

# How to Write a Project Scope Statement

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As project managers, one of our most important tasks is to manage scope. A great project scope statement serves as a baseline to determine what work the project team is authorized to do and a guide for handling scope change requests.

According to the Project Management Book of Knowledge (PMBOK) 6th Edition, 2017, the Project Scope Statement is, "...the description of the project scope, major deliverables, assumptions, and constraints." (Page 154).

As a small part of the larger scope document, it's important to take the time to create this statement as precisely as possible.

## Focus, Focus, Focus

A scope statement focuses on the putting boundaries around solving the problem. In order to do that, you must ask many questions and really understand the answers.

Start with your sponsor and the main stakeholders. What are their expectations in terms of deliverables and time frames? Explore the main deliverables with the stakeholders, determining what is acceptable to deliver in what time frame.

At this stage you're not promising anything - just trying to understand what your constituency wants and by when.

In addition, you'll want to look at your requirements documentation, the project charter, and any other documents you might have already begun producing for this project.

## The Problem Statement

If we go back to the problem statement we talked about in the [How to Write a Problem Statement](#) blog post, let's develop a sample project scope statement for that project.

The problem is stated as, "Sales managers are spending 20% of their time each week receiving and compiling sales reports for upper management, reducing the number of hours spent on mentoring sales staff, lead generation, and closing business. This is a productivity issue and ignoring it results in decreased sales and missed revenue targets over the past 3 months. XYZ Company is committed to reducing the time spent compiling reports to no more than 10% of the sales manager's time in any week.

By examining the current sales report processes for duplicative and wasted effort, XYZ Company can determine how to reduce the amount of time sales managers spend on compiling reports."

# A Sample Project Scope Statement

The scope statement might look something like this:

The Sales Report Project team will review the current sales report processes of the XYZ Company for wasted effort and low-value work and prepare a report with recommendations to reduce time spent compiling reports to no more than 10% of the sales manager's time. The report is due within 30 days of the approval of this project.

## The Deliverables

- A report containing the issues found and the team's recommendations for streamlining the sales reporting process. These recommendations should be specific and include several options for process improvement.
- A meeting of the stakeholders and the project team to convey the results and discuss further actions within 7 days of the report's publication.

## Out of Scope

- The project is not authorized to fix or change the sales reporting process.
- Project team members are not authorized to spend more than 15 minutes reviewing or testing any one specific tool.

Note that this project is a study of the problem with recommendations to achieve a specific goal, not the solving of the problem itself. Also, this team is authorized to look at reducing the time spent compiling reports - not changing or eliminating the reports.

Could the team recommend reducing or eliminating some reports? Sure - but that is not their main focus.

Of course, the more complicated your project, the more detailed your scope statement might be. I would suggest that scope statements over one page are probably not high level enough. In your scope document, you can provide more detail about the deliverables and results, particularly if your project is an implementation or product development.

# A Project Scope Statement Template

The XYZ Project will (implement, replace, review, build) (a product, service, or result) within (time frame) after the project is approved.

In Scope: (deliverables, results, services)

Out of Scope: (deliverables, results, services)

Acceptance Criteria (if appropriate): (the criteria for approving the resulting product, result, or service).

## **Project Scope Statement Approval**

You'll probably revise the scope statement several times until you get something your sponsor, stakeholders, and the team can agree on. That's fine. The point of this is to define the parameters of your project as precisely as possible at the outset. If the scope is defined correctly, the remainder of the project planning is easier and more accurate.

What are your scope statements like? Do you have any favorite templates? Let us know in the comments below.