

*What project management tools & techniques should be used?*

## *#6. Stakeholder expectations*

On the last couple of projects the project manager thought everything was going great, until the end, when project stakeholders surprised her with negative feedback.

For example, she recently had an 8-month long project where she had monthly stakeholder meetings. All of these meetings went very well. She thought it was all smooth sailing...until the last meeting, which was the project closure meeting. Through the project the stakeholders were all very amiable and polite, signing off on everything that she presented, including project change orders. The meetings usually ended by the sponsor thanking her for the good work she'd been doing. However, in the final meeting, when she turned over the project deliverables and announced that the project was done, she asked for their final feedback. It was as if she was talking to different people. They didn't agree that the project was well done and they criticized her management of the whole project from the start.

This didn't just happen once, however, it happened in similar ways on her last two projects as well.

This has shaken her confidence. What is making them change their attitude at the end? When she asks them this, they say they must have been unhappy the whole time, but just didn't communicate it. Why can't stakeholders be trusted for honest feedback during the project? Is this a normal problem for other project managers? Why are stakeholders doing this?

## *#6 Instructor Notes*

This is a standard case of missed expectations – especially in regards to project quality. The stakeholders' needs were probably not clearly understood in the beginning and the project plans were probably not shared in enough detail with the stakeholders.

They had confidence that you were of the same mindset with them, until the product deliverables came in with the proof that you had different expectations.

What project management tools and techniques can stop this from occurring?

1. **Solicit stakeholders input.** See step 11 of the workbook.
2. **Create WBS.** See step 13 of the workbook.
3. **Quality plan.** See step 21 of the workbook.
4. **Risk plan.** See step 23 of the workbook.
5. **Communication plan.** See step 25 of the workbook.
6. **Quality assurance.** See step 33 of the workbook. Did you clearly understand what the quality criteria was, and did you validate along the way that you were achieving it? Or were you only showing them minor parts, where they were unable to get a view of the whole project outcome?
7. **Manage stakeholders.** See step 45 of the workbook.
8. **Formal acceptance.** See step 48 of the workbook. Is it potentially the abrupt way you are telling the stakeholders that the project is done without going through a proper process of deliverable approval and acceptance first?