

Project Timeline

1. Project Overview

Project name	{{Project name}}
Sponsor	{{Sponsor / decision-maker}}
Project manager	{{Project manager}}
Start date	{{Start date}}
Target end date	{{Target end date}}
Status	{{Not started / On track / At risk}}

Keep this block on page one so anyone can see the project, its owner, and where it stands at a glance. Name one accountable project manager and one sponsor who can unblock decisions.

2. Objectives & Success Criteria

- {{The outcome this timeline delivers, with a launch date — e.g. "Ship v1 to all customers by Nov 6"}}
- {{The deadline or event that drives the schedule — why these dates and not later}}

Write objectives you can measure — “launch the new checkout by Q3 with under 1% error rate”, not “improve checkout”. If you cannot tell whether it is done, rewrite it.

3. Scope

In scope

- {{The phases this timeline covers — e.g. design, build, beta, launch}}
- {{The deliverable that marks the end of the timeline}}

Out of scope

- {{Work that happens after launch and is tracked on a different plan — e.g. ongoing iteration}}

Naming what is out of scope is what actually prevents scope creep. Be explicit about the work people will assume is included but is not.

4. Milestones & Timeline

Milestone	Owner	Target date	Status
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{{Phase}} 1 — Kickoff & plan locked}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 1 — Requirements / design signed off}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 2 — Build starts}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 2 — Feature-complete / code freeze}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 3 — Beta / pilot begins}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 3 — QA & fixes complete}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 4 — Launch / go-live}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started
{{Phase}} 4 — Post-launch review}}	{{Owner}}	{{Target date}}	Not started

Milestones are checkpoints, not tasks — a handful of dates that prove the project is moving. Each should be a clear “done / not done”, with one owner.

5. Tasks & Work Breakdown

Task	Owner	Start	Due	Status
{{Lead task for the current phase}}	{{Owner}}	{{Start}}	{{Due}}	Not started
{{Lead task for the next phase}}	{{Owner}}	{{Start}}	{{Due}}	Not started

Break the work into tasks small enough to track in a week or less. Give each an owner and a due date; a task with no owner will not happen.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Name	Responsibility
Project manager	{{Name}}	Owns the timeline and reports status against the dates
{{Phase owner / role}}	{{Name}}	{{The phase or milestone they drive}}

Assign responsibilities to roles so the plan survives a team change. Be clear who decides, who does the work, and who needs to be kept informed.

7. Risks & Mitigation

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation	Owner
{{The dependency most likely to push a date}}	{{High / Med / Low}}	{{High / Med / Low}}	{{How you protect the date}}	{{Owner}}
{{A risk to the launch milestone specifically}}	{{High / Med / Low}}	{{High / Med / Low}}	{{Mitigation}}	{{Owner}}

List the few risks that would actually derail the project, rate impact and likelihood (High/Med/Low), and name the action and the owner. Review this table at every status check.

8. Budget

Item	Estimate	Actual
{{Main cost line}}	{{Estimate}}	{{Actual}}

Contingency	{{Estimate}}	{{Actual}}
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Estimate the main cost lines and add a contingency for the unknowns. If your project has no budget, keep the section and write "N/A" — reviewers expect to see it.

9. Approval

Project Manager Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____	Sponsor Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Both sign-offs confirm the plan, scope, and budget are agreed before work starts.