



A Quality Experience

If you're in Sydney on 15 Sep 2009 you can catch us presenting at the QESP Meeting @ Republic Hotel, L2 69 Pitt Street Sydney

Down The Drain: How To Avoid Wasted Effort & Boost Your ROI From Process Improvement

<http://www.qesp.org.au>



Template Suite

We've released a new version of our template suite. Many thanks to those clients and associates involved in the beta program. The templates are on our downloads page:

zenkara.com/download.html



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Project Kickoffs Improve Project Performance

We were recently asked about why project kickoffs are important – surely people could just read the Project Management Plan and Project Charter.

Nice in theory – rather more difficult in practice. It's always better to get everyone in a room (physical or web-based) and make sure everyone understands the fundamental points to the project.

But what to include in a kickoff meeting?

Name of the project & Project manager

Scope

Objectives
Customers
Expected results

Team

Sponsor
Stakeholders
Organizational structure

Schedule

Approach
Key phases
Milestones
Deadlines
Key deliverables

Customer Engagement

What will the customer do
How will we interact with them?

Budget

How much money?
How much effort?

Risks & Opportunities

What could go wrong?
What synergies or opportunities (cross/up-sell)

Other Project Matters

What tools, etc do we have
What platforms are we using
Is there a current architecture?
What gets stored where?
Where are the project practices?
On the wiki/intranet?

Reporting and Meetings

How will we report progress? (THIS IS CRITICAL)
Do we need to meet regularly?
How do we raise problems and issues? To who?

But of course this doesn't mean you need to spend 3 hours going through these topics – in fact the shorter the better. It's always good to include pizza, donuts or some other nutritious motivator. The important thing is to get everyone together in the one place and the one time and to share a vision. It also assists greatly that everyone is given this info beforehand – but is not critical.

We've seen some project kickoffs use a day-countdown clock showing workdays till delivery. Others use a pinboard and wall to communicate storyboards, issues etc. It also serves the purpose of reducing the emails that fly around. Establishing a wiki for the project also accomplishes the goal. Other types of intranet pages often take far too long to get produced and are more hassle to update. Keeping things current is key.

A great idea is to get someone to write down the Q&A that occur during the kickoff. These aid communication during the project by clarifying certain points, expectations or by raising issues that need to be addressed.

We've also seen kickoffs that are one page long...

