

# Ensuring Project Launch Readiness



Traditional project management deems a project successful with the “launch” of the product. However, effective project management considers the product's success within the organizational context. Thus, a “New Market” launch project should be deemed a success only when the organization achieves the goals it established for the product or service.

**Competent project management** requires that the program or project managers in charge of the launch project create a transition or readiness team to evaluate and prepare the organization for the launch and its success in operational mode -- i.e., transition from a project to business as usual.

**The goal of the readiness team** is to ensure that, once the product or service is operational, the various business units can work with and support it. Depending on the scope of the initial project, this goal could be limited to a single business unit or to the entire enterprise. More extensive programs require the readiness team's involvement long before the launch date.

Like every endeavor, this is a unique project and, as such, requires it to be managed and led by a competent project manager familiar with the scope and role of a readiness team. However, the complexity of ensuring organizational readiness requires more than relying solely on experience or memory to achieve success.

We assert that the readiness team should develop a series of checklists to ensure the launch is a success. With years of experience in helping organizations execute enterprise initiatives, we know the power of the checklist. NASA has been launching space missions for years using them. Everyone from mission control to the astronaut follows their readiness checklist (so do all airline pilots). As aptly stated in the book “The Checklist Manifesto,” checklists provide us with the minimum explicit steps necessary while instilling a discipline of higher performance. They are the most effective way to ensure nothing falls through the cracks.

Equally important is the checklist's contribution to enhancing discussion among parties when singular decisions are too complex to make. While a checklist is not the whole solution, using them with project management techniques is not merely helpful but a valid requirement for success in readiness initiatives.

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