

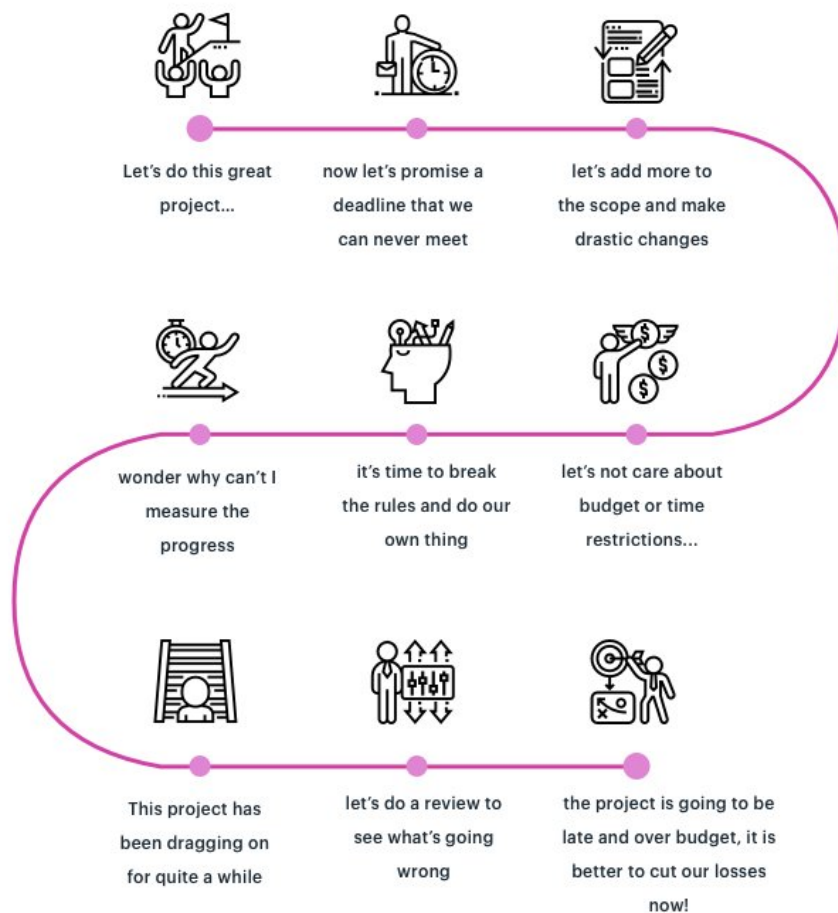
6 Reasons for Project Failure and How to Avoid It

By Kissflow Project

We've all been there. You start off really excited about a project. You do your research, plan well, gather a good team, and get to work. And then somewhere along the way, things fall apart. Deadlines are missed. Deliverables don't live up to expectations. Customers and bosses are dissatisfied, to say the least. It's awful.

But why do so many projects with such great potential end up as failures?

Why projects fail?



When is a project considered a failure?

A project becomes a failure when it does not deliver what was required within the agreed-upon budget and time. However, in most cases, the stakeholders decide if the project was a success or a failure based on their judgment and satisfaction with the outcome.

Some projects are also considered a failure if they don't meet the financial forecast or fails to meet the ROI target.

There are a number of reasons, and the good news is that you can address each obstacle and make your next project (and the one after that and the one after that) success with the help of project management guide by managing projects.

Common causes for project failure



6 reasons why projects fail and how to avoid it

Here's a look at some of the causes of project failure and how you can avoid them.

1. Lack of resource planning

We plan timelines. We plan meetings. We plan structure and themes and interfaces. But sometimes, in the midst of all that project planning, we forget to plan for our resources. It's a huge contributor to why projects fail. Project management involves resource management, often taking other projects into consideration. Most of us know that financial resource planning is important.

Here are a few questions you may want to ask when planning for other resources in your next project:

- What human resources are required? Which people and for how long? Are any of them currently working on another project or could they be called away before my project is completed?
- What facilities are required? Do we have the office space, desks, computers, meeting spaces, and production areas necessary to make this project a success?
- What outside vendors will we rely on? What is their turn around times and limitations?
- What knowledge resources might we be lacking? Can I bring in an expert or conduct training to build the requisite project management skills for my team?

2. Unclear Goals and Objectives

One way to almost guarantee project failure is to begin work without clear project objectives and goals. After all, there's no way to know whether you've succeeded when you aren't completely sure what you're trying to accomplish.

Take a simple example on a personal level. Let's say you've resolved to "get in shape." What does that mean?

- Do you want to lose a few pounds?
- Build muscle?
- Build endurance?

If you simply start exercising and/or eating better—which we should all be doing if we're honest—your physical condition will improve, but you won't truly know if you've succeeded. You need well-defined goals. Having unclear goals in your professional life is just as likely to lead to failure.

How to prevent it:

Several popular frameworks for goal setting, such as SMART goals and CLEAR goals are there but the essence is that your goals must be measurable and realistic. Don't just say you want to "lose weight," say you want to lose fifteen pounds in the next four months. That's both measurable and realistic. The projects you manage are more complex than that, which is why it's even more critical to define your objectives clearly.

3. Lack of project visibility

No matter how well-planned your project is, lack of visibility can lead quickly to failure. It's essential to create a system that provides visibility, not just for the project manager but for all team members. Visibility includes project transparency of task status, clear communication, and good document management.

How to prevent it:

When everyone knows the status of each project task, they can assist or adjust accordingly. It encourages proactive work and problem-solving. Document management doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, having a centralized, digital storage place for all project documents makes your job as a project manager easier as well as promoting visibility.

Learn more about how time tracking in project management can help improve visibility.

4. Communication gaps

It should go without saying, but communication in project management is the key. The tools your team uses to communicate should be explained and implemented from the outset of your project.

How to prevent it:

Whether it's email, text messaging, a chat service, or some combination of things, make sure everyone on the team understands what's expected and can use the technology you've selected. Beyond the method of communication, make sure to set clear expectations and guidelines on the kinds of information that need to be communicated.

Learn out how effective communication helps in remote project management.

5. Scope creep

It seems so innocent at first. A simple customer request to add an item here, a brilliant idea to expand a service there, and before you know it, your project scope has outgrown and your team is over-extended. Scope creep happens when either

- the parameters of the project were not well-defined from the outset or
- there's pressure either internally from the team or externally from customers or bosses to take on tasks that were not part of the original project plan.

How to prevent it:

The problem with scope creep is that it often contributes to project failure. You haven't budgeted the time or resources necessary to complete the extra tasks, so what might have been a smashing success ends up a frustrating failure.

6. Unrealistic expectations

Sometimes disguised as dogged optimism, unrealistic expectations have destroyed many projects. As a project manager, it's absolutely essential to gain a clear picture of what your team can accomplish and in what time frame. Once you have aligned your expectations with reality, you must communicate them to the customer and often to your bosses.

How to prevent it:

With realistic expectations in place and understood by all the project stakeholders, your team has a much better chance at successful project completion.

While the pitfalls of project failure have been around for ages, there are new solutions thanks to technology. Project management software can help you avoid project failure

by keeping goals in focus, assisting with resource planning, providing visibility, and facilitating communication.

A good project management platform can help you move past the question of why projects fail and concentrate on the successful execution of your projects.