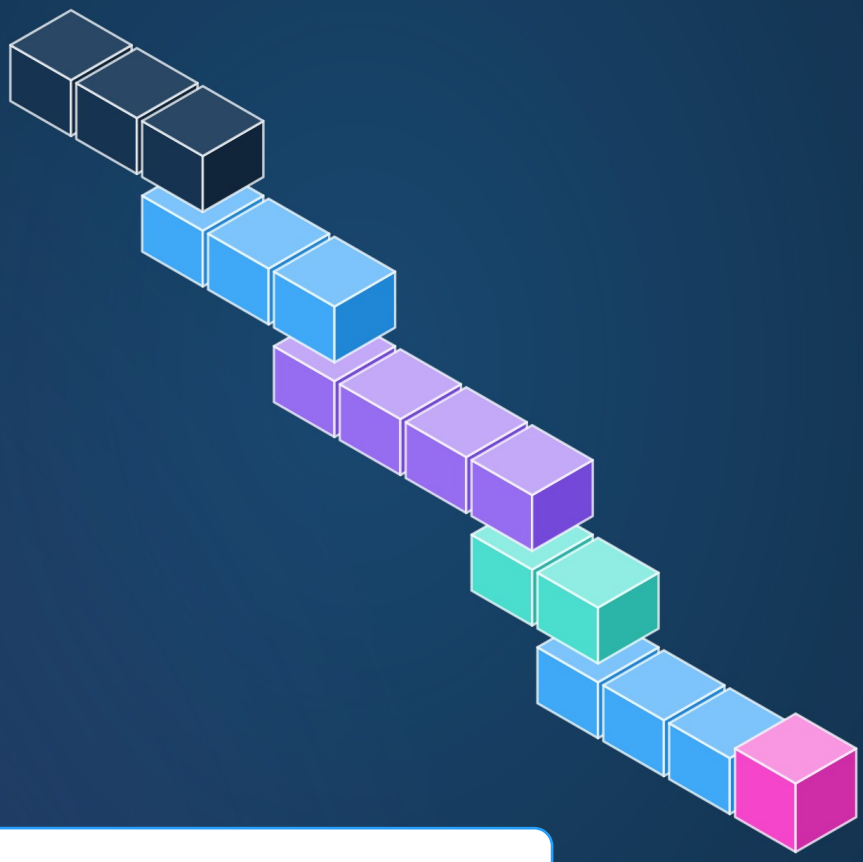
OPERATIONS INSIDER

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THE MANAGER'S PROJECT MANAGEMENT QUICK START CHECKLIST

Score one project in twenty minutes, with evidence you can point at.



CLEAR GOAL. REAL PLAN. ONE OWNER.

START HERE

How to Use This Check

One project, one hour with the project manager, twenty-five statements, one number.

01 LOOK	02 SCORE	03 ACT
Sit with the project manager and open the real documents: charter, plan, RACI, risk register, last status. Do not score from memory.	Score each statement from 0 to 4. Without a document or a board you can point at, the score is 2 or lower.	Pick the weakest block and agree one action with an owner and a date before you leave.

The Scoring Scale

POINTS	MEANING
0	Not in place.
1	Happens occasionally, depends on individuals.
2	Partly in place, not consistent across projects.
3	Mostly in place and visible in the project.
4	Consistently in place, visible, reviewed and improved.

> **WHY ONE PROJECT**
>
> **An organization does not manage projects in general. It manages this project, with these people, against this date. Score a running project of medium size, then repeat the check at the next gate.**

Before You Start

- **Project:** a running project with a team of five to forty people and a duration of three to eighteen months.
- **Evidence:** the charter, the schedule, the RACI, the risk register, the last two status reports and the change log.
- **Tone:** you check the system around the project, not the project manager. Ask how a decision was made, not who got it wrong.

THE CHECK

01 Mandate and Scope

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
01	The project has a written charter with purpose, objectives, scope, budget, key dates and sponsor, signed before planning starts.	
02	Every objective is measurable with a value and a date, and the team can name the three most important ones without looking.	
03	Scope is written as in scope and out of scope, and the out of scope list is as specific as the in scope list.	
04	Stakeholders are listed with their interest and influence, and each one has a named contact in the project.	
05	Acceptance criteria for the final result are agreed with the customer or user before the work starts.	

02 Planning and Structure

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
06	A work breakdown structure breaks the result into deliverables and work packages, each with an owner and a definition of done.	
07	The schedule links work packages with dependencies, and the critical path is known and shown in every status.	
08	Milestones and gates have dates and written exit criteria that are checked, not assumed.	
09	The resource plan shows hours per person and per month against their real availability, including other projects.	
10	A cost baseline exists per work package, and actual cost is booked against it at least monthly.	

THE CHECK

03 Roles and Communication

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
11	A RACI matrix assigns exactly one accountable person to every deliverable and decision.	
12	The project manager has written authority over scope, schedule and budget decisions within defined limits.	
13	The steering committee meets on a fixed rhythm, decides on escalations within one week and records its decisions.	
14	A communication plan states who receives which information, how and how often, and it is followed.	
15	Decisions, open points and agreements are recorded in one decision and action log that everyone can see.	

04 Delivery Approach and Control

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
16	The delivery approach is chosen per workstream: plan driven where requirements are stable, iterative where they are not.	
17	Iterative workstreams run fixed sprints or a Kanban board with work in progress limits, a review and a retrospective.	
18	Status is reported with a traffic light based on schedule, cost and scope data, and every amber or red has a recovery plan.	
19	Risks are kept in a register with probability, impact, owner and response, and the top five are reviewed every week.	
20	Changes to scope, schedule or budget follow one change request process with impact assessment and a recorded decision.	

THE CHECK

05 Closure and Learning

NO.	CHECK	SCORE 0 TO 4
21	Deliverables are accepted against the agreed criteria, and the acceptance is signed.	
22	The handover to operations or the next phase is planned with documents, training, open points and a support period.	
23	Lessons learned are collected at every gate, not only at the end, and turned into changes of the standard approach.	
24	Benefits named in the charter are measured after closure by a named owner on a set date.	
25	All projects of the organization are visible in one portfolio view with status, resources and priority.	

Your Result

BLOCK	POINTS	OUT OF
01 Mandate and Scope		20
02 Planning and Structure		20
03 Roles and Communication		20
04 Delivery Approach and Control		20
05 Closure and Learning		20
TOTAL		100

YOUR RESULT

Read the Number

The total tells you how much the project depends on luck. The weakest block tells you where to start.

TOTAL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT TO DO FIRST
0 to 39	Heroics. The project lives in the head of one person and in email threads.	Write the charter on two pages and get it signed. Build a first work breakdown structure.
40 to 59	Planned, not steered. A plan exists, but status is opinion and changes slip in.	Find the critical path. Report status from data. Start the change log.
60 to 79	Managed. Plan, roles and risks work, depending on the project manager.	Fix the steering rhythm, write escalation rules, review the top five risks weekly.
80 to 100	Capable. Projects are delivered by a system, not by heroes.	Hold the level. Feed lessons into the standard approach and steer the portfolio.

Your Three Priorities

NO.	WHAT TO IMPROVE	FIRST ACTION	OWNER	DUE

THE RULE FOR EVERY ACTION

Owner and date, or it did not happen. Repeat the check at the next gate and compare the blocks, not the feeling.

What to Do Next

NEXT STEP	WHAT YOU GET
PROJECT MANAGEMENT STARTER KIT	The guide for the first 30 days of a project, plus the project plan workbook with work breakdown, Gantt chart, RACI, risks and status.
PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE BUNDLE	The full playbook, the kickoff workshop pack, eight project templates, the multi-project Excel system and a ready-to-use workshop deck.

Both are available at operationsinsider.com.