



*A **project** is a series of activities designed to achieve a specific outcome with clear **start and end dates**.*

One of the biggest mistakes made when managing projects is not officially closing them. Too often projects seem to go on forever. Participants become disengaged and unclear on what happened as a result of their efforts. Projects move into operations with blurred roles and responsibilities. Results are never clearly documented.

If you have outlined the scope of your project with specific deliverables, successfully planned your project, and finally implemented your project, your last important step is to officially end your project.

### **Why Should I Officially Close My Project?**

Officially closing your project has several benefits:

1. Ensures that you delivered what you promised to the sponsor.
2. Provides the opportunity to identify what you learned during this project so you can improve the implementation of your next project.
3. Allows you to recognize and appreciate your team members for the work they have done and officially release them to work on other projects.

### **How Do I Effectively Close Project?**

Three simple steps will help you effectively close your project:

1. Gain approval from your sponsor on your deliverable(s).
2. Conduct a Lessons Learned with your team members.
3. Celebrate your success!

The first step in closing a project is ensuring that you have delivered what you promised. Depending on the nature of your project, you have multiple options for demonstrating your deliverables and obtaining approval. These options could include a demonstration, a documented report, a physical deliverable, a milestone, a formal meeting, etc. Ensure that your sponsor accepts your deliverable(s) and that your team has outlined the next steps and responsibilities, if any, following the project.

Once you have approval, you and your team can identify what you learned during the process by conducting a “lessons learned” session. This session could be as simple as brainstorming what went well during the project and what could be improved on the next project. Document these lessons and ensure that others involved in projects are able to access them for their projects.

Finally, celebrate your project’s success with your team members. Let them know they were successful in delivering what the sponsor wanted, that you appreciated their help, and that they have completed their work on this project. This step encourages a sense of accomplishment for team members and helps motivate them to become engaged in future projects.

Closing a project is just as important as initiating and planning it – now you can take what you’ve learned and move on to implement your next successful project.