Georgia Technology Authority

PMO PROJECT GUIDE

HELPING THE PM AND THE PROJECT SUCCEED

REVISION DATE: JANUARY 6, 2007
VERSION 1.4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Number	Date	Comment
1.0	January 27, 2006	Version 1 for rollout to GTA
1.1	February 25, 2006	Removed Section 3.2.2 referring to SharePoint site.
1.2	July 1, 2006	Added section 2.2 on Project Notebook
1.3	September 28, 2006	Changed links to go to Knowledge Library on gta.georgia.gov and added section 2.6 on Steering Committee
1.4	January 6, 2007	Added section 4.3 on budget and contingency budget process.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SO YOU HAVE A PROJECT

Congratulations! You have just been assigned a project to manage. You probably have a few questions running through your mind right now. Where do you start? What is expected? How do you get a team together? This Project Guide has a single purpose – to help you, your customer, and your project succeed.

Let me start by talking a little bit about the style of this guidebook. It is written as if you and I are having a conversation. You will see the first person ("I" or "We") used often as well as the direct address to you, the reader. This project guide is written to be as simple and straight-forward as possible. If you are reading this document on-line, there are hyper-links to important sections within the document you will see them in blue font and underlined. For example, to see the Project checklist, go to section 2.2. Put your cursor over the blue text and you will see a note pop up telling you how to follow the link.

Sometimes I will have an absolutely brilliant idea that you and the entire world should know. Look for this symbol to let you know that you are on project management sacred ground.

You won't find a lot of jargon and theoretical gobbledygook here (there's plenty of that in the Project Methodology Knowledge Base – read to your heart's content).

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) has oversight responsibility for any agency project that exceeds one million dollars. GTA assigns an oversight project manager to help on these projects. The agency developing the project generally provides the project manager. The Project Guide is written for managing a project. It is not a methodology for oversight, but can be a helpful tool for the oversight manager and project manager as well. As a project manager, your job will be much easier when everyone is singing from the same sheet of music. If you need help, the Enterprise PMO is here for you. Knowledge management is one of our jobs. Contact the Enterprise PMO Knowledge Management via e-mail at pmomethodology@gta.ga.gov.

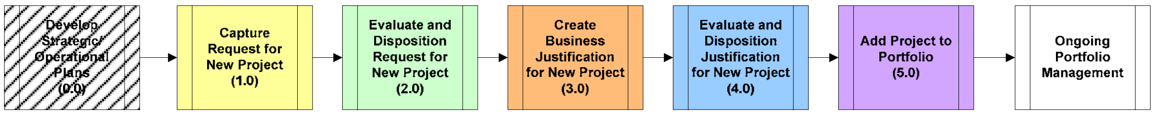
1.2 CHANGE – IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

Even as we put this guide together, there are changes underway. For example, GTA is in the process of implementing Microsoft Project Server as an Enterprise wide tool for project management. As with any change we weigh the options of holding off on the guide until we get the Enterprise tool implemented or going ahead with the guide and make updates as we go along. We came to the conclusion that if we waited until everything was in place, we would never get the guide published. You face this every day in your own life. Do you buy the new flat screen television now or wait a little while longer for the prices on plasma screen to drop? So, we decided to roll on ahead with what we have now. When there are changes, we will update the guide and post the updated version in the Project Methodology Knowledge Base. Even with upcoming changes, the steps in this guide will not change dramatically. Start using it now and grow with the PMO as it grows.

1.3 TAKE THE 30,000 FOOT VIEW

Before you dive in to the details, you need to take the 30,000 foot view of the project process. So let's get started. Listed below is a high level diagram of the Project Initiation and Approval Process. The chart on the next page picks up with the Project Initiation Phase which is displayed below in the box labeled "Ongoing Portfolio Management."

The following diagram depicts the (Level 1) GTA Project Initiation and Approval Process:

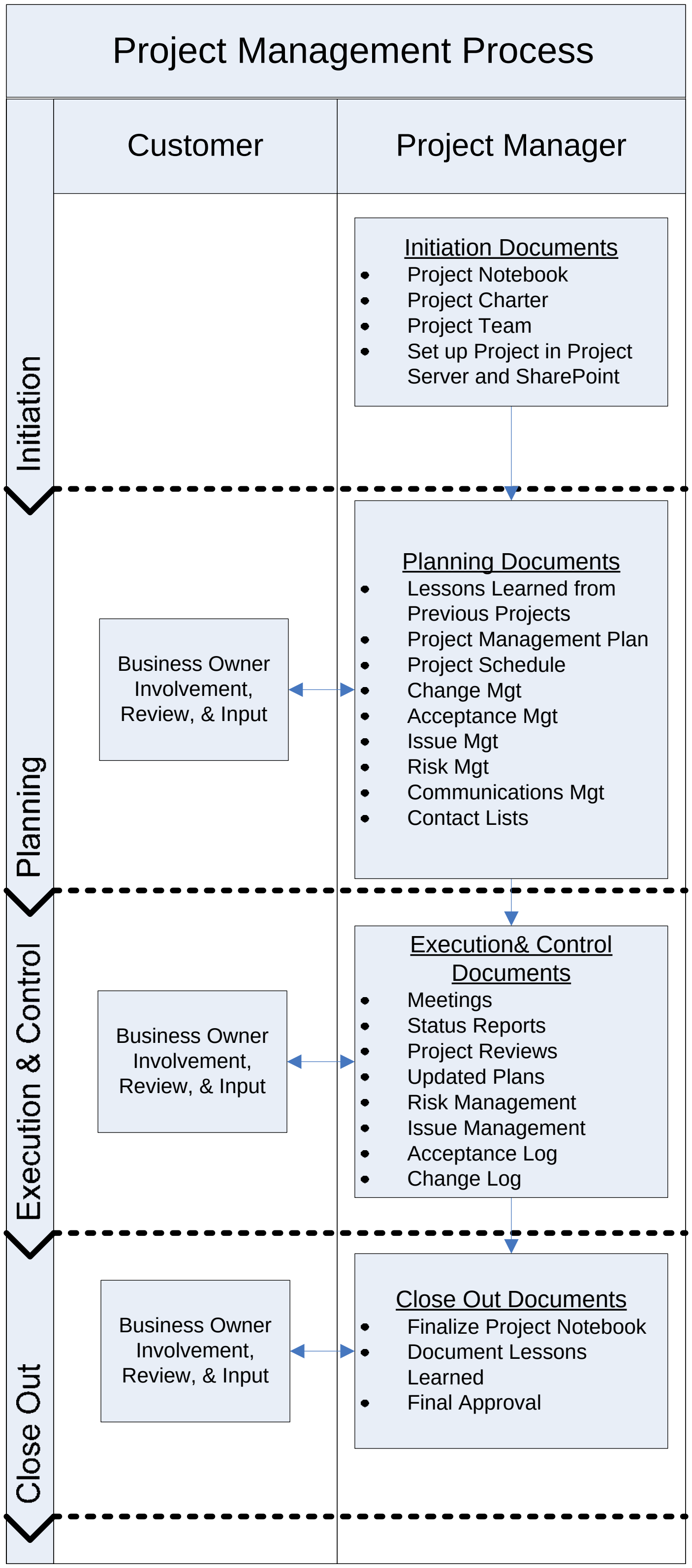


- *1.0 and 2.0 map to the APR/PIR Process*
- *3.0 and 4.0 map to the Business Case Process*
- *4.0 maps to the Project Prioritization Form*

There are many activities that must take place before a project is approved. You may be assigned to the project before these activities take place. It is out of the scope of this document to serve as a detailed guide on how to develop a business case or project request. Ask your supervisor to direct you to the proper person in the appropriate PMO for guidance on the APR/PIR or Business Case Process. This document is designed to walk you through the project management process from the project initiation phase through the project closure phase.

On the next page is a diagram that shows you how your project will flow from where you are now to where you want to go. Notice that there are distinct phases in the project life cycle. Concept →Initiation → Planning → Execution and Control → Close. The diagram shows a high level view of the relationship and responsibilities between the Business Owner and the Project Manager in each of the phases. The chart is a handy quick reference throughout the life-cycle of your project.

Look at this like you would look at a map of the United States if you were going to take a trip from Georgia to Nebraska. You would want to be able to see all the states at a glance and get a general idea of which states you would cross to get there. Then you would get individual state maps to lay out a specific plan for your trip. At stops along the way you might look at the United States map to get a picture of your progress.


Project Management Process
Customer
Project Manager
Initiation
Planning
Execution & Control
Close Out
Initiation Documents
Project Notebook
Project Charter
Project Team
Set up Project in Project Server and SharePoint
Planning Documents
Lessons Learned from Previous Projects
Project Management Plan
Project Schedule
Change Mgt
Acceptance Mgt
Issue Mgt
Risk Mgt
Communications Mgt
Contact Lists
Business Owner Involvement, Review, & Input
Execution& Control Documents
Meetings
Status Reports
Project Reviews
Updated Plans
Risk Management
Issue Management
Acceptance Log
Change Log
Business Owner Involvement, Review, & Input
Close Out Documents
Finalize Project Notebook
Document Lessons Learned
Final Approval
Business Owner Involvement, Review, & Input

2 PROJECT INITIATION

2.1 WHO ARE THE PLAYERS?

Someone told you that you are the project manager. Whoever that was is your first stop in the journey. Set up a meeting and ask some key questions.

1. What is this project all about?
2. Who wants it?
3. Who doesn't want it?

It is important to know who doesn't want a project to take place. The opponents are the people that can sink your ship and need to be identified, met with, and watched.

4. Who do I talk with next?

2.2 PROJECT NOTEBOOK

Here's a little something to remember about projects. "If it isn't written down, it didn't happen." The project notebook is the place where you or anyone else can go to find out what has happened, what is happening, and what you hope to happen with your project. You need a project notebook. Even the smallest projects need a place to record notes, activities, authorizations, issues, lessons learned, and other important matters regarding the project. The notebook can be a physical notebook or a virtual notebook with folders. (We'll talk about using SharePoint for your project notebook later.)

All key decisions must be documented and recoverable. These can be key emails or part of the change log. What I mean by recoverable is that you need to be able to go back and show who, what, when, where, and why on all key project decisions. Remember that you work for a public entity and there is a potential that project decisions will be scrutinized. A vendor may file a protest on why another vendor was selected, or someone from the Governor's Office, Legislature, Judiciary, or news media may make an inquiry. When that happens, you will be relieved when you can open your notebook and pull out a copy of that e-mail that explains the basis for decisions on your project. Every notebook should have documents that cover, at a minimum, the following areas:

- Project Charter
- Contract
- Statement of Work (SOW)
- Communications plan
- Contact List
- Org chart
- Escalation process
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Acceptance Log and Acceptance Forms
- Change Log and Change Forms
- Latest copy of MS schedule
- Key emails
- Status Report

These do not have to necessarily be separate documents but may be combined. For example the Project Management Plan (PMP) may contain a communications plan, contact list, org chart, escalation process, and so forth. The key is that your notebook document, at a minimum, the items listed above so that anyone reviewing your project or coming in to take over your project (when you get a promotion), can see what you were planning to do, what you have done, and what you still need to do.

2.3 Project Process Checklist/Audit

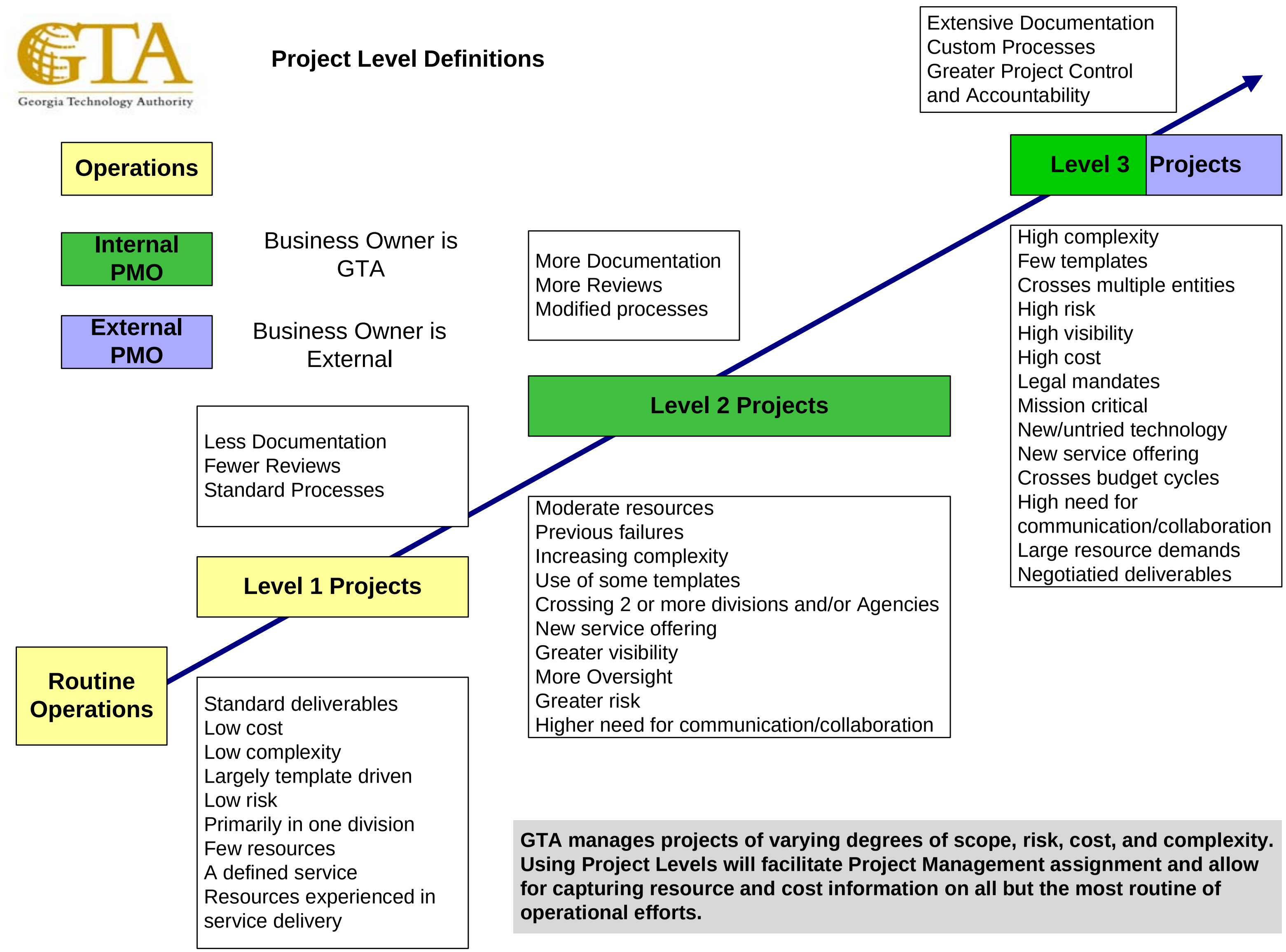
Do you like to cook? Maybe you aren't a cook but I'll bet you like to eat. A good cook has a favorite recipe book. The recipes contain the list of ingredients and the steps to follow to produce delicious treats. The project checklist is like a recipe in a cookbook. It gives you the required ingredients and the steps to follow.

A good cook will add a special touch to a recipe. You still end up with a pound cake, but Aunt Mary's pound cake is the one that's the favorite at the covered dish dinner. Like Aunt Mary's pound cake, project management is an art, not a science. No two projects will look exactly alike. Here is where the term "audit" comes into play and this is where our analogy of Aunt Mary's pound cake diverges. When Aunt Mary is cooking her pound cake, you dare not come in to tell her that she isn't putting enough vanilla in the mix. You know the old saying, "You can't have two cooks in the kitchen."

Project management is a little different. There will be people who are looking over your shoulder. There are minimal processes that you must follow. This is one of the purposes of a uniformed methodology. Just like Aunt Mary's pound cake has a certain list of required ingredients, your project has a certain list of required artifacts and processes.

A key factor in project success is getting your project off to the right start and keeping it between the ditches as you move down the road to project completion. The project checklist helps you make sure that your project has all the key ingredients for success.

Projects come in different sizes. Smaller projects do not require the same degree of rigor in PM methodology as larger projects. (There are some PM purists who would spend a million dollars applying rigorous methodology to a ten thousand dollar project. That's like swatting a fly with a sledge hammer. After successfully killing the fly, you can take out a second mortgage to remodel your kitchen.) The chart on the next page shows three levels of projects and the associated requirements:


Project Level Definitions
Operations
Internal PMO
Business Owner is GTA
External PMO
Business Owner is External
Routine Operations
Level 1 Projects
Less Documentation
Fewer Reviews
Standard Processes
Standard deliverables
Low cost
Low complexity
Largely template driven
Low risk
Primarily in one division
Few resources
A defined service
Resources experienced in service delivery
Level 2 Projects
More Documentation
More Reviews
Modified processes
Moderate resources
Previous failures
Increasing complexity
Use of some templates
Crossing 2 or more divisions and/or Agencies
New service offering
Greater visibility
More Oversight
Greater risk
Higher need for communication/collaboration
Level 3 Projects
Extensive Documentation
Custom Processes
Greater Project Control and Accountability
High complexity
Few templates
Crosses multiple entities
High risk
High visibility
High cost
Legal mandates
Mission critical
New/untried technology
New service offering
Crosses budget cycles
High need for communication/collaboration
Large resource demands
Negotiatied deliverables
GTA manages projects of varying degrees of scope, risk, cost, and complexity. Using Project Levels will facilitate Project Management assignment and allow for capturing resource and cost information on all but the most routine of operational efforts.

When you are assigned a project, ask about the level of the project. If you don't have a level assigned keep on asking until you get a documented decision. The table below is your project checklist that tells you the minimum requirements for a project based on the level assigned.

- Level 1 projects are those that may not need the full rigor of PM Methodology. Level 1 projects have standard deliverables, are low cost, low complexity, largely template driven, and low risk. They are primarily in one division, have few resources, a defined service, and generally the resources are experienced in service delivery

- Level 2 projects need a little higher level of PM rigor. Level 2 projects have moderate resources, have possibly experienced previous failures, are increasingly complex, make use of some templates, cross 2 or more divisions and/or agencies, and comprise a new service offering. Level 2 projects have greater visibility, require more oversight, have greater risks, and have a higher need for communication/collaboration.

- Level 3 projects require the full rigor of PM Methodology. They likely will require a formal business case or they are on the critical project review. Level 3 projects are highly complex, require more tailoring of templates, cross multiple entities, are high risk, high visibility, high cost and often carry legal mandates. They are mission critical, may use new/untried technology, and comprise a new service offering. Due to their cost and size, they likely cross budget cycles, have a high need for communication/collaboration, have large resource demands, and have negotiated deliverables with vendors, possibly even multiple vendors.

Each phase of the project will have a set of project management deliverables or artifacts. The table below lists these deliverables in each phase and also indicates if they are applicable for Level 1, 2, or 3 projects.

		Project Checklist	**Comments**	**Level 1**	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
		Concept Phase				
1.	☐	Establish Business Justification* *Check with your Unit Director for guidance determining what you will need and who can provide you with the appropriate guidance and templates on items 1-4 in this checklist.	Determine if Business Case is required or less formal method is required and then document and obtain approval from Project Sponsor. You will either have an Agency Project Request (APR), Project Initiation Request (PIR), or Business Case.			●
2.	☐	Agency Project Request (APR)	Complete this one for agencies external to GTA			●
3.	☐	Project Initiation Request (PIR)	Complete this one for projects internal to GTA			●
4.	☐	Business Case	This may be required for internal or external projects			●
5.	☐	Document official approval for project	Document approval for project funding.	●	●	●
		Concept Phase – Deliverables				
6.	☐	APR, PIR, Business Case, or Document showing official approval for the project				●

		Project Checklist	Comments	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		Initiation Phase				
7.	☐	Establish Project Charter	Sponsor should write this but PM can assist	●	●	●
8.	☐	Assign Project Manager	Sponsor or office manager should do this and announce to key stakeholders	●	●	●
9.	☐	Create Project Document Repository and establish standards for its use	Use SharePoint or similar software		●	●
10.	☐	Identify Project Stakeholders	Document in Contact List in Document Repository	●	●	●
11.	☐	Identify Project Team	Document in Contact List in Document Repository	●	●	●
12.	☐	Conduct Project Initiation meeting	Document agenda, schedule and minutes in Repository	●	●	●
		Initiation Phase – Deliverables				
13.	☐	Project Charter		●	●	●
14.	☐	Project Site on SharePoint		●	●	●
15.	☐	Project Team Contact List		●	●	●
16.	☐	Minutes of Project Initiation Meeting		●	●	●
		Planning Phase				
17.	☐	Write Communications Plan	The communications plan is a key component of your Project Management Plan.	●	●	●
18.	☐	Create Schedule for Initiation and Planning phases of project	Document the initial activities and planning efforts required to start the project.		●	●
19.	☐	Schedule team meetings	These should be based on the Communications Plan	●	●	●
20.	☐	Schedule customer meetings	These should be based on the Communications Plan		●	●
21.	☐	Establish status reporting	Team member folders should be set up in the Document Repository for status reports and management reports	●	●	●
22.	☐	Conduct Risk Evaluation	Initial Risk Meeting with key stakeholders to determine areas of risk and appropriate response plans.		●	●
23.	☐	Conduct Issues Review	Initial Issue Meeting with key stakeholders to determine key issues and develop appropriate response plans.	●	●	●
24.	☐	Create Project schedule		●	●	●
25.	☐	Create Project Management Plan (As appropriate)			●	●
		Planning Phase - Deliverables				
26.	☐	Communications Plan (May be included in PMP)		●	●	●
27.	☐	Status Reporting Process (May be included in PMP)		●	●	●
28.	☐	Issue Log		●	●	●

		Project Checklist	Comments	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
29.	☐	Risk Log			●	●
30.	☐	Project Management Plan (PMP)			●	●
31.	☐	Project Schedule		●	●	●
		Execution and Control Phase				
32.	☐	Hold Team Meetings – Agendas & Minutes		●	●	●
33.	☐	Hold Customer Meetings – Agendas & Minutes			●	●
34.	☐	Individual Status Reports		●	●	●
35.	☐	Project Status Reports			●	●
		Execution and Control Phase - Deliverables				
36.	☐	Meeting Agendas and Minutes posted in Project Notebook		●	●	●
37.	☐	Individual Status Reports (frequency as established in PMP)		●	●	●
38.	☐	Project Status Reports (frequency as established in PMP)			●	●
39.	☐	Updated Acceptance Log		●	●	●
40.	☐	Updated Risk Log			●	●
41.	☐	Updated Issue Log		●	●	●
42.	☐	Project Reviews			●	●
43.	☐	Project Dashboard				●
		Close Out Phase				
44.	☐	Lessons Learned		●	●	●
45.	☐	Hand-Over Documents to Production Support		●	●	●
46.	☐	Obtain client sign-off		●	●	●
47.	☐	Close out contracts (where applicable)		●	●	●
		Close Out Phase – Deliverables				
48.	☐	Final Report w/Lessons Learned		●	●	●
49.	☐	Support Model accepted by Production Support		●	●	●
50.	☐	Final approval by customer		●	●	●
51.	☐	Final contract approval and authorization to pay final invoice (where applicable)		●	●	●

2.4 PROJECT WEB SITE

Every project needs an organized approach to maintaining project records. GTA uses SharePoint as a document repository. SharePoint contains a model project template site which includes the basic folders, templates, logs, and links that you will need for your project.

Contact your office manager to find out the Project Server and SharePoint administrator to set up your site. All you need to provide is a project title and file name.

 Make your project file name short and without spaces. Check to see if your organization has any specific naming conventions for projects. See details of setting up your project site in Section 2.4.1.2 Project Server and SharePoint Overview

2.4.1.1 PROJECT SERVER

GTA is in the process of implementing Microsoft Project Server as an Enterprise wide portfolio management and project planning tool. When this tool is in place, you will use it to set up a project notebook on the internet. As of the writing of this Project Guide, the Project Server effort is still in the early stages. A part of the implementation of Project Server will be to update the guide to match the new technology. You will probably see the changes sometime in late Fall 2006.

2.4.1.2 SHAREPOINT

SharePoint Portal Server enables a single point of access to multiple systems such as Microsoft Office System applications. Users can extract and reuse timely and relevant information from systems and reports, and quickly locate and access documents. In addition, you can organize documents and information by topic and browse for relevant content. Alerts notify you when new information has been added or existing information has changed, to help you better use the data.

Note: The SharePoint project sites were so popular that the system is overloaded. Therefore, as of February 24, 2006, GTA is holding off on most requests to create new project sites. As you read through the guide, please note that references to SharePoint project sites may not be applicable to your project. As GTA implements Project Server and upgrades the system, the SharePoint sites will be available. This is just one of those growing pains we are going through at this time. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Sign on to the GTA SharePoint Portal using your GTA log-in and password. If you have team members who do not have a GTA log-in, you will need to get the SharePoint administrator to create a log-in and password for them. The GTA SharePoint Portal has an excellent overview and orientation for using SharePoint. Here is the link on the SharePoint site for training: http://sps.gta.ga.gov/Training/default.aspx (note: this link is only available on the GTA network)

2.4.1.3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT METHODOLOGY LIBRARY

Back in section 1, I mentioned the Project Management Methodology Library. Here is a link to the Methodology Library: http://gta.georgia.gov/00/channel_title/0,2094,1070969_63101296,00.html

The Project Management Methodology Library contains hyperlinks to all the documents in the knowledge base. You can browse by general categories:

- Project Planning
- Acceptance Management
- Business Case/Charter
- Status Reporting and Review
- Change Management

- Issue Management
- Meetings
- Project Request
- Risk Management

It would be a good investment of your time to read through some of the documents and guides. (Don't try to read them all in detail unless you are suffering from insomnia.) The idea of this guide is to give you the basic templates that you need. The Project Management Methodology Library contains a wealth of information that is helpful but it can also be, as they say, "information overload."

2.5 SPONSOR AND BUSINESS OWNER

You have a project but do you have a customer? Someone is the sponsor or business owner. You need to identify this person or persons and make contact. If you can not identify the business sponsor, then stop where you are – do not pass go – do not collect $200.00. If you can't find the sponsor make it an issue and escalate. When you do find the sponsor, don't assume anything. You may discover that the project sponsor doesn't even know that a project exists. (Yes, that kind of thing does happen in the real world.) Get together with the sponsor and business owner face to face. The purpose of the meeting is to listen to them so that you can begin to determine the needs and expectations.

Effective sponsorship is a key to project success. Sponsorship means more than approving the budget. It means having one's skin in the game. If the sponsor is on the hook for results along with the project manager, you are half-way to success already. Without a sponsor, your chances of failure just went up like a hot air ballon.

Let's look at what it means to be a sponsor. Perhaps you can help educate your sponsor. Being a sponsor means making a commitment to success and specifically a:

- Commitment of "political capital"
- Commitment of personal time
- Commitment of resources

What should the sponsor do? The sponsor should:

- Appoint an appropriately skilled project manager
- Understand project complexity
- Champion the project and the team
- Formally manage the project scope
- Provide guidance for business strategies
- Approve plans, schedules, & budgets
- Ensure sustained buy-in
- Ensure timely availability of resources
- Review project progress

The sponsor should be able to make 80% of all decisions without having to get approval from higher ups.[1] Do your best to educate your sponsor about being closely involved with the project. While the sponsor is important, there are others who are important to your project's success.

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[1] SeminarGTCBIPI Copyright 2005 Center for Project Management ®.

You will likely find that someone other than the business owner is more knowledgeable of the need. You may also find that someone other than the business owner carries more influence in business decisions than the business owner. Identify these people and diplomatically involve them in the project – either formally or informally. The involvement may be as simple as “let’s go get a cup of coffee” or as formal as including the person as a stakeholder. Walk cautiously and carefully here because you are walking through a landmine field of turf protection, personalities, and power struggles. Start with “let’s go get a cup of coffee” and ask questions to get to know the person. Keep the number of people small, preferably one on one, and don’t make this a formal meeting. It is fine to take your notebook, but leave it closed until you get to project-specific information.

Project Management, especially in public sector, requires a degree of political skill. You are building a relationship, not just following a process. Let me say that again. You are building a relationship, not just following a process. The half hour you spend at Starbucks is just as important (if not more important) than getting all the process boxes checked.

Here are a few non-project questions that you may want to ask to start with:

- How long have you worked for the state?
- How long have you been in this job?
- What is your greatest challenge in this job?

Listen for interests, places, friends, connections, and so forth. If you know someone that has lived, worked, or has some other possible connection, ask if they know that person. Listen and watch how they respond.

Okay, now it is time to open your notebook and get out your pen. The answers to the project related questions will help you build or (if they already have one – don’t count on it) better understand the project charter.

Here are some project related questions:

- Tell me about this project.
- How will this project help you accomplish your mission? (This relates to Section 2.1 Justification and 2.2 Business Objectives in the Project Charter.
- What would be a successful project to you? (plan on reviewing the answer to this question throughout the life of the project with your sponsor or business owner to make sure that you are still on track.)
- What parts of the organization are involved in providing and supporting this business function? The answer to that question will give you an idea of where to look for Subject Matter Experts (SMEs).

You will hear the term "SME" mentioned often. SME is not to be confused with Captain Hook's loyal first mate in Peter Pan. SME stands for Subject Matter Expert and refers to the individual who knows the business and rules of the business. Get to know the SMEs well and stay in close touch with them.

- Who would be stakeholders in this project? (This relates to Section 5 Stakeholders in the Project Charter)
- Are there any deadlines or other constraints? (This relates to Section 6.0 Constraints in the Project Charter)
- Is there anything that must happen before this project can be completed? (This relates to Section 7.0 Dependencies in the Project Charter)
- Are there any other projects going on with this business unit that may impact this project?
- Who supports this project? Does anyone oppose it?
- What assumptions do you have about this project? (This relates to Section 8.0 Assumptions in the Project Charter)
- What risks will we face in this project? (This relates to 9.0 Risks in the Project Charter)

You can add more questions as you need. The purpose of the meeting and questions is to establish a relationship of trust and to learn the needs and expectations of the project. You also want to find out potential potholes and roadblocks along the way. This first meeting sets the stage for your relationship with the business owner and sponsor. The purpose is to listen and learn. Don't make any assumptions on your own.

2.6 STEERING COMMITTEE

Does this project have a steering committee? Does it need to have a steering committee? Throughout your project, you will need guidance and direction to help resolve issues and generally make sure that your project is going in the right direction. Rest assured that once you get going on your project you will get a lot of ideas. If you are not diligent, you will wake up one morning and find your project team spending precious time and resources on someone's, "hey that would be neat" idea. Meanwhile your schedule and budget are going off the charts. A steering committee formally determines which of the, "hey that would be neat" ideas that should be incorporated in the scope of the project.

2.6.1 DO YOU NEED A STEERING COMMITTEE?

Generally, you need a steering committee if your project is touching areas outside the direct line of responsibility of the project sponsor. For example if the project is going to impact finance, human resources, and marketing and the project sponsor is in finance, then you probably need a steering committee with someone from human resources and marketing serving as members on the committee. There may be a requirement for a steering committee already established in law, regulation, or the project charter. Here is a checklist to help you determine if you need a steering committee:

- Is there a statutory or regulatory requirement for a steering committee?
- Does the project charter specify the need for a steering committee?
- Does this project impact the operations of more than one department, division, or agency?
- Are there other initiatives or projects that may interface with this project?
- Are other projects gathering similar business requirements?
- Would the project sponsor like to have input from other individuals for this project?

2.6.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF A STEERING COMMITTEE:

A steering committee is for guidance. The members of the committee are not expected to do the work of the project (although members may have tasks of reviewing, approving, etc.) The steering committee is not to be a layer of bureaucracy that slows down progress and micro-manages the project. Like its name implies, the responsibility of the steering committee is to keep the project between the ditches as you move toward your destination. Here are a few responsibilities for a steering committee.

- Give input and/or authorization for change requests
- Assure that the project will meet business needs and objectives
- Give guidance on resolution of project issues
- Reconcile differences of opinion and resolve disputes
- Identify risks and mitigation plans

The project charter or project management plan should spell out the specific roles, responsibilities, and decision process.

Let me offer you some advice here that will save you a lot of heartache and anxiety down the road. The term “steering committee” is somewhat of an oxymoron. Imagine trying to navigate Atlanta rush hour traffic with the entire carpool trying to steer at the same time. OK, enough of that nightmare. You get the point. Try to get your project sponsor to identify a single point of authority that you go to for decision making and interpretation of decisions. Get that in place at the start of the project and save yourself a lot of heartache later on.

2.6.3 ESTABLISHING A STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is a part of the Project Team. You should document the organization and makeup of the steering committee as part of the sections on Project Team and Communications Plan in the PMP Template. Based on the committee responsibilities, it may also be referenced in the deliverable/acceptance, change management, issue management, and risk management sections of the PMP.

The sections should include key information such as:

- Members of the Steering Committee
- Meeting schedule and method (i.e. teleconference, in person, etc)
- Committee Chair (usually the project sponsor)

- Decision making between meetings
- Project Manager's single point of contact for decision-making authority and alternates.
- Responsibility of Steering Committee (advisory, approval of deliverables, change orders, etc)

2.7 Project Authorization

New projects go through a project request process. It is not within the scope of this document to go through all the steps required to complete the Agency Project Request (APR) or the Project Initiation Request (PIR).

2.7.1 Agency Project Request (APR)

The Agency Project Request (APR) is for projects in state agencies that require budget approval by the Office of Planning and Budget and oversight review by the Georgia Technology Authority.

The Project Initiation Phase folder contains documents relating to the APR. The easiest to start with is Agency Project Request Instructions located at the following URL:

http://gta.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/7/55/66549203GTA-PMO-GLI-114%20Project%20Request%20Guidelines.doc

2.7.2 Project Initiation Request (PIR)

The Project Initiation Request (PIR) is for internal GTA projects that do not require an APR. The PIR is reviewed and approved within GTA. For more information on the PIR contact portfoliosupportteam@gta.ga.gov.

Talk with your business owner and your supervisor to determine which of these initial planning documents you will need.

Once you make that determination, write a simple draft and ask for your business owner's input. This is an iterative process to make sure that you are on the right page with the business owner.

2.7.3 Business Case

Some projects will require a formal Business Case. It is not within the scope of this document to go through all the steps required to complete the Business Case. The Project Initiation Phase folder contains documents relating to the Business Case. The easiest to start with is the Business Case Instruction document located at the following URL:

http://gta.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/13/19/65799477BusinessCaseInstructionsv2.pdf

Talk with your business owner and your office director to determine if you need a business case and which documents you will need.

2.7.4 Project Charter

Not every project will necessarily have a business case or a formal project request, but every project will have a Project Charter. If the project requires a Business Case, APR, or PIR, the charter should not duplicate the information, but should reference the sections of the other documents in the appropriate section within the project charter. See the comments in the Project Charter template for guidance on which sections you need and which ones you can reference. The Project Management Institute Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) defines the project charter as follows:

> *The project charter is the document that formally authorizes a project. The project charter authorizes the project manager with the authority to apply organizational resources to project activities.*[2]

In Section 2.5 Sponsor and Business Owner, of this project guide, you started gathering information for the Charter when you met with the Business Owner to find out about the project. If there is not already a Charter, open the Project Charter folder and the Charter Template.

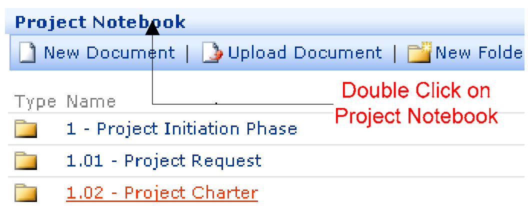
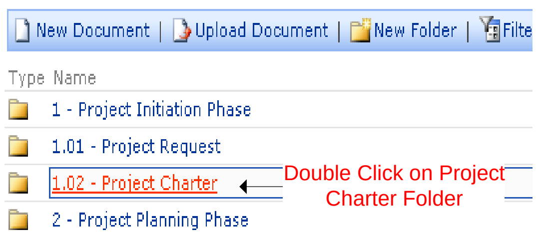
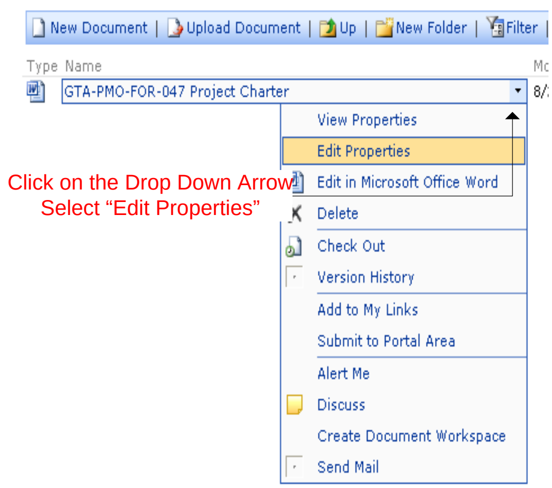
[2] A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) Third Edition – Section 4.1, Page 81.

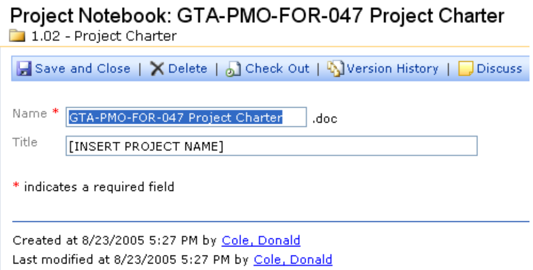
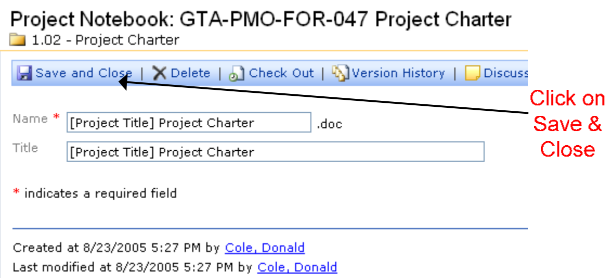
2.7.4.1 *From Generic Template to Your Project Document*

Your new project notebook has folders and files all set up for you – but these are all templates. At this point, the only thing specific about your project is the file name of the project work space. Now, you will begin the process of converting the template from a generic template to your own project document.

2.7.4.2 *Making the Template Your Own*

The first step in making the template your own is to change the file name and title of the template. The table below walks you through the process. You will use this process with every template that you use so I will refer back to this section more than once.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Making the Template Your Own</th></tr>
<tr><td>1.</td><td>Open your project site in SharePoint</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.</td><td>Double-Click on “Project Notebook”

</td></tr>
<tr><td>3.</td><td>Double-Click on Project Charter Folder

</td></tr>
<tr><td>4.</td><td>Put cursor over project file name and move to the drop down arrow on the right. Then click on the drop down arrow and select “Edit Properties.”

</td></tr>
</table>

	Making the Template Your Own
5.	This is what you should see when you click on Edit Properties 
6.	Change the Name and Project Title using the following format: [Insert Your Project Title] Project Charter Insert the Same information in both fields and click Save and Close 
7.	Congratulations! You should now see that the file name of your template is now the file name of your project. Now move your cursor over the file name as you did in Step 4 and select Version History. You will see that your document has two versions, the original template is version 1 and the newly named template is version 2. You won't need to do anything with versions unless there is some reason that you need to go back to a previous history. This is the same process you will follow to make all the templates yours. Throughout the remainder of this document, I will refer you back to this process for making the template your own.

Theoretically, you should have a signed and completed project charter handed to you when you are assigned a project. If this happens to you, be sure to document it carefully for submission to Guinness Book of World Records or Ripley's Believe It Or Not. In the real world, you will likely be writing a charter for your business owner and be building your project team at the same time.

2.8 Project Team

2.8.1 Identify the Stakeholders

You already met the business owner (remember the cup of coffee at Starbucks) and learned a little about the project. During your initial meeting, you asked about stakeholders. PMI identifies the stakeholders as follows:

> *Project Stakeholders are individuals and organizations that are actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be affected as a result of project execution or project completion. They may also exert influence over the project's objectives and outcomes.* [3]

It is important to identify and engage the stakeholders early. The ability of the stakeholders to influence the project is highest at the beginning and gets progressively lower as the project continues.[4] Think of a building a house. This is going to be your house, so you are definitely a stakeholder. Your architect has drawn up a rough sketch with the master bed room suite with a porch on the West side of the house. You look at the plans and say, "I'm a morning person and I love to sit out on the porch with my cup of coffee and have a quiet time reading while I watch the sun rise." At this point, it doesn't take a lot of effort or cost to change the rough sketch and move the bed room suite and porch to the East side of the house. If you don't point this out until the architect draws the detail plans, it will take more time and effort to change the detail drawings. And if you wait until the house is built before you decide to make this change, then you are really looking at a high cost.

Don't assume anything and don't expect your business owner to tell you everything. I don't mean to burst your balloon, but this project is probably not on the high priority list for your business owner. You will have to ask a lot of questions and you will have to compete for the time of your business owner and stakeholders. Ask your business owner who the stakeholders are, then ask the stakeholders to identify stakeholders and go over that list with your business owner. You probably won't use the full list of stakeholders but it will be time well spent to find as many as you can.

2.8.2 Vendor Management

I am including a section on Vendor Management in this guide simply because of the reality that most state projects engage a vendor to provide some part of the project. Recognize and treat vendors as a part of your team. As such, they need to be involved from the beginning and have an understanding of expectations and dependencies.

Perhaps you have heard someone say, or maybe you have said this yourself: "The vendor is taking care of that." When you hear those words (even if they come from your mouth), raise the caution flag immediately. Does the vendor know this? Is the vendor involved in the discussion?

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[3] A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) Third Edition – Section 2.2, Page 24.

[4] A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) Third Edition – Section 2.1.1, see figure 2-2, Page 21.

2.8.2.1 VENDOR CONTRACT OR STATEMENT OF WORK

Every vendor will have a contract or statement of work that describes what the vendor is expected to do, when it is to be done, and what dependencies are involved. If there is not a statement of work that describes what, when, and dependencies – then you need to get with the vendor and contracting officer to get these expectations clearly documented.

2.8.2.2 VENDOR AS A RESOURCE IN YOUR PMP AND SCHEDULE

The vendor is a resource in your project's PMP and schedule. Your schedule should have tasks that are due from the vendor and when they are due as a part of your overall plan. You should know any required dependencies both upstream that may impact the vendor's ability to deliver and also downstream that may impact other tasks and milestones if the vendor is late. Based on what the vendor is delivering, you don't necessarily need to have a detailed plan for the vendor's deliverable, but you should have an adequate number of tasks along the way for the vendor to be able to monitor the deliverable. If a vendor has a deliverable that will take six months to develop and is not due for six months into the project, you don't want to find out on the 25^{th} day of the 5^{th} month that they haven't started on it.

2.8.2.3 VENDOR AS A PART OF YOUR TEAM

The vendor is a part of your team and should be in the loop on communications and reporting. The vendor should have a project plan and schedule for the deliverable for which they are responsible. The vendor should report on that plan to you as the project manager. It is important that the vendor see the big picture of the entire plan and understand how their place in the project impacts others. This brings me back to the "the vendor will take care of that" comment. Would you want someone obligating you and your team to something without you knowing it? I didn't think so – even if it does happen all the time. There is nothing at all wrong with "the vendor will take care of that" as long as the vendor is aware of the obligation and expectation.

2.8.2.4 GETTING THE VENDOR PAID

Vendors like getting paid. You can help them with this and help keep track of your budget as well. Keep some general principles in mind when dealing with vendors:

- Vendors are asked to perform certain tasks and present certain deliverables.
- The tasks and deliverables are documented in a statement of work, contract, or purchase order.
- The vendor should formally deliver an acceptance form which relates back to the statement of work, contract, or purchase order.
- The vendor's invoice should relate to the acceptance form.
- The approving authority should be able to see what service was expected at what cost, what service was performed, that the service was performed to an acceptable standard, and that the invoiced services match the contract and purchase order.

You can help the vendor get paid by making sure that the acceptance form maps back to the contracted service and that the invoice maps back to the acceptance form.

The guidelines below may be of assistance in helping to manage the costs and helping the vendor to get paid. Look at this like one of those diet and exercise programs that always gives the warning to check with your doctor first. These are guidelines only. Check with your accounting and payment approval authorities.

	General Guidelines for Vendor Invoicing
1.	Identify in your project plan the specific deliverables that are identified in the statement of work, (for purposes of this guideline, references to statement of work, would include contract, purchase order, or other document authorizing the vendor to do the work and committing the state to pay the bill.) It's a good idea to enter a cross reference in the notes section of your project schedule and in the project management plan.
2.	When creating the delivery/acceptance form, identify the specific deliverables and sections of the statement of work. Document the specifics of what is to be delivered, when it is to be delivered, and the cost for the deliverable in the acceptance form as stated in the statement of work. Include the PO # on the acceptance form and if an invoice has already been submitted, include the invoice number.
3.	Submit the acceptance form to the person identified in the statement of work..
4.	Receive the acceptance form from the authorizing individual indicating acceptance of the deliverables.
5.	Give the acceptance form to the vendor and recommend that the vendor attach the acceptance form to the invoice when submitting the invoice.
6.	Obtain a copy of the invoice from the vendor.
7.	You may want to add the additional step of obtaining payment information from the accounting office to show when the invoice was paid.

2.8.3 Secure the Resources

Now you have a list of people who have a special interest in this project. So for the big question – who will do the work? By now you should have an idea of what general skill sets you need and a ballpark idea of the time frame. See your office manager and go over the needs. You may have resources available from existing staff or you may need to contract for resources. It is not within the scope of this document to go through all the steps for securing resources. Each office or agency has its own process. The key is to find the individual who can help you and then you must be tenacious. Remember, the clock is ticking.

2.8.4 Get Everyone Together – This Isn't the Kick-Off

At this point you are probably under pressure to get going on the project. The fact is that you are going on the project. Hopefully, one of the by-products of this project guide will be that your superiors will not be demanding schedules and target dates from you before you have the facts on which to make plans.

Schedule a meeting with your business owner, stakeholders, and the resources assigned to your team. Ask your office manager about reserving rooms, equipment, and conference bridge lines and send out an invitation using Microsoft Outlook. It is also a good idea to go ahead and start filling out the contact information as much as possible for all participants. It is easier to get them to review, correct, and update, contact information than to start from scratch.

E-mail is a wonderful tool for disseminating information. It is not a substitute for personal contact. Block out an hour in your schedule to call or personally stop by to see the meeting participants in person. Let me say again that I don't mean to burst your balloon, but people are not sitting at their desks anxiously waiting to receive an e-mail from you.

If this isn't the project kick-off, then why are you having a meeting? The purpose of this meeting is to get the key players in one place, talking together, to confirm the facts of the project charter. It is also to help build your relationship with the business owner, stakeholder, and project team. On a very practical level, this also allows you to ask the stakeholders for their contact information including e-mail, phone numbers (including pagers and mobile phone) and any other relevant information that you may need to have for communications with stakeholders. For this first meeting you need to plan on doing some follow up before the meeting. If you don't receive a confirmation then make a follow up call. Give the key players a friendly reminder call the day of the meeting because people get very busy and things can slip.

2.8.4.1 MEETING GUIDELINES

There are many resources on how to hold meetings and do's and don'ts of meetings. I won't write another book on meetings but will include a few helpful bullets here.

- Determine what you want to accomplish in this meeting by asking that deep philosophical question of the ages – "Why are we here?"
- The purpose of the meeting will go in the agenda (see the steps in the next section)
- Prepare for the meeting by making necessary copies, securing equipment, etc.
- Arrive early and get set up – test out that Power Point projector and show – they are notorious for glitches when you get ready to start
- Start on time – this will set the stage for the rest of your project. If you start on time and end on time, project members will quickly learn and adapt to being in your meeting on time even if they are notoriously late for all others
- End on time – see above
- Stay focused – meetings easily shift into rabbit chasing mode so make constant course corrections during the meeting
- Record action items and assign to one person – if there is an action item that relates to a specific agenda item or to a specific need in the project, assign that to one person and record it in the minutes as well as on the agenda for the next meeting

Not everything mentioned in a meeting is necessarily an action item. Meeting participants always have great ideas but not all specifically relate to your needs. Learn how to "just say no" to ideas that come out but do not specifically relate to your project needs. If you don't learn to do this, you will die under the weight of trying to do a lot of good things that don't really help your project and you will also be setting expectations that say, "I'll be back," and some of those expectations could show up as your own Terminator.

2.8.4.2 AGENDA AND MINUTES

Even though this is not the kick-off meeting, you should have an agenda and take minutes. You may take minutes of the meeting yourself or assign one of the team members. It is always easier to conduct a meeting if someone else is taking care of the details of attendance and minutes. A meeting agenda and meeting template is in your project notebook folders 3.02 and 3.03. Send the agenda out ahead of time. Part of your responsibility as project manager is to make sure that a packet of meeting information goes out ahead of time to the meeting participants. (This applies to all meetings – not just the first one) The packet serves as a reminder of the meeting and as an added benefit; it gives the business owner a sense that you are on top of things and in charge. Remember that in this business, perception becomes reality. Start out giving your business owner warm fuzzies and do it all the way through the project.

The template is composed of a section for the agenda and the minutes in one document. This allows you to plan the meeting, and then record the minutes of the meeting in the same document. The following step table walks you through completing the agenda. Refer to the sample agenda in Appendix A of this document.

2.8.4.3 Steps to Completing the Agenda and Minutes

	Completing the Agenda and Minutes
1.	Open the agenda template from SharePoint and save to your local drive using the following naming convention: YYYYMMDD – [Project Name] [Type of meeting customer or team] Agenda
2.	Move to the page footer and replace the existing information as follows: [Insert Project Name] – [Insert "Customer" or "Team"] Minutes – [Insert meeting date in Month, Day, Year] format.
3.	Move to the top of the page and insert the Project Name
4.	Insert Meeting Date
5.	Insert Meeting Time
6.	Insert Meeting Location
7.	Purpose: Underneath the Agenda heading type in the purpose of the meeting.  You are asking people to take their time to come to your meeting. Before you ask anyone to take their time with you, know why you want them there. Have a clear purpose for every meeting.
8.	Invited: List all the people who are invited to the meeting. Having this list will make it much easier when you prepare the minutes and record who attended.
9.	Host: This usually will be the Business Owner. It could the Project Manager or someone else.
10.	Facilitator: This is usually the Project Manager, although the Project Manager or Business Owner may want someone else to facilitate the meeting.
11.	Number: This is an automated number that lists the agenda items. If the numbers don't start with "1", or if they don't seem to be in the right order, right click in the box and select "bullets and numbering" then click the radio button to restart numbering or continue the previous list.
12.	Time: This is the time allocated for the topic – for example "10 min"
13.	Topic: This is the topic that you will be discussing
14.	Objective: What do you want to accomplish for this topic
15.	Responsible: Who is responsible for this topic in the meeting.
16.	Save the document and upload the document to 3.02 (Team Folder) or 3.03 (Customer Folder) in your SharePoint project notebook.
	You have completed the Agenda – Continue to Prepare the Minutes

	Completing the Agenda and Minutes
17.	When you hold the meeting, use the invited list (step 8) to check off those who attend. I find it easy to cut and paste the entire list from those invited into the attending list, then delete those who were absent,
18.	Under discussion, the topic numbers relate to the agenda item numbers. Do not try to record word for word what everyone says, only record those items that sum up the discussion for that particular item.
19.	Key Decisions: Record key decisions regarding the project or meeting items.
20.	Record Action Items and who the owner of the action item is.
21.	Record any issues or risks that need to be addressed. These items will go into a risk or issue log.
22.	Record information about the next meeting, such as where, when, and any key topic items to be covered.
23.	You may save this with the same file name or you may save it and change the word "agenda" to "minutes" in the file name. The first option will have one file with agenda and minutes. The second option will have one file with just the agenda and one file with agenda and minutes.
24.	Upload the document to 3.02 (Team Folder) or 3.03 (Customer Folder) in your SharePoint project notebook.

2.8.5 Sample Agenda Items for Your First Meeting

Here are sample agenda items for the first meeting you hold with stakeholders:

Number	Time	Topic	Objective (s)	Responsible
1.	10 min	Introduction	• Project stakeholders meet and obtain necessary contact information	Project Manager
2.	15 min	Overview of Project Charter	• Review project charter to assure understanding of project purpose, goals, and organization	Business Owner and Project Manager
3.	10 min	Communication Plan	• Establish some means for initial group to communicate/stay in touch – monthly meetings, every-other-week conference calls, emails use of SharePoint, etc.	Project Manager
4.	5 min	Schedule for Kick-off	• Schedule project kick-off meeting	Project Manager
5.	5 min	Next Steps	• Summarize meeting and review action items	Project Manager

2.9 What Now?

2.9.1 Determine Where You Are

Remember back in section 1.3 I referred to a trip from Georgia to Nebraska and how you would look at a map of the United States for the big picture, and then look at state maps for more detail? It is time to step back and take a look at where you are. Does the project require a formal project request or business case? Do you know why you have this project? Do you have resources assigned? Are your stakeholders on board with you? Did anyone show up for the introductory meeting? Has anyone made any promises about what you are going to deliver and when you are going to deliver it?

You are standing at a critical point in the success or failure of a project. It is not uncommon for a project to start out with great and grandiose dreams in the clouds but no reality of feet on the ground. Your job as a project manager is to sort through the grandiose ideas and help your business owner and stakeholders see the realistic picture. Determine where you stand right now and where you see caution lights flashing, point them out to your business owner and stakeholders.

2.9.2 Know Where You Are Going

After having the introductory meeting to review the project charter, do you feel comfortable with the idea that you know what the business owner and stakeholders want out of this project? Do you understand the business problem and the proposed solution? Do you feel comfortable that your business owner and stakeholders understand the business problem and proposed solution?

There are political realities in every project. Without even having a project schedule you may see that the budget and schedule expectations are unrealistic. You have an ethical obligation to document and report what you see – even if it isn't what the business owner, stakeholder, or your own organizational leadership wants to hear. For example, the business owner may have an expectation that a project will take 6 months and cost one million dollars. You see that it will likely take twice as long and probably cost much more. The business owner is insistent so even before you start the project you are over schedule and over budget. You need to know where you are going – even when you can see that the road goes over the edge of a cliff.

2.9.3 Review Your Audit Checklist

It is time to look over your audit checklist to make sure you have done everything you need to do up until this point. Confirm that all the documents are properly posted in the SharePoint repository.

2.9.4 Hold Your Formal Kick-Off Meeting

Now you are ready to hold your formal kick-off meeting. You have the stakeholders, the project team, the business owners, and you have a general idea of where you are going and how you will get there. In this meeting, you will again make an introduction of the project team, stakeholders and key players. You will also help to identify some risks and develop mitigation plans for each of the risks. You will also review lessons learned from previous projects of a similar nature. This is the meeting where you set the stage for how you will run this project. This is a key meeting that will flavor the rest of the project.

NUMBER	TIME	TOPIC	OBJECTIVE (S)	RESPONSIBLE
1.	5 min	Introduction	• Project stakeholders meet and obtain necessary contact information	Project Manager
2.	10 min	Overview of Project Charter and high level schedule	• Review project charter to assure understanding of project purpose, goals, and organization. Identify major deliverables and their target dates.	Business Owner and Project Manager
3.	15 min	Lessons Learned from Previous Projects that would apply to this one	• Identify lessons learned from previous project that would apply to this one and explain how you are applying the lessons learned.	Project Manager
4.	5 min	Intro to Risk Management	• Give overview of risk management. Use Risk Management Guideline	Project Manager
5.	20 min	Identify risks and issues	• , identifying potential risks and determining how to mitigate and be prepared for a risk event. Also identify any issues that may be in play at this time.	Project Manager
6.	10 min	Schedule regular meetings	• Set schedule for regular project reviews – should be weekly meetings but may be less often at Business owner's request.	Project Manager

2.9.5 MOVE TO PLANNING PHASE

If the office manager has not assigned a project officer or auditor to review your work, ask the office manger or a fellow project manager to review the project checklist. In some circles this is called peer review. It is always good to get a second set of eyes to look over your work. Even if a project officer or auditor is assigned, it is still a good idea to get a fellow PM to look over your work. If everything is in order you are ready to move to the Planning Phase of the project.

3 PROJECT PLANNING

3.1 LET'S GET THE TERMS STRAIGHT

When someone refers to a "project plan" they could mean the project schedule of dates, resources, and dependencies, normally found in a tool such as Microsoft Project. They could also mean the Project Management Plan which is a written document explaining how you will manage the project.

For the purposes of this project guide, I will use the term "Project Management Plan" (PMP) to refer to the written document explaining how you will manage the project. I will use the term "project schedule" to refer to the schedule developed in tools such as Microsoft Project.

3.2 WHAT PLANNING DOCUMENTS DO YOU NEED?

In the planning phase, you will be writing a set of documents that will set forth how you will manage the project. The two key documents are the Project Management Plan (PMP) and the Project Schedule. (The Project Schedule is normally created using a program such as Microsoft Project.) In some projects, particularly larger projects, you may need to create a separate document such as a communications plan or risk management plan from one or more sections of the PMP. Your project may also have requirements from regulatory agencies or federal requirements. Check with your business owner for contacts with stakeholders who may have requirements to be sure that you have everything covered at the beginning. Normally, the PMP will contain everything you need.

3.2.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN (PMP)

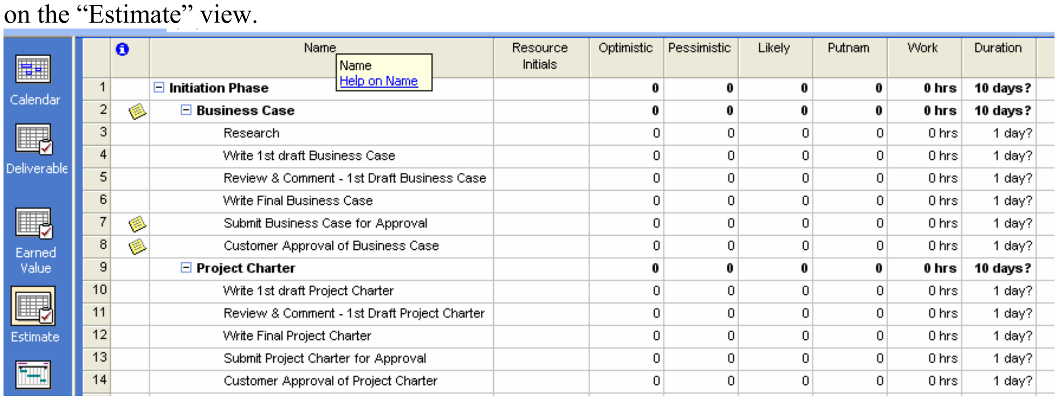
In most projects, the PMP will include individual sections on deliverable and acceptance management, staffing acquisition, and resource management, project organization, risk management, scope management, issue management, procurement management, change management, budget management, communications management, quality management, performance measurement, configuration management, and project closure management. As I pointed out earlier, in some projects, there may be a need for a separate document focusing on one or more of the sections listed above but in the majority of cases, the PMP will be a single document with individual sections. Click here to go to the PMP Template. The Project Management Methodology Library Index contains examples of sample documents which you may find helpful. Look under the "Type" column for Sample documents.

You know how you will be managing this project, why "waste" all that time writing a huge document? First, it helps you as the project manager to think through and focus on just how you will be managing this project. Second, it is a communication tool so that your project team and stakeholders can see and understand what will take place. (Normally the business owner is impressed and it gives him/her a warm fuzzy feeling that you know what you are doing.) Third, when issues or risks arise and you have to make a difficult decision, it is always good to have something to which you can point.[5]

[5] One area that comes to my mind is issue escalation. When you have an issue that will likely need escalation, make a copy of the escalation schedule and set it out when you document and communicate the issue and the clock starts ticking. Everyone knows that if the issue isn't resolved in say, 2 days, it automatically bumps up to the next level. Then you aren't doing it because of the individuals involved, you are doing it because the plan sets it out that way.

3.2.2 Project Schedule

The project work schedule is a breakdown of all the tasks involved in the project from start to finish with resources assigned, dependencies identified, effort and duration estimated. This document assumes that the project manager has some experience with MS Project and can develop a basic project schedule. The steps below are high level steps to follow. For more detailed information on training for MS Project, see your office manager.

	Developing the Project Schedule using MS Project
1.	List the tasks in the project. Use the phases of the project – Initiation, Planning, Execution and Control, Close and start listing every task you think of within each of those phases. Don't worry about the order, just start listing what needs to be done. Get your team together and ask them what needs to be done. They have the expertise and know what needs to be done. Ask questions and keep asking questions. Your team members, particularly technical team members, have become so accustomed to doing certain things that they don't think to mention them. It may seem to be excruciating at times but keep asking the stupid questions. You will know that you asked the right question when someone answers, "oh yeah, we have to……" You want the "oh yeah" at this stage of the game, not two days before you are scheduled to deploy. Ask questions and keep asking – that's what you get the big bucks for.
2.	Set the start date of your project and set up the project calendar with any holidays that would apply to everyone on the project.
3.	Develop a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) – The WBS is just a list of the tasks to accomplish in the project organized from higher levels to detail levels. Take all those tasks you just listed and start organizing them into a pattern that will guide you from start to finish of the project. Put the detailed tasks under the higher level tasks and organize them within each of the phases.
4.	What you do next is a matter of personal preference. Some say to estimate the effort and duration of each task, some say to assign resources to each task. My preference is to assign the resources because the effort and duration could be different based on the resource assigned. So, I'll write the guide with resources being the next step. You can do it the way I do it or you can do it the wrong way – it's up to you.
5.	List your resources on the resource page or if you use a resource pool, link to the resource pool. (You may need to talk with your office manager to see how they manage project resources.)
6.	Assign a resource to each task. Some tasks may require more than one resource. (Hint: When you finish going through the first time, go to the Resource Usage view and check to see if there are any tasks under "Unassigned" to find those that you may have missed.
7.	Now you are ready to start estimating effort and duration. get back with your team and walk through the plan task by task asking for their estimate.
8.	If you are using the MS Project Schedule template in your project workspace, open it and click on the "Estimate" view. 

		Name	Resource Initials	Optimistic	Pessimistic	Likely	Putnam	Work	Duration
1		**Initiation Phase**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0 hrs**	**10 days?**
2		**Business Case**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0 hrs**	**10 days?**
3		Research		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
4		Write 1st draft Business Case		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
5		Review & Comment - 1st Draft Business Case		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
6		Write Final Business Case		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
7		Submit Business Case for Approval		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
8		Customer Approval of Business Case		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
9		**Project Charter**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0 hrs**	**10 days?**
10		Write 1st draft Project Charter		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
11		Review & Comment - 1st Draft Project Charter		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
12		Write Final Project Charter		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
13		Submit Project Charter for Approval		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?
14		Customer Approval of Project Charter		0	0	0	0	0 hrs	1 day?

	Developing the Project Schedule using MS Project
9.	As you begin the estimating process, it is good to insert a note with each task describing your basis for estimating the effort.
10.	With your team go through each task and ask them for a pessimistic estimate of effort hours, an optimistic estimate, and likely estimate. Fill in the number – these are effort hours not duration. The view will calculate a weighted average known as PERT which is 4 times the likely effort plus the optimistic and pessimistic divided by 6. This formula will give you a good basis for estimating the effort.
11.	As you estimate the task, also estimate how long it will take in actual duration. A task may take someone only 8 hours but 3 or 4 days.  Be patient and persistent in this process. It is excruciating. Plan on several meetings of 2 – 4 hours each. Based on the size team, it may be helpful to break up into teams and tackle sections of the plan. You will all need to be together at some point to talk through each task. I know that it is boring, it is painstaking, you will feel like a fool at times, but just plow through the tasks. You will be glad that you documented what you intended to do with each task and how you came up with your estimate. When management complains about how long it takes, push back and tell them that the time invested now will save time later. Don't fall to the temptation of shortcuts.
12.	Identify dependencies and create the dependencies in the project schedule  Here's a valuable hint. Put your dependencies on the lowest detail levels. Don't put a link on a summary task. There is always that one little detail task that isn't finished before you start the next one and if the dependency is on a summary, you will get those aggravating conflict messages because in order for a summary to be "complete" every detail underneath it must be completed.
13.	Check your start and end dates to see if they are realistic.
14.	Check your resource hours assigned to be sure that you don't have resources over-allocated. You can generally be comfortable with a resource assigned to 50 hours a week for a few weeks in a row but if the assignment goes beyond 50 hours, for more than three weeks in a row, you are probably practicing wishful thinking. You will need to level your resources by extending the dates, revising the estimates, or adding resources.
15.	After your dependencies are in place and resources leveled, it is time to baseline the plan. You may be a few weeks into the project before you get to the baseline stage but you shouldn't go very far. When you baseline the plan and the customer has approved it, the only time the baseline should change is through the formal change process.

3.2.3 BUDGET

3.2.3.1 WHAT IS A BUDGET?

Ask four or five people what a budget is and you will get four or five different answers. Webster's Dictionary defines the word "budget" as:

a. A statement of the financial position of an administration for a definite period of time based on estimates of expenditures during the period and proposals for financing them.
b. A plan for the coordination of resources and expenditures.
c. The amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular purpose.

3.2.3.2 *PROJECT BUDGET*

Letter b is probably the best answer for a project budget. Simply stated, a project budget is an estimate of the total cost of a project based on the resources and cost of resources. The key word is estimate. The project scope statement defines the requirements. Thus, a project manager estimates the costs for the amount of resource time, hardware, software, equipment, material and other considerations believed necessary to complete a project based on the scope.

3.2.3.3 *CREATING A PROJECT COST BUDGET*

The first step in creating a project budget is to determine the project cost. As the project manager, part of your job is to create a project schedule (see Section 3.2.2) and estimate the effort for each task in the schedule. The core team makes reasonable estimates of time and cost for each task. There are several good sources of information for estimating. These include past experiences and lessons learned from previous or similar projects, subject matter experts, professional organizations and estimating tools and software packages. Yes, it is a lot to do and it is tedious, boring, repetitive work – but you have got to do it.

The next step is to add up the cost estimates for each task. The sum of the cost estimates for each task provides the project manager with the cost budget estimate for the entire project. This is referred to as the estimated baseline project cost. At this point, some customers want to take the estimated cost and proclaim it to be the budget. That's fine as long as nothing changes. That is not very likely to happen. So, what do you do when, not if, something changes? That brings us to the Contingency Budget.

3.2.3.4 *CREATING A CONTINGENCY BUDGET*

The purpose of a contingency budget is to address additional costs associated if and when a change occurs. The contingency budget contains funds that can be tapped if the contingency plan had to be implemented; however, it is a separate budget and is not included in the budget baseline. Contingency funding should be directly proportional to the degree of risk to be mitigated during the project life. The riskier the project, the more contingency is required to mitigate risk to an acceptable level.

I know what you are thinking. Why not just pad the task estimates with extra costs and then you won't need a contingency budget? There are several reasons. First, it is simply dishonest. Let's be straight with the customer. Give a real estimate. It is one thing to say that optimistically a task can be completed in 8 hours, pessimistically 12 hours and you generally expect 10 hours. You could put as low as 8 and as high as 12, but then if you estimate 16 hours; you are out of the ball park. You have pulled at least 4 hours out of thin air with no basis. 4 hours of pad here, 2 hours there, 10 hours somewhere else, and soon you have a substantial amount in a project budget that has no basis whatsoever. Plus, the extra funds that are tied up in your project means that another important project may be put on hold unnecessarily because all the resources are wrapped up in your project. Give real estimates and then establish a contingency to manage those changes when they come along. Your customer will have a better idea of the cost of potential change.

There is another reason that you as a project manager will want a contingency budget rather than pad. When your customer wants a change and you have pad, you will have a tendency to want to be the hero and say that you were able to add more functionality without increasing the budget. I know that it looks good. I know that it feels good. But my friend, you are creating a monster that can come back to devour you. When your customer grows accustomed to you making a change here and a change there without any change control and without any cost, you will eventually come to a point where you can not make another change. The customer will want to know why you can't do that because you have been able to do it plenty of times before. It's just a small change. You will succumb to the pressure, make the change, and eventually you will have to pay the piper. So, let's talk about creating a contingency budget.

3.2.3.4.1 Risk Assessment for Contingency Budget

As the project manager, you and the core team create cost estimates for the project based on information you know. The next step is to evaluate and account for inherent risk involved in each completed work package. Risk is an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, has a positive or negative impact on the project. A project risk has three defining elements:

- a definable event;
- a probability it will occur; and
- an impact, or consequence, to the project if the event occurs.

Risk assessment and assignment are very important to a successful budget. Certain circumstances may arise, causing deviations to the project budget, such as:

- Unforeseen need for risk mitigation;
- Unforeseen business or technological requirements;
- Changes to the project scope;
- Changes to the project schedules or scheduling issues;
- Changes to project priorities; and
- Error corrections (internal or otherwise).

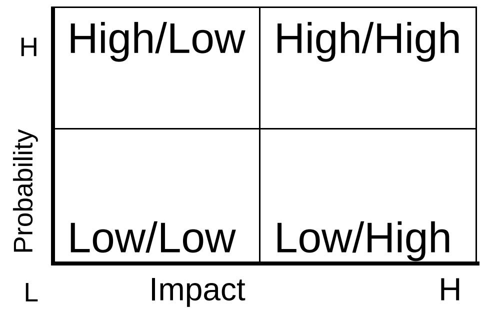
These *foreseeable* risk factors are referred to as "known unknowns". They are identified in the project manager's Risk Management Plan and contingency budget. There are also *unforeseeable* risks that might occur. These are known as "unknown unknowns". The Project Management Methodology Knowledge Base contains several detailed documents on Risk Planning and Management. We will also take a closer look at managing risk in Section 4.8. So, let's take a look a how risks fit in to a contingency budget.

3.2.3.4.2 Using Risk Assessment to Prepare a Contingency Budget

A contingency budget is not mixed in with the project budget. You want to manage your project budget based on the estimates and baseline that you developed when you planned the schedule. However, you will want to report on the contingency budget so that everyone knows it is there and available if the customer needs it.


Let me offer some advice about budget. You have probably been in meetings where the group spent an hour discussing a 25 dollar coffee pot and then that same group approves a 3 million dollar project in the blink of an eye. I know, it doesn't make sense – but it is human nature. It is a matter of expectations and perception. Part of your job is to manage the expectations and perceptions. The contingency budget lets the customer know that you are helping them prepare for change or the unexpected.

You create the contingency budget based on the amount of risk contingency. There are several tools used to qualify, quantify and calculate risk. One tool used to qualify risk involves creating a risk register. This tool is used to rank the probability of the identified risks occurring and impact if the risk were to occur. The probability and impact for each risk factor would be rated as low, medium or high. Then the project team could prioritize the risks based on the overall rating. For example:



Quantitative tools use numbers to assess probability and impact. For example, a risk event has a 15% probability of occurring and the impact would cost the project an additional $10,000. You can assign numerical probability ranges to each identified risk. For example:

Risk	Probability	Impact	Risk Contingency
A	0.25	$500	$125
B	0.15	$1,500	$225
C	0.50	$3,000	$1,500
D	0.10	$45,000	$4,500
TOTAL		**$50,000**	**$6,350**

The potential impact to this project is $50,000. However, all $50,000 would only be needed if all of the risks occurred. The objective of managing risk is to make sure that risks do not impact the project. The contingency budget should reflect the potential impact of the risk as well as the likelihood that the risk will occur. This is reflected in the Risk Contingency column. Therefore, $6,350 would be the amount you would want to add to the contingency budget as risk contingency. Keep in mind that there is a great deal of subjectivity in risk management. You don't have a crystal ball. You just have your experience and judgment. These tools help you think through what might happen and how these possible events could impact your project.

If risks A and B actually occurred, then you submit a change request to the customer to seek permission to tap into the contingency budget. If the contingency request is approved, you update the project plan and baseline budget. However, if risk D actually occurred, the contingency budget would probably not be enough to protect the project from the impact of the risk event. Then you have to assess the risk and offer the customer alternatives which would impact scope, schedule, budget or any combination of the three.

3.2.3.4.3 Processing a Request for Using the Contingency Budget

So, the day arrives when that change event takes place. What do you do now? You create a change request with the supporting documentation. The Change Request form contains instructions for each step in the form. Click here to open the Change Request Form.

You should have the approval process documented in your Project Management Plan. Depending on the project there will be different levels of approval authority. The Business Owner or Project Sponsor may be able to approve changes up to a certain amount. Any change over $100,000 will require the approval of an agency head.

- Submit the change request to the Business Owner or the appropriate person identified to approve changes as identified in the Project Management Plan.
- Obtain the approval and signature of the approval authority.
- Upon approval of the request:
  - move the approved contingency funding from the contingency budget to the operating budget,
  - communicate the decision to the impacted stakeholders, and
  - update the project schedule baseline to reflect the additional funding.

3.2.3.5 Scope Change and the Budget

We have been looking in this section at using the change process and contingency budget. You will not always need to use the contingency budget. In some cases, the customer may prefer to reduce the scope of the project as a means of managing change. A reduction in scope is a change and should be processed as a change even if the budget itself doesn't change. In reality, the budget does change with a scope reduction because you are delivering less but the customer is paying the same (you know kind of like those candy bars that get smaller and smaller while the package is the same size).

While we have been looking at shifting funds from a contingency budget to the project budget, it is theoretically possible that a shift could go in the other direction as well. You could reduce the budget of the project and shift funds back to the contingency budget or wherever the customer wants them to go. The process is the same.

3.2.3.6 Final Thoughts on the Budget

The bottom line is that when you have a significant change in your project, you need to communicate the need for change to the customer and manage the change. The budget is one tool to help you manage and report on your project. The contingency budget is a tool to help process changes easier and faster because, in effect, the approving authorities have delegated a level of authority to allow you and the business owners to act and report instead of getting approval before acting. As you prepare your contingency budget keep in mind that while you are managing risks and contingencies, you cannot anticipate every event. Compare the time it takes to plan for contingencies to the time you would save by being able to use a contingency budget and find the balance for your project.

4 Project Execution and Control

You have all your planning documents in order now and you are ready to start executing. The reality is that you have likely been executing the project for a short while (hopefully it hasn't been too long) because there are generally no neat and clean breaks between phases. Let's take a look at the key documents you need to maintain during the execution phase of the project.

4.1 Status Reporting

One of the fundamentals of project management is regular status reporting. The status report provides information on a weekly basis showing the activity of the week, planned activity for the following week, issues, assigned action items, and other information pertinent to the project. Some projects are on a critical project review list and require a monthly project dashboard report which summarizes project status at an executive level.

Status reporting gets formalized here – but regular updating/checking in – is part of establishing trust with sponsor – business owner. Sending a status report via e-mail isn't the same as an informal chat. A good project manager will follow a formal and informal process.

Each member of the team should provide a weekly status report to the team lead or project manager. (See Appendix B) You can use the weekly team meeting time as an opportunity to relate items on an individual status report such as issues or accomplishments to the entire team. You can also plan a weekly review with individuals on the team to go over the status report.

It is good practice to assign issues/risks to team members and review status as part of team meetings. Assigning your team members something specific on which to report builds team spirit and accountability.

The project manager summarizes the individual status reports into a project status report. (See Appendix C) The project manager uses the information from the individual weekly status report to manage activity on scheduled tasks, issues, risks, and action items. A part of the weekly status report is capturing actual effort hours on tasks and giving estimates to complete. It is important to capture actual hours, not just get percent complete. Actual hours worked and hours estimated to complete can be measured against baseline estimates. Reporting hours may be made a part of the weekly status report itself or may be captured in a separate document or through a web interface.

4.1.1 Individual Weekly Status Report

	Completing the Individual Weekly Status Report
1.	Open your status report: Appendix B. In Header enter the date for the week ending. In most cases, the week should end on a Friday or Saturday. Use MM/DD/YY Format
2.	Name: Enter Your Name
3.	Phone: Enter Your Phone
4.	Mgr: Enter Your Manager
5.	Office/Unit: Enter your office or Unit

	Completing the Individual Weekly Status Report
6.	Tasks Delivered and Current Work Activities with Status: List the high level activities and deliverables for the week. If you have more than one project, list them by project or project groupings. Check with your manager for guidance on specific questions.
7.	My Plan to Deliver Next Week: Activities planned for the following week. These activities should relate to the tasks in the project schedule. If you have more than one project, list them by project or project groupings. Check with your manager for guidance on specific questions.
8.	Issues Requiring Management Attention: List any issues and activities related to issue management
9.	High Potential and Impact Risks: List risks that need to be identified and mitigated
10.	Other: List any other information which may be pertinent to the project
11.	Save the file with the following naming convention: YYYYMMDD – Weekly Status – [Last, First Name]

4.1.2 Project Status Report

As project manager, you will take the individual weekly status reports and roll them up into a project status report for your customer and your management team. The project status report includes basic project information along with more information on overall project details such as budget and schedule. Based on your customer and management requirements, the project status report may be on a weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly basis.

	Completing the Project Status Report
1.	Period Ending: Fill in the end of the reporting period MM/DD/YY
2.	Project Name: Enter the Project Name
3.	To: Enter the name of the individual(s) to whom you are submitting the report.
4.	From: Enter your name
5.	Accomplishments this Period: List the key accomplishments during this reporting period
6.	Acceptance Log: List only those deliverables that are open or approved/rejected during the current month. • # - List the Number of the Deliverable from the Acceptance Log • Deliverable – Describe the Deliverable • Submitted – Date submitted for acceptance • Approved or Rejected: List either approved or rejected or leave blank if the review is still in process. • Date – List the date of the action of approved or rejected or leave blank if the review is still in process.
7.	Change Request: List only those change requests that are open or approved/rejected during the current month. • ID - List the Number of the Change Request from the Change Log • Description – Describe the Change Request • Submitted – Date submitted for approval • Status: List either approved or rejected or leave blank if the review is still in process. • Date – List the date of the action of approved or rejected or leave blank if the review is still in process.
8.	Open Issues: List only those issues that are open or have been closed during the current month. • # - List the Number of the Issue from the Issue Log

	[Completing the Project Status Report]()
	• Date ID – List the date that the issue was opened • Issue Statement – Give a brief description of the Issue. This does not have to be a full and complete description, just enough for the reader to recognize the issue. The issue log is the defining source for issues if the reader needs more information. • Owner – List the name of the person to whom the issue is assigned. • Activity – Summarize the latest activity. The issue log is the defining source for issues if the reader needs more information. • Date Resolved – List the date that the issue was closed.
9.	Budget: This section of the report is the same as the budget section from the project dashboard. • Project Budget – Budget for Project • Planned Expenditures to Date: Baseline planned expenditures through the date of the report. • Actual Expenditures to Date: Actual expenditures through the date of the report. • Variance – Subtract the Actual from the Planned. If the number is negative put ( ) around it. • Available Funds to Complete the Project – Normally this is the budget amount minus the actual expenses to date. • Estimated funds needed to complete the project – Determine the estimated work remaining and use that number. This is not a simple subtraction of Project Budget minus planned or actual. Try to give a good, realistic estimate based on the facts on what is left to do and the resources required to complete the work. • Variance – Subtract the Estimated Funds Needed to Complete from the Available Funds to Complete..
10.	Current Project Risks: List a summary of current risks from the risk log. • # - Number assigned to risk • Current Project Risk – Describe the risk. This does not need to be a detailed description. The risk log is the defining source for risks if the reader needs more information. •
11.	Comments: Add any information that you think the reader needs to know regarding this project.

4.2 Project Reviews

Some projects are of a high enough priority to be placed on a critical projects review. The critical projects review involves a project dashboard report with the Critical Projects Review board. You can find a copy of the Dashboard and Guidelines for the Critical Project Review in the Project Methodology Knowledge Base.

4.3 Update Project Schedule

Each week you should update your project schedule with the actual work and estimates to complete. Many project managers do not capture actual effort hours. You will never get an accurate picture of what is really going on if you do not capture and track actual effort against tasks. Each week you need to obtain from each member of the project team a time capture sheet consisting of the following:

- Tasks assigned for the week
- Hours worked during the week on each task
- Estimated hours to complete each task

After entering the actual hours worked during the week and the estimate to complete for each task. Update the project plan to reschedule tasks so that you don't show a projected finish date in the past for an uncompleted task.

4.4 Team Meetings

You should hold a regular team meeting on a weekly basis. Refer back to Section 2.8.4.2 for instructions on completing the agenda and minutes. You need to have all your team members present, preferably in face-to-face meetings, but you may use conference calling. In the weekly team meetings you will review status, issues, and risks. Keep the meeting to the time limit. Don't chase rabbits and don't try to solve every problem that comes up. Delegate the problem to a specific individual and record it as an action item for a future meeting.

Be sure that someone documents in the minutes what is to be done, when it is to be done, and who is going to do it – then follow up because if you don't the team will not take action items seriously and your meetings will be reduced to talk that means nothing. You will become a statistic of failed projects. We don't want that and neither do you. Stick to the subjects in the meeting and follow up on action items.

4.5 Customer Meetings

You should hold a meeting with your customer on a regular basis. I recommend that you start out with a weekly customer meeting. As time goes on, the customer may want to change to bi-weekly. You should not let things go longer than two weeks without some kind of meeting with your customer. Refer back to Section 2.8.4.1 for instructions on completing the agenda and minutes.

When you are holding this meeting, watch your customer and key stakeholders for important body language messages they may be sending. Are they bored, engaged, questioning, positive, negative? These messages will tell you a great deal. You may need to plan on some informal meetings with one or more of the players individually between meetings. Remember, perception is reality and you want your customer to have a positive perception of the project.

4.6 Acceptance Log

The acceptance process is outlined in the Project Management Plan. Click here to go to the PMP Template. While developing the delivery and acceptance process is a planning activity, the maintenance of the acceptance log is an execution phase activity. Executing the delivery and acceptance process begins with the submission of a deliverable and the acceptance form and updating the acceptance log. (See Appendix D and Appendix E) The tables below give instructions for completing the simple form in Appendix D.

	Completing the Acceptance Form
1.	Deliverable Number and Description: Enter the Deliverable Number from the PMP and cut and paste the description from the PMP
2.	Acceptance Criteria: Cut and paste the acceptance criteria from the PMP
3.	Project Manager Acceptance: To check the box, double-click on the checkbox and select the radio button that says "checked" under the Default Value.
4.	Name: Enter Your Name
5.	Signature: If you are obtaining e-mail approvals, type in the word "Electronic"
6.	Date: Date of the your submission
7.	QA Acceptance: If you have a formal QA review, follow the same process.
8.	Business Owner Acceptance: Business Owner follows the same process.
9.	Remarks: If you are obtaining e-mail approvals, keep an e-mail chain of the submission and acceptance and cut and paste it in this area to document the approval e-mails.

If you are using an e-mail acceptance process, here is some standard verbiage that allows you to have an e-mail tracking:

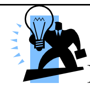
Subject line – Acceptance Log # (match this with the acceptance log)

"Attached are the [insert name of deliverable] and the acceptance form. You may reply to this e-mail with your approval and I will update the acceptance log and acceptance form. Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information."

Another hint is to attach the acceptance form to the invoice for prompter payment. It also helps for the audit trail to include the cost for the deliverable in the acceptance form so that the purchase order, invoice, deliverable, acceptance form, and payment can all be tied together.

The acceptance log is a simple document to track the delivery and acceptance of deliverables. (See Appendix E)

	Completing the Acceptance Log
1.	Line # : This is the Acceptance Log number you put on your e-mail when you submit the deliverable. (Click Here)
2.	Deliverable: Enter a brief description such as "PMP"
3.	Submitted: Date submitted to the business owner or approving authority.
4.	Approved or Rejected: Status of the deliverable. Blank if it has not been formally approved or disapproved. (Note: there are no conditional approvals. If the deliverable does not meet the acceptance criteria, it should be disapproved, corrected, and resubmitted as a new entry on the acceptance log.)

	[Completing the Acceptance Log]
5.	Date: Date of the approval or rejection
6.	 If you have a large number of deliverables, you may want to select the rows that have been approved and shade those rows so that you can easily tell which deliverables are still outstanding.

4.7 Change Log

Every project experiences change and that change must be managed. Any time there is a change in scope, change in deliverable, change in budget, or change in a baselined schedule, you need to prepare a change request. See Appendix F for a change request form. The Change Request form contains instructions for each step in the form. Click here to open the Change Request Form.

4.8 Risk Log

A key to delivering a successful project on time and on budget is to keep your eyes open for risks and have a plan to mitigate the risk. Risk mitigation consists of taking action to avoid a risk, accept a risk, develop a plan of action if the risk event takes place, or a combination of all of the above. The Project Management Methodology Knowledge Base contains several detailed documents on Risk Planning and Management. Based on the size and needs of your project, you can have an extensive risk management process which requires resources assigned specifically to manage risks, or you can have a fairly simple risk process. For the purposes of this guide, we will be using the simple risk management process, but as I said, the Risk Planning material in the Project Methodology Knowledge Base is extensive enough to cover the needs of just about any project you could ever deal with.

The Risk Log is an Excel spreadsheet with a few columns. It is fairly simple to maintain. You schedule a time at least once a month during a weekly team meeting and a weekly customer meeting to review the risk log and identify new risks that may arise. It is always better to manage a risk before it becomes an issue than it is to wait on it to become an issue. One of your key roles as a highly skilled, highly qualified, and highly paid project manager (well two out of three isn't bad) is to manage risks to the project.

	Completing the Risk Log
1.	Risk: Write a brief description of the risk
2.	Status: Is it Open or Closed
3.	Probability: Rank this as High, Medium, or Low. This is the probability of this risk event taking place.
4.	Impact: If the risk event took place what would the impact be. Rank this as High, Medium, or Low.
5.	Rating: Give this risk a numeric rating as to the overall severity or importance of the risk. Suggested range is 1-5 with 1 being the highest rating and 5 being the lowest.
6.	Owner: Who is assigned to monitor, manage, and report on this risk.
7.	Category: Assign a category to this risk such as: staffing, vendor, infrastructure, etc.

	Completing the Risk Log
8.	Target Date: A risk of most often an uncertain event so the target date doesn't mean the date that the risk will no longer be a risk, but the target date for taking action to mitigate the risk or to have a plan in place ready to activate if the risk event occurs. For example, there is a risk of levees in New Orleans breaking in the event of a category 4 or higher hurricane. I can mitigate the risk by spending billions to build the levee higher and stronger in which case the target date would be the date of completion of the reinforcement project. Or I can have a plan of action in the event the levee breaks in which case the target date would be the date of the completion and dissemination of the plan.
9.	Activities: Enter the date, person, and actions taken regarding this risk.  If you need room for a lot of documentation such as e-mail transcripts, create a risk memo that refers back to the risk log and in the risk log for activities write "See Risk Memo # [Enter the Number from the Risk Log] File the memo in the same folder as the risk log.

4.9 Issue Log

Every project will encounter issues. The PMP outlines an issue management process in detail. You may also want to review the Issue Management Guideline. It is important to document an issue when it arises and, if the default escalation path in the PMP is not appropriate, establish the escalation path up front. Set a priority on the issue (if you assign top priority to every issue, you may as well not assign a priority at all – be realistic with yourself and your team by setting realistic priorities.) Assign the issue to someone to track the issue to resolution. It is important to document phone calls, e-mails, and meetings. Issues are tracked in the SharePoint Issue Log that is on your project site. This guide also includes an issue log in Appendix H. Like the risk log, you may want to make a separate issue memo and refer to it in the issue log if the resolution documentation takes up much space.

One of our successful project managers offered some advice on how their team managed issues which you will probably find helpful.

Start at project staff meeting – explaining what an issue is and differentiating it from a risk.

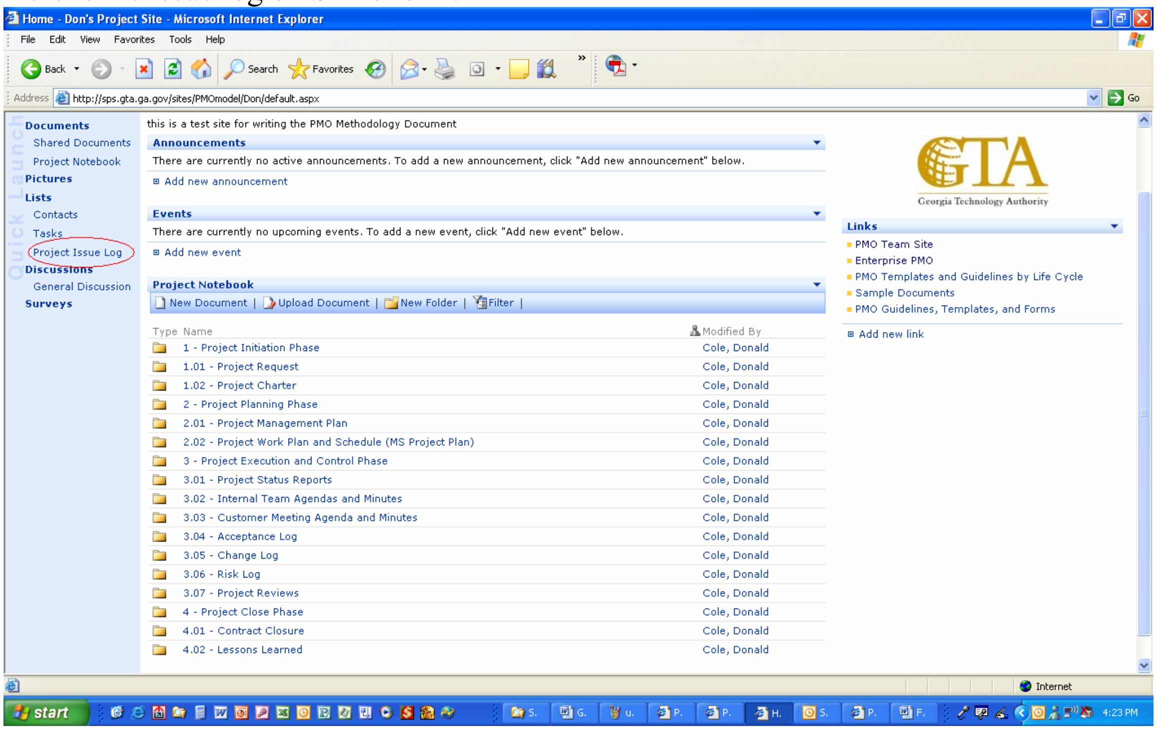
Put the following guidelines in place:

1) Anyone can identify an issue – but discuss new issues in staff meeting before adding it to the issue log. Classify the issues.
2) Focus on the most important ones – so limit the number of issues to 2/project staff member.
3) All issues must have action items.
4) Action items need to be updated weekly (review issues/action items weekly in staff meeting)
5) The Project Manager assigns people to issues
6) Only the Project Manager closes issues
7) Target is to close issues within 30 days.
8) More than one person can be involved in action planning – but only one person is responsible for resolving the issue.

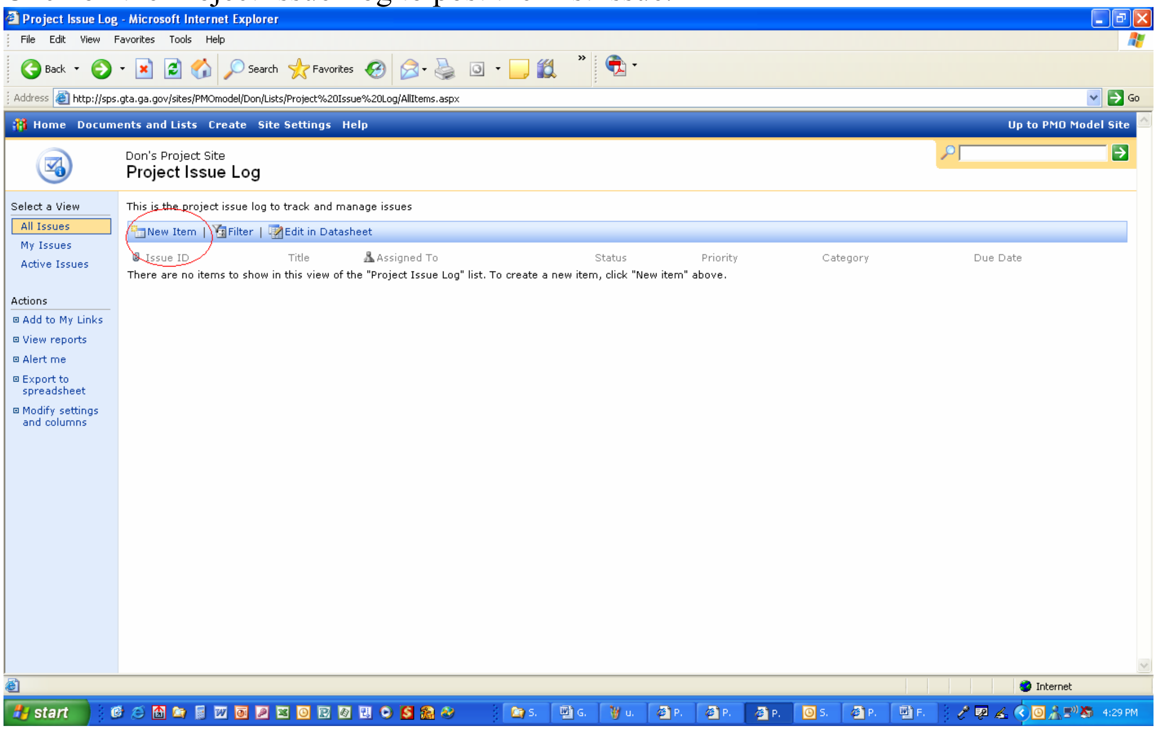
B. Review issues/action items every Friday to check for expired dates and to see if actions were being taken and documented.

SharePoint has an issue tracking tool which is incorporated in the model project site. By using the tool on SharePoint, your entire team has access to the issue log for more productive collaboration.

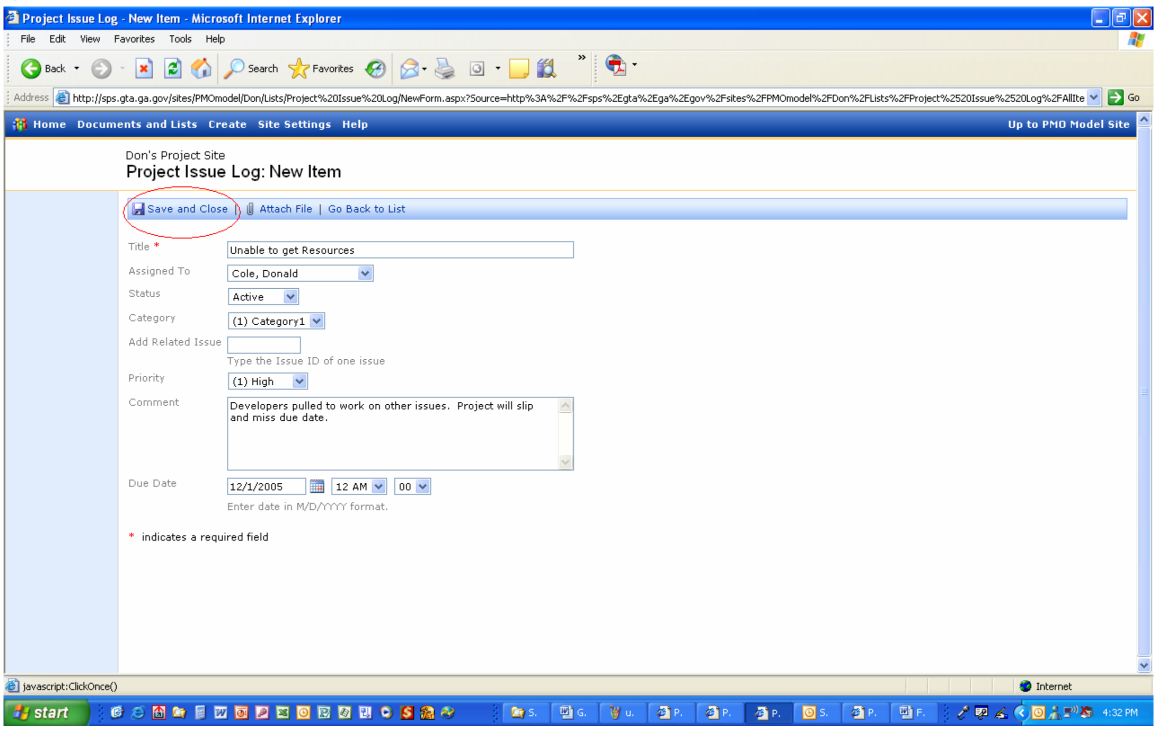
Here is the issue log on SharePoint:



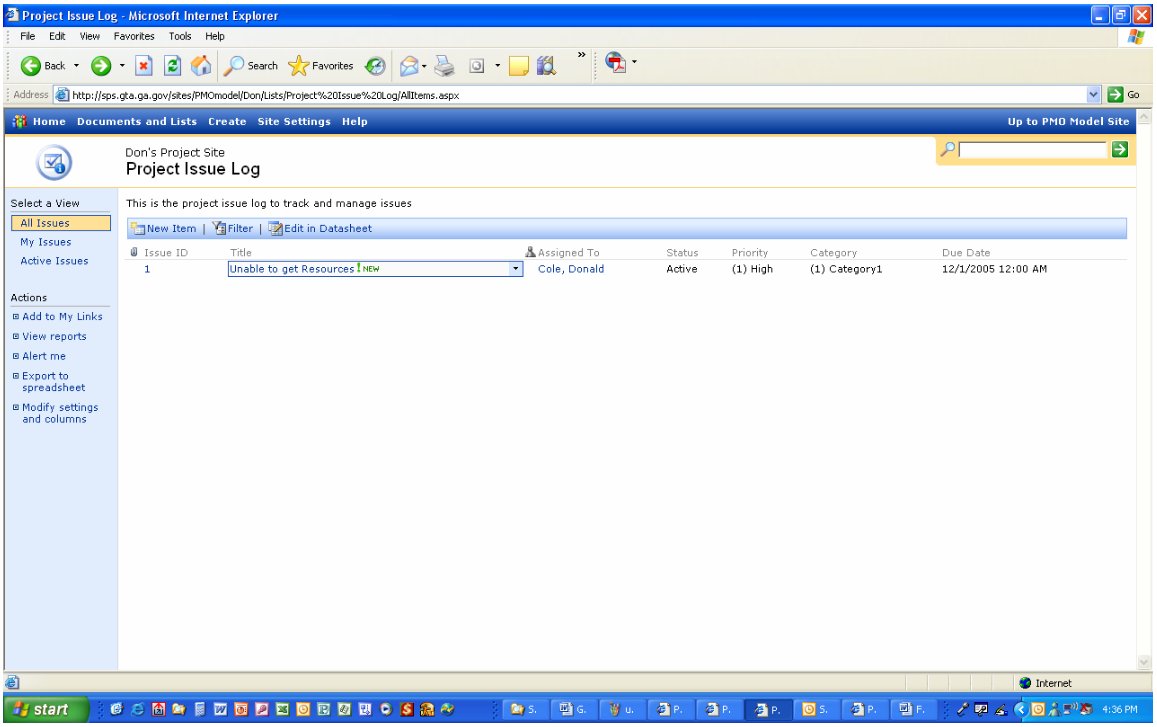
Click on the Project Issue Log to post the first issue.



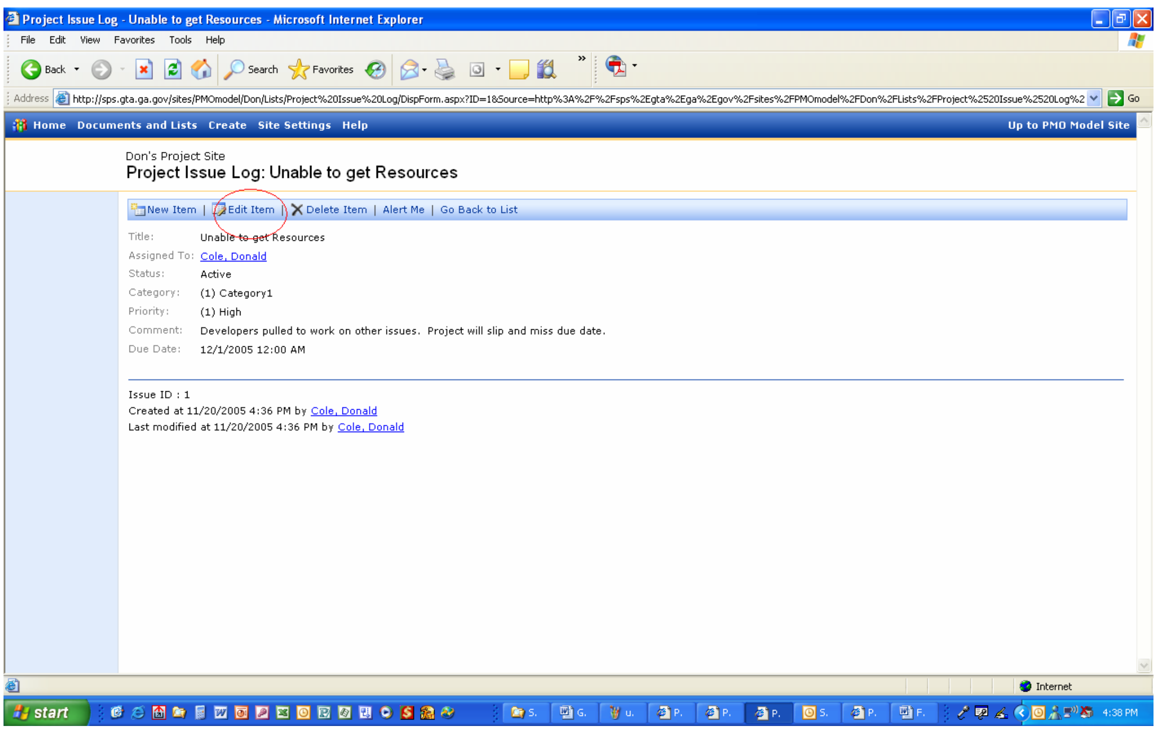
Click on the New Item button to add a new issue.



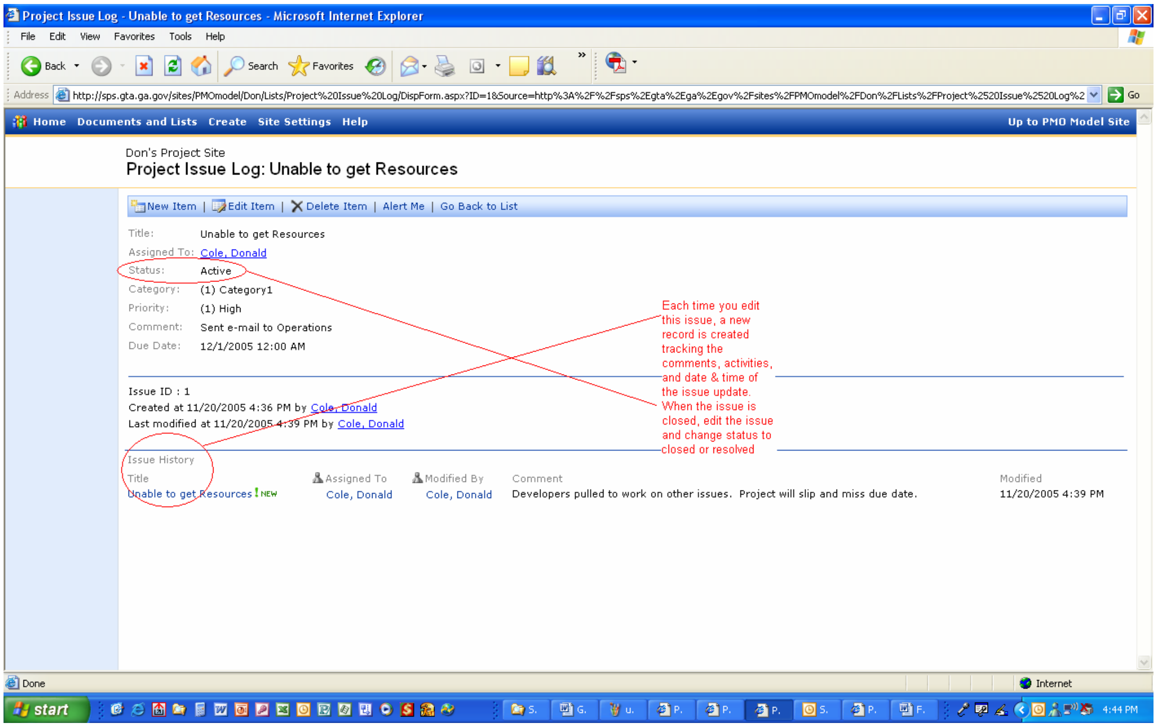
Fill out the information. SharePoint provides a way to measure the types of issues as well as the priority of issues. You should determine and document in your project management plan what the categories (1,2, or 3) mean. Establish a Due Date for the Issue and click Save and Close.



This is how the issue will look. To update the issue with new activity, double click on the Issue Title to open the issue and click on Edit Item as seen below:



When you click on Edit Item, the issue will open and allow you to update the comments. Click Save and Close and you will see that SharePoint saves your activity and maintains an activity trail. You can cut and paste e-mails in the comments box.



The SharePoint Issue Log should provide all the tools necessary to track and manage issues.

Let me share a word about issues and escalation. The first issue you have will likely test your resolve and management of issues when it is time to escalate to the next level. Escalation is often confused with filing a complaint. People sometime take it personally when you escalate an issue to the next level above them. They don't want the hassle of being asked questions by the next level of management and perceive that the escalation is a bad mark on their record. The problem on your end is that you wait a day, then another day, then another day, and finally the issue blows up in your face and you are the one on the hot seat being asked, "why didn't you let us know there was a problem?" Set out a clear expectation of escalation when you communicate the issue for the first time. For example, in the memo or e-mail (always have it in writing in some form even if you initiate it with a phone call or in person), put something like this:

> "Section x.x of the PMP sets forth the issue resolution path. This is a high priority issue and needs a fast track to be resolved. The PM has 2 days to resolve the issue, if not resolved it goes to the [next position] who has 2 days. If it isn't resolved in that time it goes to [next position] who has 2 days and then to the Business Owner. Please let me know if there is anything that I need to do or can do to help resolve this issue."

If you wish to use the Issue Tracking Log instead of the SharePoint tool, you can find a sample in Appendix H.

	Completing the Issue Tracking Log - Appendix H
1.	Date ID: Date the issue is placed on the log
2.	Issue Statement: Describe the issue in one or two sentences
3.	Owner: Every issue must have an owner – a single point of contact
4.	Resolution: How was this issue resolved or what is taking place to resolve it. You may need to create a separate issue memo to track all the activities and reference the memo in the resolution field.
5.	Date Resolved: Date the issue was resolved or closed.

4.10 Process Improvement

Process Improvement closely relates to lessons learned in the project close phase. Throughout the project you should be identifying, documenting, and implementing ways to make things work better. This is far easier said than done. The next time you are in a meeting listen for and count the time you hear "we oughta." Every "we oughta" is a potential process improvement. The key is moving from "we oughta" to "we did it." The Project Management Methodology Library contains several documents on Process Improvement.

5 PROJECT CLOSURE

Well, it looks like you made it! The dream that was on the PowerPoint presentation back at the project initiation phase is now in production. Hopefully that is your experience. So now what? Throughout the project you probably had a few bumps in the road and a few "ah-ha" moments. Now is the time to take a step back with your team and write the story of your project. Go back to your project Charter and PMP. Take a look at the original business, technical, and quality objectives. Did this project accomplish what everyone hoped it would? What did you learn along the way? The Project Closeout Guideline offers some key information on closing a project.

5.1 LESSONS LEARNED

Most importantly at this phase is asking how the lessons learned in this project can help future projects. You may recall that back in step 3 of section 2.9.4 you started the kick-off by reviewing lessons learned from previous projects. If the lessons learned never make their way back around the full circle from project close back to project kick-off, then they may have been lessons but they were never learned.

One way to document Lessons Learned is to take the objectives from the Project Charter and ask stakeholders to score how well the project met the objectives. So, how do you get this information and who should provide it? Schedule a meeting at the end of the project and send an e-mail to all the people who had been involved in the project asking for their input on lessons learned. You probably need to summarize in the e-mail the objectives listed in the Project Charter. Another good idea is to capture lessons learned throughout the life of the project from status reports, issue logs, meetings, and just informal discussions with people involved in the project. Hold a meeting and just brainstorm on lessons learned that can be converted to best practices for future projects. You can find samples of Lessons Learned documents in the Project Methodology Knowledge Base.

5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE CLOSE

You may be finished with the project, but you aren't really finished until you take care of all the paperwork.

- Contracts - If your project involved any contractual agreements, you need to confirm that all deliverables and contract requirements are complete and approved. After confirming that everything is complete, notify the appropriate procurement staff to advise them of the completion of the project.
- Budget – Finalize the cost and advise the appropriate financial staff that they can close the project and reallocate any remaining funds.
- Resource assignments – Notify the appropriate management staff that resources can be assigned to other projects.
- Project Notebook – Go through your notebook to be sure that you have all documents uploaded, scanned, and saved.
- SharePoint – During the course of the project you may have created several SharePoint work spaces for collaboration and document preparation. Confirm that your notebook has the latest version of the appropriate documents and that there are no documents sitting in a work space that should be in a project notebook. Advise the SharePoint Administrator that you have no further need for work spaces and they can be deleted or archived.

5.3 FINAL REPORT

The final report is the story of your project. It should have an executive summary that covers the high level baselines and how your project compared. It should review the objectives from the Project Charter and comment on how you met them. The final report should identify the critical success factors that helped make the project successful. The final report should also identify areas for improvement. This is where lessons learned comes in. Lessons learned can be either things that worked well which would fall under the Critical Success Factors, or things that could use some improvement.

Your final report should also include the final project schedule with baseline compared to actual. You may also want to include the last dashboard report for the critical project review. The purpose of a final report is to step back away from the weeds of the project and take a look back over time. In many cases, you will probably find that your project was far more successful than you may have felt at times.

Finally, even though you may be finished with this project, the report should look ahead to what is next for the project you just completed. The project may be an iterative project where one release leads to another. Either way, your final report will be of help to the group who has to manage the application or system. The Project Methodology Knowledge Base contains a sample Final Report that you may find helpful.

You've done well and it has been a pleasure to be on this journey with you. I hope this guide has been of help. Feel free to share it with others. The Enterprise PMO Team welcomes your suggestions and feedback. Drop us an e-mail at: pmoknowledge@gta.ga.gov.

Appendix A – Agenda & Minutes

Agenda & Minutes
Georgia Technology Authority
[Insert Project Name]

Date :
Time:
Location:

Agenda

Purpose:
Invited:
Host:
Facilitator:

Number	Time	Topic	Objective (s)	Responsible
•			•	
•			•	

Minutes

Attending:

Discussion	
Topic	
1.	
2.	

Key Decisions		
Number	**Decision**	**Owner**
1.		
2.		

Action Items		
Number	**Item**	**Owner**
1.		
2.		

Issues/ Risks		
Number	**Issue Statement**	**Owner**
1.		
2.		

Next Meeting		
Number	**Topic**	**Responsible**
1.		
2.		

Appendix B – Individual Weekly Status Report

GEORGIA TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY
INDIVIDUAL WEEKLY STATUS REPORT
WEEK ENDING – MM/DD/YY

NAME:		**PHONE:**	
MGR:		**OFFICE / UNIT:**	
TASKS DELIVERED AND CURRENT WORK ACTIVITIES WITH STATUS			
1.			
MY PLAN TO DELIVER NEXT WEEK			
1.			
ISSUES REQUIRING MANAGEMENT/EXECUTIVE ATTENTION			
1.			
HIGH POTENTIAL AND HIGH IMPACT RISKS			
1.			
OTHER			
1.			

Appendix C – Project Weekly Status Report

GEORGIA TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY
PROJECT STATUS REPORT
PERIOD ENDING: MM/DD/YY
PROJECT: [NAME]

To: From:

Accomplishments This Period
1.

Accomplishments Planned for Next Reporting Period
1.

Acceptance Log (Open & Current Month)				
#	Deliverable	Submitted	Approved or Rejected	Date

Change Requests (Open & Current Month)				
ID	Description	Date Submitted	Status	Date

Open Issues					
#	Date ID	Issue Statement	Owner	Activity	Date Resolved

Budget						
Project Budget	Planned Expenditures to Date	Actual Expenditures to Date	Variance	Available Funds to Complete	Estimated Funds Needed to Complete	Variance

#	Current Project Risks

Comments
1.

Appendix D – Short Acceptance Form

Georgia Technology Authority

Deliverable Acceptance Form

[Insert Project Name]

DELIVERABLE NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION:
ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA:

Project Manager Approval for Delivery

☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved

Name ____________________ Signature ____________________________ Date ___________

QA Acceptance

☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved

Name ____________________ Signature ____________________________ Date ___________

Business Owner Acceptance

☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved

Name ____________________ Signature ____________________________ Date ___________

Remarks:

Appendix E – Short Delivery and Acceptance Log

[Insert Project Name]
Acceptance Log

#	Deliverable	Submitted	Approved or Rejected	Date
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				

Appendix F - Project Change Request

Georgia Technology Authority

Change Request Form

[Insert Project Name]

Change Request Number and description:				
Basis for Change and Impact to Project:				
Change Request Title:	**Priority (Indicate with an X)**			
Project Area:	**Critical**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**
Sponsored By:	**Verified By:**		**Date Submitted:**	

Status			**Outcome**		
Submitted ☐	**Evaluated**	**Approved** ☐	**Closed** ☐	**Rejected** ☐	**Deferred** ☐

Preferred Resolution:			
Implications of Not Making the Change: •			
Schedule / Timing Change			
Resource Change			
Source of Resource	**Additional Hours Required**	**Resources Available**	**Comments**
Financial Change			
Financial Type	**Original Estimate**	**Revised Estimate**	**Comments**

Project Manager Approval

☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved

Name ____________ Signature ________________ Date _______

Business Owner Acceptance

☐ Approved ☐ Disapproved

Name ____________ Signature ________________ Date _______

Actual Resolution and Other Remarks:

Appendix G – Risk Log

ID	Risk	Status	Potential	Impact	Owner	Target Date	Activities
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Appendix H – ISSUE TRACKING LOG

[PROJECT NAME]: ISSUES TRACKING

NUMBER	DATE ID	ISSUE STATEMENT	OWNER	RESOLUTION	DATE RESOLVED
001					
002					
003					
004					
005					
006					
007					
008					
009					
010					
011					
012					