

Project Closing

Phase 4 - Closing + Maintenance

At this point it is highlighted that an **innovative product is actually never finished**. Especially products that incorporate machine learning technology **need regular testing and maintenance** to ensure that the developed product **will stand the test of time**. Therefore, the maintenance process is enormously important and the **responsibility for it must be clearly taken by someone** (project team or client). However, this does not exclude the fact that the project cannot be closed. Closing a project completely and correctly involves several steps. The checklist below helps to ensure that the project is closed successfully.

6 Steps to Closing a Project

1. Transfer of All Deliverables

The first step involves completing and handing over the project deliverables to the client. The roadmap or the project plan help to identify all services rendered and then ensure that all tasks have been fully completed and handed over.

2. Confirm Project Completion

In order for the project to be officially considered complete, all stakeholders must agree to close and sign official signatures stating that they have fulfilled all parts of the project plan. Only when everyone has given approval for the project deliverables is the project completion confirmed.

3. Review All Contracts and Documentation

Once you have completed the project handover and the client has received the approvals, you can start finalizing the contracts. To ensure that all parties have been paid for the work and there are no outstanding invoices, all project documents must be reviewed in advance.

4. Release Resources

Further, all formal resources must also be dismissed from the project. Involved suppliers, contractors, team members and other partners should be informed about the end of the project and officially released. In the process, all payments must be settled and commitments completed.

5. Conduct a Post-mortem

A post-mortem, or project review, is one of the most valuable steps in the project closeout process. It involves reviewing the successes, failures, and challenges of the project and identifying opportunities for improvement in the future. A performance

review of the project should be conducted at the beginning of the post-implementation review. This involves calculating the performance of the project in terms of cost, schedule, quality, customers, increase in sales, profitability, cost cutting etc.

The following questions can help:

- Was the budget adhered to?
- Did the team members involved use their time wisely?
- Were there issues with quality or compromises along the way?

In order to obtain feedback on project performance, a survey or meeting with the project management team should be conducted. Individual responses can be used to draw more comprehensive feedback on project performance.

The project team should ask themselves the following questions:

- What went well?
- What were the challenges or failures?
- How well did the team communicate?
- Did the team follow the specified processes and plan?
- Was the client satisfied with the results?
- What would you change or improve on future projects?

With project performance and feedback on the project, lessons learned and opportunities for the future can then be identified.

Pro tip: Applying imagery can help analyze team performance so that projects can be done better and faster in the future.

In this step, it is important to keep in mind that **it is not about assigning blame for mistakes**. It is a learning opportunity for everyone to improve on future projects.

6. Archive Documentation

Once the project wrap-up is complete, all documentation (contracts, project plans, outline, costs, schedule, etc.) can be finalized and filed in the company archive for future reference.

Notes on project performance and opportunities for improvement should be recorded in a traceable and clear manner. This is key to ensure that the same mistakes are not made on similar projects in the future.

Other sources

<https://www.lucidchart.com/blog/nailing-the-project-management-closure-process#:~:text=This%20is%20the%20stage%20where,management%20processes%20have%20been%20executed.>