

What project management tools & techniques should be used?

#5. Scope Unclear

As the project team is planning the WBS and work assignments, there is a lot of disagreement about what work is actually to be included in this particular project. For example, when issues of software testing, user training, and documentation came up, some people thought these things should be part of the project while others thought that since the customer didn't specifically ask for it that it should not be included.

Also, as the project team creates the WBS, some deliverables listed in the scope statement still have a great deal of confusion regarding specifications – which can greatly affect how much work is involved. Also, in this WBS creation meeting the team has some new creative ideas for the project that would add some work but would also be very valuable.

The schedule and the budget are clearly specified. What should the project manager do to clarify the scope?

#5 Instructor Notes

This is a standard case of lack of clarity in the scope of the project. See step 7-8 in the workbook.

The scope statement should be the basis for future project decisions, including the criteria used to determine the balance of the project constraints. The scope statement should help you by identifying the project goals and major project deliverables. However it is rarely clear enough so that you can make your detailed WBS, project schedule and estimates directly from it. More customer/sponsor input and communication is often needed during the creation of the WBS.

But here are a few considerations:

If the scope was totally confusing, it could be that the document was either lacking or on the opposite side of the coin, it may have included piles and piles of information, but nothing that clearly and succinctly defined the scope. When this problem becomes evident, the project manager must go back and define the scope of the project and get it validated with the sponsor. While taking this step the PM should also review the change management plan and validate all of the other important project information. If scope was unclear the other factors may need to change as well.

It is common for the project scope to change so ensure that change management is handled professionally, and when needed make addendum to the scope statement.

Every large project must live with some ambiguity while the WBS is in the planning phase (and this can last through almost the entire project).