

7 Steps to Delivering Projects On-Time and On-Budget



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SHAW SYSTEMS WHITE PAPER

Today many managers are faced with the dilemma of whether to fund critical projects or delay them until company revenues and department budgets improve. The rub is that while it may be risky to support increased expenses, failure to approve necessary projects can result in lost profits and lost customers.

For approved projects, managers must work within strict budget limitations with marginal room for error. The dirty little secret is that projects are rarely delivered on budget. Poor planning, resource distractions, and scope creep almost always see to that.

What's the best methodology for delivering projects on-time and on-budget? Here are seven vital steps to ensure success:



7 Steps to Delivering Projects On-Time and On-Budget

1. **DETAIL THE DELIVERABLE**
2. **ESTABLISH STRICT CHANGE CONTROL**
3. **DEDICATE THE PROJECT TEAM**
4. **DIVIDE THE PROJECT PLAN**
5. **TRAIN EARLY AND OFTEN**
6. **TEST, TEST, TEST**
7. **BE FLEXIBLE**

1. **DETAIL THE DELIVERABLE**

This may seem obvious, but how are you going to get there if you don't know where you're going? Define not only what will be included in the project deliverable, but when appropriate, what won't be included as well. Detail the requirements and have both business and IT sign-off. This simple but critical step sets the baseline for change control and allows you to more accurately estimate resource needs, costs, and time lines.

2. **ESTABLISH STRICT CHANGE CONTROL**

Scope creep is the #1 reason that projects fail to be delivered on-time and on-budget. Uncontrolled scope creep can lead well-intentioned projects to be cancelled after executive management realizes they were millions of dollars over budget with no end in sight. It's the never-ending list of new "must-haves" and "nice-to-haves" that can sabotage a well-intentioned project. At a minimum, executive-level stakeholders should be required to approve any proposed changes in project scope.

3. DEDICATE THE PROJECT TEAM

Ultimately, your team determines the project outcome. Motivated and enthusiastic resources can achieve results beyond your wildest imagination. Define tasks and responsibilities and set reasonable expectations. If part-time resources must be assigned, make sure they understand their priorities. Don't allow daily job duties and distractions to destroy your project.

4. DIVIDE THE PROJECT PLAN

Project delays and tardy deliverables equal late, over-budget projects. Create smaller projects within the plan that your team can understand. Don't allow small deadlines to slide. Be disciplined and work methodically towards your end goal.

5. TRAIN EARLY AND OFTEN

One of the main reasons conversion projects fail is because the project, IT, and business teams don't fully understand the new application. How can you expect to have a valid requirements document if you haven't been thoroughly trained on the new product? Management often sees up-front training as a miscellaneous expense. If you do, don't be surprised when you're writing the check later.



6. TEST, TEST, TEST

Don't wait until the end. Test early and test often. Testing is the best way to uncover and correct errors. Don't allow small mistakes to grow into bigger ones. Let your project team see the fruits of their labor. This will boost morale and lead to a more confident, motivated, and productive project team.

7. BE FLEXIBLE

Remember, there is more than one way to reach the goal. Be willing to make the changes necessary to deliver your project on-time and on-budget.

There is no reason to delay projects that will reduce expenses, increase revenues, or provide your clients with a better experience. The key is to run your business and projects more efficiently. This has always been possible; it's just that when companies are performing well, we don't always take the time to manage the process. NOW is the time.

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About SHAW RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

Raleigh deShazo manages **SHAW RESOURCE SOLUTIONS**, Shaw Systems' consulting division. The group has successfully delivered hundreds of projects for companies across the country, including some of the nation's largest banks and finance companies.

From Project Managers to Developers to Subject Matter Experts and everything in between, **SHAW RESOURCE SOLUTIONS** has the critical resources your project needs. Proficient in your industry and systems, these consultants will address your business and technical challenges and deliver the results you expect. The group's services span the complete solution lifecycle, including project management, strategic planning, integration strategy, operational assessments, reporting, conversions, upgrades, training, systems enhancements, and more.