

"Managing" Outsourced Projects

Outsourcing of project work is more common today than ever. However, even though you outsource the work, you cannot completely outsource your obligation to make sure the project is progressing smoothly. If all goes well with the outsourcer, you do not have much work to do. Unfortunately, in many instances, the outsourcing vendor does not perform against expectations. If that happens, you want to know about it as soon as possible. For the purposes of this discussion, let's assume that your company has outsourced a project, or a portion of a project. They have also asked you to manage the relationship to ensure the vendor performs as expected.

Many people are not sure what they should be doing when they are asked to manage an outsourcing relationship. Part of the uncertainty is because some of the project roles are reversed when you outsource work to a third-party. On a normal internal project, the Project Manager assigns the work and manages issues, scope, risk, quality, etc. The Project Manager makes sure things are done on time and that the project is progressing as it should. They are held accountable for the success of the project. Other people perform a quality assurance role to make sure that the project progresses as it should. A formal quality assurance group may do this, but it is more likely that the sponsor and the manager of the Project Manager perform this function. They are not interested in knowing all the details of what is going on, but they need to ask the right questions to feel comfortable that things are progressing as they should.

This paper provides a summary of the full document. The full two-page white paper contains the following sections. It is available to licensed TenStep users.

What to Look For at the Beginning

Ongoing Questions