



Self-Awareness quiz: Are you a strong project manager?

Project management commentators have written at length about the processes, techniques, and best practices required to manage projects successfully. This quiz attempts to boil down what we consider to be the most important skills required to manage projects in order to help you evaluate your own Project Management skills. The statements in this quiz have been designed so as to you to answer “true” or “false,” even though there may be shades of grey as far as your response to some of them is concerned. Your confidence in applying a particular skill, or the lack of using it, does not mean that you’re a bad manager, but it does identify areas where your project management capabilities could be improved.

Answer the following questions with either true or false

Look at the following project management attributes and then answer “false” or “true” to each one. Be honest in your assessment of your skills & experience.

Question	True	False
<p>You don't plan well because you regard yourself a doer rather than a planner</p> <p>Many people consider themselves responsive and decisive. When they're given a job, their first tendency is to jump in and tackle the problem. Even though “planning” can be a form of doing” try and make a distinction between the two in this case.</p>		
<p>You try to manage with minimal collaboration and interaction with customer and team members</p> <p>This is a classic illustration of the individual who feels more comfortable working alone. Many people are more productive this way. This person works by themselves on the project plan, hands out work assignments, and validates that the work is done. However, they tend to be uncomfortable with a lot of human interaction.</p>		
<p>You tend to make excuses for problems rather than take responsibility</p> <p>Some project managers appreciate that they're responsible for most of what goes on within a project. Others prefer not to perform at that level. To them, there's always a logical explanation why things don't get done. What's your inclination? Do you try to explain problems away or do you take responsibility for the good and the bad and make every effort to get rid of the causes of problems and failures?</p>		
<p>You're an order-taker for your business client, and don't use scope change management</p> <p>Do you believe that client-focused behaviour means that you take on whatever the client wants?</p> <p>Or do you call upon scope change processes to manage changes?</p>		
<p>You let problems fester until they become disasters</p> <p>Let's face it. There are many procrastinators among us. Do you regard project problems to be nuisances that you just hope will go away? Do you focus on problems only after they start to adversely impact upon your project?</p>		
<p>You don't create a work plan or you don't keep it up to date</p> <p>This is widespread on many projects. Many project managers go through the exercise of creating a project work plan, but they then never update it. Or they discard it somewhere in the project life cycle. If they're asked how much work remains, they have a hazy idea but they can't calculate the remaining effort.</p>		



<p>You would rather deliver poor quality than admit you need more time</p> <p>Many projects finish on time and within budget but only at the cost of quality. The managers of these projects trust they'll deliver on time and then fix the problems in production.</p> <p>Are you one of them?</p>		
<p>You present people with surprises at the last minute rather than manage expectations</p> <p>This trait shows either a tendency to be overly optimistic about what can be done in a short time-span or a conscious act to conceal information and hope things work out.</p> <p>The first situation can be caused by inexperience, but in the second instance, the project manager is concealing information as part of a deliberate tactic, perhaps related to the next question below.</p>		
<p>You communicate the bare minimum information required</p> <p>It's surprising how many project managers think that communication is one of the burdens of the job. Their project team might be making heroic efforts, but when it comes to communicating status, they want to provide the bare minimum. They also don't have regular status meetings. If your project requires extensive communication, would you welcome the challenge or be irritated by all the people who want to know what's going on?</p>		
<p>You ignore risks</p> <p>Some risks are evident from the start of a project. Other risks show up later while the project is proceeding. Some project managers don't even consider risk management to be a part of their project responsibilities. Other managers can recognize risk, but they do nothing about it until it's too late.</p>		
Totals:		

Grade yourself

Add up the statements you said were true of you. We would grade the numbers as follows:

0— if you did not answer “true” to any category, you have a good chance of success as a project manager.

1— you're not perfect, but you're not hopeless either. Work on the category so that you can answer “false” in the future.

2— we're being really charitable here. This is a borderline score. Depending on what the two categories are, you may be able to overcome the weaknesses through additional focus. Work on the two categories in question to turn them around.

More than 2—If you answered “true” to three or more categories, you have work to do on your project management mindset. This doesn't mean you're a bad person. But given your answers to the questions posed in the categories, you need to develop your knowledge of good project management practices or examine your overall motivation for taking on project management work. Perhaps you can focus on those areas for improvement and take the test again at a later date.

A perfect score doesn't guarantee perfection

Of course, these questions have been designed to identify weak project management practices. Answering “false” to all 10 items doesn't guarantee your success. However, answering “true” to any of them shows an area that could place a project at risk—especially larger and more complex projects.