



# **Project Methodology**

## **Briefing Document**

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## Executive Summary

This document defines a standard project methodology that can be followed to assure the delivery of outcomes to cost and schedule. The systematic application of proven principles is at the heart of a standard project methodology that eliminates the overruns and failed delivery associated with the “take every short-cut known and get nowhere approach”. Based on the Standard Development Life Cycle (SDLC) approach, a three-phase methodology is identified:

- Initiation phase – the project is initiated.
- Implementation phase – where the project actually happens.
- Production phase – the solution is in production.

Whilst iterative steps may be required within each of these phases and sub-projects may exist within a phase, a standard methodology can be applied and followed by projects of all sizes. Work can also proceed in parallel. Within each of these phases, various stages are present:

- Initiation phase – 3 stages:
  - Strategy – the overall business strategy and direction of the project within this context is resolved.
  - Scoping – initial research and scoping of the project.
  - Business Case – development of the business case, budget and other high-level business driven activity.
- Implementation phase – 7 stages:
  - Planning – the project is determined.
  - Requirements – determine requirements.
  - Specification – develop and sign-off on requirements.
  - Development – building and initial testing of the solution.
  - Testing – formal testing of the solution.
  - Deployment – implementation of the solution into production.
  - Integration – integration of the solution into the business.
- Production phase – 2 stages:
  - Support and Maintenance – ongoing support and development of the system.
  - Review and Monitor – ongoing assessment, monitoring, reporting and review.

Remember the methodology is a means to an end and not an end in its own right.

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# 1 Introduction

This document defines a project methodology that can be used to ensure that projects are delivered to time, to budget, to specification and that the required outcomes and benefits are realised. Aimed at all people this document provides summary details on the steps involved.

Section 1 of the document provides the introduction, whilst Section 2 details the background and shows how a standard approach can be used across the enterprise. Section 3 outlines the details of the methodology and Section 4 looks at some supporting fundamentals. Additional elements are discussed in Section 5. The operation of a stabilisation project, an often important but overlooked tool is addressed in Section 6. Supporting information is included in the appendices.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Introduction

Whether an extension to a home is being planned or a marketing campaign is scheduled, a common approach to the design, development, management and implementation of projects is seen. Using illustrated examples, this section of the document explains the common approach.

### 2.2 SDLC – Standard Development Life Cycle

There are many project management, development management and operational management methodologies and frameworks around with differing levels of complexity and bureaucracy. All of these methodologies are based upon and used key steps identified in Standard Development Life Cycle (SDLC). Whilst the complexity and size of the project may impact upon the details of the methodology used, there is a clearly identified minimum number of steps necessary for effective project delivery.

### 2.3 Examples

#### 2.3.1 Extending a House

To ensure that your house meets the continuing needs of you and your family or friends, an extension to the house may be required. As with all things, this just does not happen and some of the steps you may go through are outlined as follows:

- Initiation phase – 3 stages
  - Plan what you want to do - Strategy
  - Cost it and find funding - Scoping
  - Assess the need and justify the extension - Business Case
- Implementation phase – 7 stages:
  - Detailed planning and timings - Planning
  - Draw up plans with an architect - Requirements
  - Agree room sizes, window sizes etc. - Specification



- Arrange for the builder to come in and build it - Development
- Surveys by the local council and building inspector - Testing
- Fit it out with furnishings etc. - Deployment
- Connect electricity and live in it - Integration
- Production phase – 2 stages:
  - Clean the extension and paint it - Support and Maintenance
  - See how it is being used and address future space needs - Review and Monitor

Whilst the detail involved may differ and various sub-steps are required and the logistics of planning inspectors and builders differ, this process is common to most house extension processes.

### 2.3.2 Production of a Marketing Video

The production of a marketing video may seem very different to extending a house and whilst the logistics involved may vary, much of the activity is similar:

- Initiation phase – 3 stages
  - Plan what you want to do in the context of a business need- Strategy
  - Cost it and market research - Scoping
  - Assess the need and justify the video against expected returns - Business Case
- Implementation phase – 7 stages:
  - Detailed planning and logistics - Planning
  - Defining what the video will contain and how it will look - Requirements
  - Provide details to the production company of what they are to do and what is required - Specification
  - Arrange for the production of the video and have it produced - Development
  - Sample market evaluation and review - Testing
  - Mass production and distribution of the video - Deployment
  - Use of the video within business context - Integration
- Production phase – 2 stages:
  - Ongoing production of the video and periodic updates - Support and Maintenance
  - See how it is being used and address audience response - Review and Monitor

Whilst the detail involved may differ and various sub-steps are required and the logistics vary, common steps to that of extending a house exist.

### 2.3.3 Arranging a Conference

The same principles apply to arranging a conference. The following steps can be identified:

- Initiation phase – 3 stages
  - What is the conference for and why it is required - Strategy



- Cost it and initial planning - Scoping
  - Assess the need and justify - Business Case
  - Implementation phase – 7 stages:
    - Detailed planning and resourcing - Planning
    - Define the structure of the conference, who are the speakers and moderators etc. - Requirements
    - Draw up schedules and agendas etc. - Specification
    - Announce conference, register attendees etc. - Development
    - Test lighting, facilities, microphones etc. - Testing
    - Stage the conference - Deployment
    - Run the conference - Integration
  - Production phase – 2 stages:
    - Operational support through the conference to ensure a smooth operation - Support and Maintenance
    - Assess customer feedback and learn lessons for next conference - Review and Monitor
- Again, the details vary and the logistics are different but the basic process is the same.

## 2.4 Commonality of Steps

From the examples of a web site, a house extension and the production of a marketing video, a commonality of steps can be seen:

- Initiation phase – the project is initiated.
- Implementation phase – where the project actually happens
- Production phase – the solution is in production

Within each of these phases, various stages are present:

- Initiation phase – 3 stages
  - Strategy – the overall business strategy and direction of the project within this context is resolved
  - Scoping – initial research and scoping of the project
  - Business Case – development of the business case, budget and other high-level business driven activity
- Implementation phase – 7 stages:
  - Planning – the project is determined
  - Requirements – determine requirements
  - Specification – develop and sign-off on requirements
  - Development – building and initial testing of the solution
  - Testing – formal testing of the solution



- Deployment – implementation of the solution into production
- Integration – integration of the solution into the business
- Production phase – 2 stages:
  - Support and Maintenance – ongoing support and development of the system
  - Review and Monitor – ongoing assessment, monitoring, reporting and review

Whilst iterative steps may be required within each of these phases and sub-projects may exist within a phase, a standard methodology can be applied. For smaller projects, some of the steps may be rolled into one. For larger and complex projects, additional steps may be required. Some steps run in parallel and others are dependent upon steps being completed. Either way, world's best practice applies across the process. This approach is commonly called Standard Development Life Cycle (SDLC), Figure 1.

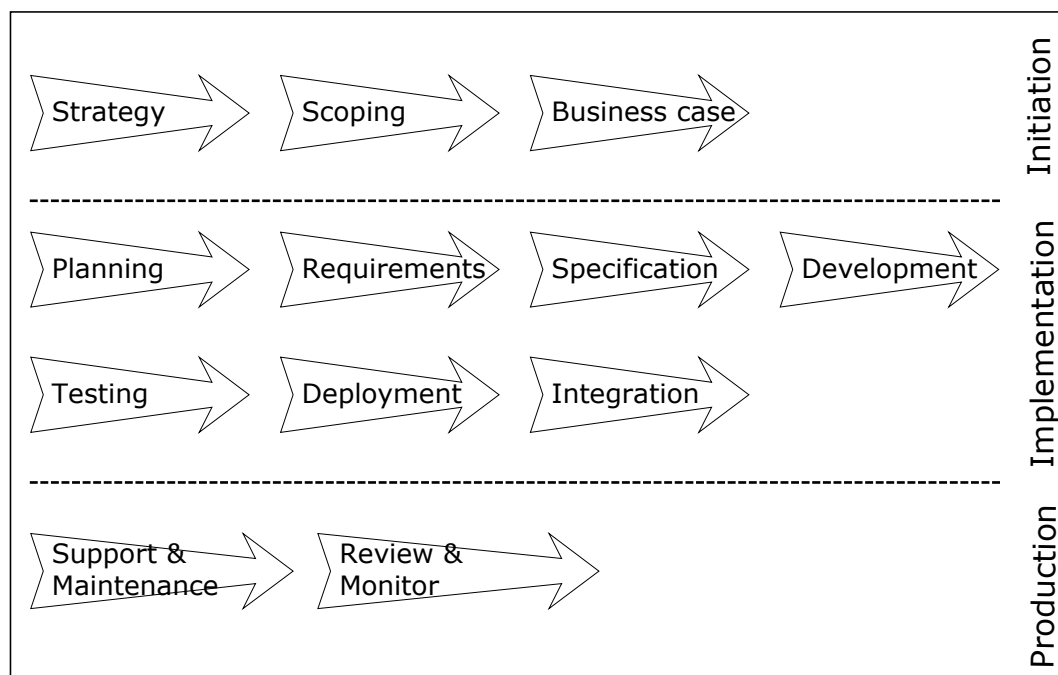


Figure 1. Standard project methodology.

## 2.5 Benefits of standard methodology

The benefits of a standard project methodology include:

- Guaranteed service delivery.
- Stops the “take every shortcut known and get nowhere fast” approach.
- Ensures that all stakeholders are involved and impacts properly assessed.
- Basis of informed decision making.
- Mitigation of risks.
- Controls scope creep.



- Funding gates and sign-off ensure accountability at all levels.
- Decreases the duplication of effort and lower costs.

## 3 Methodology Details

### 3.1 Introduction

This section of the document looks at the major elements of the standard methodology. The intention is not to specify exactly what is required but to provide an operational framework for each of the phases:

- Initiation phase – the project is initiated.
- Implementation phase – where the project actually happens
- Production phase – the solution is in production

Within each of these phases, various stages are present:

- Initiation phase – 3 stages:
  - Strategy – the overall business strategy and direction of the project within this context is resolved.
  - Scoping – initial research and scoping of the project.
  - Business Case – development of the business case, budget and other high-level business driven activity.
- Implementation phase – 7 stages:
  - Planning – the project is determined.
  - Requirements – determine requirements.
  - Specification – develop and sign-off on what is required.
  - Development – building what is required, including any trials and initial testing required.
  - Testing – make sure that it all works as it should.
  - Deployment – implementation of the solution into production.
  - Integration – integration of the solution into production.
- Production phase – 2 stages:
  - Support and Maintenance – ongoing support and operation.
  - Review and Monitor – ongoing assessment, monitoring, reporting and review.

### 3.2 Initiation

The first phase of the standard project methodology is the initiation phase. This is where the project is initiated or commenced and much of this is pre-planning and research. It is after this phase, that a decision to proceed can be made.



### **3.2.1 Strategy**

At the heart of any activity is strategy. A clear resolution of strategy is a business must and without this, any project is doomed to fail. Until the strategy is signed-off, the project should not proceed.

### **3.2.2 Scoping**

It is during this stage that scope of the project and the required outcomes are determined. At this stage of a project, many people do not know exactly what they want and there is a tendency to say “we need to do something, this is something, let’s do it”. By taking the time now to address issues properly, considerable time and effort is saved further down the track. A clear sign-off of agreed objectives and outcomes is required before the project can proceed.

### **3.2.3 Business case**

The last stage of this initial phase is development of the business case. This should include the justification, the expected cost and likely return. If the business case does not justify the project, then it does not proceed. A justification for further research and investigation may be required.

## **3.3 Implementation**

The second phase of the standard project methodology is the implementation phase. This is where the project proceeds out of the research phase into becoming a fully resourced, fully funded project.

### **3.3.1 Planning**

Without detailed planning a project cannot proceed. The initiation phase has set the groundwork for resolving the details. Detail planning is somewhat dependent upon the requirements and thus the stages mentioned are not entirely sequential.

### **3.3.2 Requirements**

This is one of the most important stages of the project. Time spent now in accurately establishing what the user wants, agreeing the scope and resolution of issues saves considerable costs subsequently, Figure 2. The failure to resolve requirements and plan up front is one of the main reasons for ongoing delivery failure. A sign-off is essential before the project can proceed.



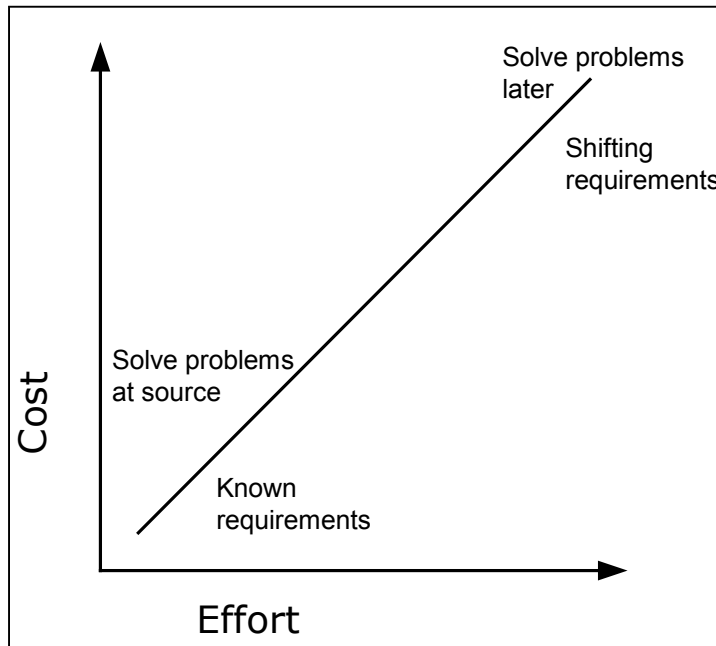


Figure 2. Resolution of requirements lowers costs.

### 3.3.3 Specification

Once the requirements are known, two issues need to be resolved: (i) which of the requirements can be met and (ii) how they will be met. This is the purpose of the specification stage. By resolving issues at the specification stage and sign-off, subsequent scope creep is minimised and it is easier to manage expectations. The specification is conducted in response to the legislative issues that need to be met, the needs of customer, market forces and cost, Figure 3.

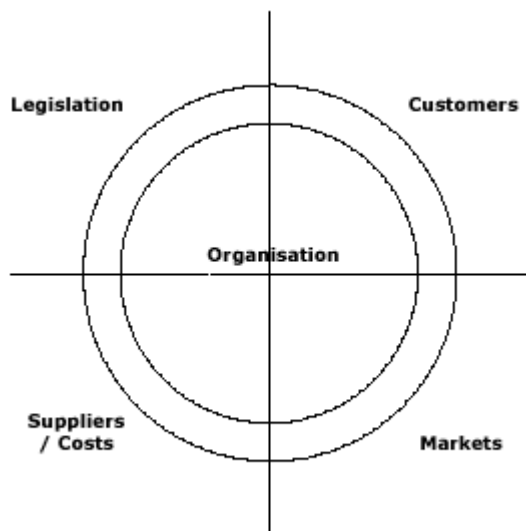


Figure 3. Drivers to be used in defining a specification.



### **3.3.4 Development**

With a considerable investment in requirements and specification, the development stage should become easier and faster. One of the problems encountered with development is managing any change in scope creep. With sign-off in the previous stages and a clear understanding of what is required and expected, this can be managed.

### **3.3.5 Testing**

Part of the testing stage will have been done in development, when the solution was tested against the specification, but testing also forms a discreet activity in its own right. Acceptance of the solution is dependent upon performance against testing criteria. It is a good rule of thumb to allow (1/3 of the time for requirements and specification, 1/3 for development and 1/3 for testing).

### **3.3.6 Deployment**

With acceptance of the solution, set by the testing criteria, the next stage is its deployment.

### **3.3.7 Integration**

Deployment is not the end of the project. It is the operation of the solution that is important. This may include such things as promotions, education, training, new policies and procedures etc. It is that delivers the required outcomes.

## **3.4 Production**

The third phase of the standard project methodology is the production phase. This marks the last phase of the project methodology and is where the solution is used as an every day tool.

### **3.4.1 Support and maintenance**

Any solution needs to be supported and maintained. This is ongoing for the life of the solution.

### **3.4.2 Review and monitor**

Part of the ongoing activity is to monitor and report performance and to review the success of the exercise. Review may also form the basis of further activities.

## **4 Underlying Fundamentals**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Underlying any standard project methodology are some key business issues and assumptions that need to be addressed. This section of the document notes these issues, which include:

- Customer driven;
- Peer review;
- Signoff;
- Realigning, not reinventing;



- Documentation as an expected outcome.

## 4.2 Customer Driven

Whether it is a sales brochure that has flopped or apartments that are not selling, one of the ongoing reasons for failure is that the project did not meet the needs of the customer. This not only highlights the importance of requirements but the importance of the strategy, scoping and business case. Projects need to be driven from the top down by the customers' needs.

## 4.3 Peer Review

The second important concept is peer review. This is where your peers review work before proceeding. This ensures that it is correct and the best it can be. Peer review is a positive process, you gain experience and valuable intellectual property is added. It is not a negative process and it is not about criticism. No one person can know it all. **All work is subjected to peer review.**

## 4.4 Signoff

An extension of the peer review is the importance of signoff. Signoff is used to ensure accountability. Signoff is not a barrier to progress. If a person was asked to signoff and they do not have time to do the review or have nothing to contribute, then they can state this at the time of signoff. Conversely, they can take the time required to review, accept responsibility and signoff. Either way, progress is still achieved.

## 4.5 Realigning

An important element is that of optimisation and realignment. The methodology is not about discarding what already exists and reinventing, it is about addressing shortcomings and value adding to what already exists.

## 4.6 Documentation

From the design and building of a Boeing 747 through to a marketing campaign, there is a need for quality documentation. The benefits of documentation are widely recognised and include:

- a vehicle for driving cultural change and business optimisation,
- a mechanism for accountability and discipline,
- sharing intellectual property,
- reduced risk,
- elimination of bottle necks and points of dependency.

The reality, however, is that documentation is often omitted. Documentation needs to be an expected outcome, with time and resources allocated accordingly.



## 5 Additional Elements

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous sections have covered many aspects of a standard approach to project management, including some underlying principles. Associated with any project are additional elements needed to support it. These are discussed in this section and include:

- Communication.
- Training.
- Reporting.
- Financial.
- Escalation.
- Risk Management.
- Stabilisation Projects.

### 5.2 Communication

At the heart of every successful project is effective communication across all levels. Communication needs to be included within projects as a key component with time and resources allocated. The outcomes from communication need to meet performance and quality criteria like any other aspect of the project.

### 5.3 Training

The benefits of training are widely known. The cost of ignorance is often overlooked. Training is required across the project for all those involved. Again, it should be an expected outcome.

### 5.4 Reporting

The significance of quality reporting of results, progress and issues is widely recognised. Whether it is the status of a project reported via traffic lights or daily summaries, effective and efficient reporting highlights what is going wrong and not what is going right. You can not action good news. Effective reporting of actionable items is the cornerstone of effective reporting.

### 5.5 Financial

The need for financial management is self explanatory. One aspect that is often overlooked, particularly with IT projects, is the cost that comes from “there is never enough time and money to do it once properly but there is always time and money to do it badly many times over”. Fiscal responsibility within this regard should be part of the project management and reporting.

### 5.6 Escalation

A procedure for escalation and resolution of issues is required.



## 5.7 Risk Management

The reality of any activity is that there are risks associated with it. The need is to identify the risks and manage them. Not all scenarios will occur but it is certain that a good few of them will and at the worst time. Risk management is about moving beyond the qualitative to the quantitative and having plans in place to deal with them. Risk management should be an integral part of the project and not an after thought done in crisis management mode.

## 6 Stabilisation Projects

After deployment, a series of issues may arise. Development may become bogged down. Rather than proceeding with further developments and ongoing projects, a Stabilisation Project should be implemented. This involves the following:

- Freeze implementation – put a freeze on some or all aspects of the project.
- Consolidation – consolidate around what is current.
- Policies and procedures – implement stopgap policies and procedures for the period of the stabilisation project.
- Education – provide training and support.
- Quick wins – address the most pressing issues, e.g. top 50 user gripes.
- Planning – plan for what happens after the stabilisation project.

Stabilisation projects should follow the standard methodology as much as possible and should run for short periods, maximum of 6 months. If the issues cannot be resolved in this time, then a standard project methodology will not solve your problems; alternative actions are required.

