Kickoff Meetings

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IDT 4150: Project Management and Stakeholder Communication

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April 23, 2023

An abundance of information for my kickoff meeting was derived from the article "How To Run Project Kickoff Meetings: The Ultimate Guide" by Ben Aston, which I discovered on the Digital Project Manager website. Before this kickoff meeting, I will have started on the planning phase of the project lifecycle.

A kickoff meeting is the first meeting between the client and the project team when starting a new project. Also, kickoff meetings are essential, and "If you do not get started on the right foot, your project team and project success are already at risk" (The Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023). This kickoff meeting occurs after the scope of work (SoW), project costs, and project timeline have been agreed upon and contracts finalized. This meeting aligns team members with project goals and tasks, the reasoning behind these goals, and how to successfully achieve them. Finally, kickoff meetings demonstrate to team members and stakeholders that I am competent, building trust that forms the foundation of any successful partnership (The Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023).

Before the kickoff meeting, I (the project manager) must research and thoroughly read the scope of work (SoW) to ensure that my team can successfully meet deadlines related to deliverables, uphold any project timeline drivers, and adhere to budgets and schedule constraints. If I need clarification or collaboration, I must meet with my team to clarify any uncertainties. I would assume that I would need at least one week for preparation before the internal and client kickoff meetings.

Internal Kickoff Meeting:
The Digital Project Manager suggests that good projects start with internal and external kickoff meetings, so that I will take this same approach in this paper. The internal kickoff meeting will follow the one-hour-long meeting agenda below.
1. Introductions – some warm and fuzzy banter (5 mins)
2. Review the project teams – who is responsible for what? (3 mins)
3. Approval process – the process and personnel for signing off deliverables (3 mins)
4. Statement of Work Review – what are we doing, when, how, and what will we produce? (20 mins)
5. Discuss RAID (Risks, Assumptions, Issues, Dependencies) and change management – what is the client's attitude and approach to managing risk and change? (3 mins)
6. Reporting – how will we track and communicate project progress, and to whom? (3 mins)
7. Collaboration – what tools will we use to work together? (3 mins)
8. Assets – what do we need to get started? (5 mins)
9. Kickoff agenda – what will we discuss in the client kickoff? (5 mins)
10. AOB – anything else that we need to discuss? (5 mins)
(The Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023)

During the internal kickoff meeting, I need to provide my team with a robust overview of the client using the client's website for information. Also, I need to supply my team with any knowledge about the stakeholder team. Next, I will overview the project schedule and address any projects that may conflict with my team's ability to deliver on time. My main role as the project manager is to foster collaboration among my team to deliver a successful project. Lastly, I will clarify team member roles, overview deliverables, and address any questions or concerns (The Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023).

Client Kickoff Meeting:
The most critical team members must be in attendance. During this kickoff meeting, I must align "what is in scope" and "what is not in scope," so all team members know the project essentials. The kickoff meeting will follow the one and half hour meeting agenda below.
1. Introductions – who is working on the project, and what is their role? (15 mins)
2. Project background – how does this brief fit into the broader strategy and other projects? (10 mins)
3. Project briefing – what are the business problem and customer need? (30 mins)
4. Success – how will we know if we have been successful and what is failed before? (10 mins)
5. Project management – review timeline, deliverables, risk, roles, reporting, estimate, and change management (10 mins)
6. AOB – what haven't we discussed that we should? (10 mins)
7. Next – what are the next steps to keep the project moving? (5 mins)

(Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023)

Closing the Meeting:
Before closing the meeting, I must provide a summary and the next steps. The next steps below address the following questions below address next steps and task owners:
- Do they still need to grant your team access to anything?
- Are there some follow-ups coming out of your Q&A agenda items?
- Do you need to send kickoff materials to the client team or invite them to project management tools?
- Do not forget to share meeting minutes and action items after the call.

(Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023)

Email Script to Initiate the Kickoff Meeting:

We eagerly look forward to meeting with your team and our upcoming project. Please ensure that your most critical team members attend the kickoff meeting. During this kickoff meeting, we must align "what is in scope" and "what is not in scope" so all team members know the project essentials. The kickoff meeting will follow the one and half hour meeting agenda below.

1. Introductions – who is working on the project, and what is their role? (15 mins)
2. Project background – how does this brief fit into the broader strategy and other projects? (10 mins)
3. Project briefing – what are the business problem and customer need? (30 mins)
4. Success – how will we know if we have been successful and what is failed before? (10 mins)
5. Project management – review timeline, deliverables, risk, roles, reporting, estimate, and change management (10 mins)
6. AOB – what haven't we discussed that we should? (10 mins)
7. Next – what are the next steps to keep the project moving? (5 mins)

(Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023)

Please contact me with any questions or concerns before our meeting.

Email Script to Follow-up the Kickoff Meeting:

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting with your team and are eager for our partnership with this project. This email is a follow-up to provide an overview of the next steps. Provide answers to the questions below to address any concerns not discussed at the kickoff meeting

- Do we still need to grant your team access to anything?
- Are there some follow-ups coming out of your Q&A agenda items?
- Do we need to send kickoff materials to your team or invite them to project management tools?
- I am attaching to this email the kickoff meeting minutes.

(Digital Project Manager & Aston, 2023)

References

The Digital Project Manager, and Ben Aston. 2023. "How to Run Project Kickoff Meetings: The Ultimate Guide." *The Digital Project Manager*. February 7. https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/projects/how-to-run-a-great-project-kick-off-meeting/.

The Digital Project Manager, and Ben Aston. 2023. "What Should Be Covered in a Project Kickoff Meeting?" *The Digital Project Manager*. February 22. https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/projects/what-should-be-covered-project-kickoff-meeting/.

The Digital Project Manager. 2022. "Internal Kickoff Meeting Agenda." *The Digital Project Manager*. December 20. https://thedigitalprojectmanager.com/download/internal-kickoff-meeting-agenda/.