QUICK REFERENCE: PROJECT KICKOFF MEETINGS

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PROJECT KICKOFF MEETING?

A project kickoff meeting is probably the most important project meeting held during the life of a project. Not only is it the first time that the entire project team is gathered but also, it is a great opportunity for the project manager to gain commitment from the project team and to answer any questions that they might have. A kick-off meeting has four basic functions:

1. Formally and publicly notify all team members and stakeholders that the project has begun.
2. Outline the project goals as well as the individual roles and responsibilities of the team members.
3. Clarify the expectations of all parties.
4. Create a commitment by all those who influence the project’s outcome.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Kickoff meetings should include anyone and everyone who has a direct or indirect interest in the successful outcome of the project:

Project Team: The project team consists of the full-time and part-time resources assigned to work on the deliverables of the project.

Project Sponsor: The project sponsor is the executive who manages, administers, monitors, funds, and is responsible for the overall project delivery.

Project Stakeholders: The project stakeholders are the specific people or groups who have a stake, or an interest, in the outcome of the project. A stakeholder can be internal or external.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A KICKOFF MEETING?

A kickoff meeting should always have an agenda. Typically, these meetings can be conducted in an hour or two. There are a number of specific things that should be included in a kickoff meeting:

- Introduce the people at the meeting.
- Recap the information in the Project Charter, including the purpose of the project, the scope, the major deliverables, the risks, the assumptions, the estimated effort and budget, and the deadline.
- Communicate the important roles and responsibilities of the project team, clients and stakeholders.
- Review the general approach and timeline of the project.
- Discuss how the project manager will manage schedule, issues, scope, risk, etc. The kickoff meeting is the time to make sure everyone understands and agrees to the proposed project management procedures.
- Discuss and answer any outstanding questions.
- Confirm that the project is now underway.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

U Services PMO: Sample kickoff meeting materials and a kick off meeting PowerPoint template is available at: www.uservices.umn.edu/pmo

OSCI Resources: Project resources are available at: http://www1.umn.edu/osci/resources/how_to/index.html

OIT PMO Resources: Project resources are available at: http://www1.umn.edu/pmo/toolkit.html

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