant reuse? A number of major project activities are implied by software development. The scope of those activities may depend on the degree of re-use.
- Is any development outsourced (if yes, then this planning document should summarize the outsourcing or co-development plan, including due-diligence and qualification of the vendor, communication plan, roles and responsibilities by name, etc.)?
- Will the product be sold internationally? A number of major project activities are implied by product localization.
- Is the product subject to regulatory compliance such as UL, CSA (Canada), CE (European), etc.? A number of major project activities are implied by compliance requirements.

8. Technology and Risk

Describe here the technology to be used in developing the product or service. Then identify and describe the key project and product risks and the mitigation plan for these risks.

When discussing technological innovations, categorize them by their risk level. For example, very low risk technology is done often by both the prospective development team and other organizations. Mid-risk technology has been done by other organizations and by perhaps some members of the prospective development team. High-risk technology has never been done by the prospective development team and has rarely been done at all by anyone. Extremely high-risk technology has never been done before—sometimes referred to by engineers as “science” or “research.” Such extremely high-risk technology is virtually impossible to schedule. If a project has both a critical time-to-market constraint and an extremely high-risk technology component, then the risk analysis of the project should show a prohibitively high

**Some pages intentionally left out of this preview.
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