

Monitoring Scope

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson explains how a project manager evaluates success criteria defined in the scope document. Two areas of focus for this lesson include:

1. Monitoring Scope

The project manager is responsible for confirming deliverables, meeting requirements, and establishing the criteria in the project scope.

Monitoring scope is necessary for a project's success, so it's a critical role. If the project manager discovers that deliverables are not meeting standards, then the project manager will initiate action to address the issue or to revise the scope criteria.

IN CONTEXT

A project is tasked with creating a video game that focuses on teaching players how to drive a car. The project manager discovers that players are crashing cars more than originally anticipated.

What responsibility, if any, does the project manager have in this scenario? What areas of scope would be impacted by this discovery?

If the primary goal of the game is to teach people to drive, then the project manager would need to add or change resources to fix the driving portion of the game. To make this change, the budget will probably increase, but if the work is necessary for project success, then it is the right path to take.

Can you think of another outcome to this situation?

Let's say the goal of the game was merely to have fun. The project manager may suggest a change in the scope requirements that states the driving portion is not necessary.



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It's important for the project manager to keep the overall goal of the project in mind and not just focus solely on specific deliverables.



Monitoring Scope

The process of ensuring that work being performed is meeting expected deliverables and satisfying requirements.

2. Scope Creep

If a change is made to scope requirements, the project manager would need to make sure the changes can be made without significant harm to the schedule or budget. The project manager would also need to initiate a change request with the stakeholders and project sponsor.

When too many changes continue to be made throughout a project's life cycle though, this can cause a project to fail or be canceled. This is called **scope creep**.

When a project has requirements that are difficult to define, scope creep is a danger. New requirements and deliverables are often added to the project far past the planning phase. This can also occur when new stakeholders, who have new opinions, are added to a project after the initial phases.

The project manager must be diligent when defining scope, even if the requirements are difficult to define. And if the project manager expects many changes to be made, then they should consider processes that handle scope changes better, such as iterative development.

Scope creep can also occur at the project team level. This occurs when the project manager has not communicated the requirements clearly to the team.

➔ **EXAMPLE** What if a programmer thought a video game needed both off-road and highway driving, but the game only focused on road travel? That programmer might add features that were not needed for the final product, inadvertently increasing budget and time.

When changes occur on a project that cause deliverables to differ from the scope, the project manager should be aware of those changes before they happen, so that change management and approval procedures can happen. Any changes outside of the project manager's knowledge is a risk to the project.



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Unexpected or unneeded work will impact the schedule and the budget. That is why it is critical for a project manager to monitor tasks and costs closely to find indications of scope creep.



SUMMARY

Scope creep can impact the project team level when a project manager has not communicated requirements clearly. **Monitoring scope** will help reduce the risk of delayed deliverables or producing a deliverable that does not meet expectations.

Source: This work adapted from Sophia Author Jeff Carroll.

**Monitoring Scope**

The process of ensuring that work being performed is meeting expected deliverables and satisfying requirements.

Scope Creep

Uncontrolled expansion of a project scope through the creation of additional requirements or deliverables.