



AMERICAN PRESS TECHNOLOGIES, Inc.

1800 Midway Road, Menasha, WI 54952

920-830-8057

TIPS for DETERMINING PROJECT SCOPE

The first key to a successful project is to properly establish the scope and quality standards required to maximize the benefits and return on investment. Scope defines the project. It states what is included and what is not. We will address the following points:

- Importance of scope
- Define duty and life cycle needs
- Define a level of automation
- Machine image
- Process knowledge
- Price/scope relationship
- Maximizing return
- Level of detail

While the significance of these points will vary by the nature of the project under consideration, we believe they are important factors in any project.

Importance of scope

Because determining the proper scope can be the most difficult part of planning a project, it is often not given the consideration it deserves. Generating the maximum return for your investment requires choosing the optimum scope. If the scope is too limited, the return is limited. Setting the scope too large costs resources the project cannot support. Finding the proper balance requires careful consideration, and considerable process and technological knowledge. Time taken to acquire the knowledge, examine the process, and visualize the finished project is time very well spent. Care needs to be taken to insure your decision is based on all relevant information -- favorable or not.

Define duty and life cycle needs

When planning a project, the expected duty and life cycles of the equipment need to be determined. Will this equipment only operate a few hours a month? Will the equipment be used to produce a specialized product that will be obsolete in a year? If so, a 10-30% savings resulting from using less expensive and less durable parts is probably a good idea. Will the equipment be expected to operate 24/7? If so, an extra 20% spent on more durable parts is essential for a successful project.

Define a level of automation

How much to automate a process should be determined by the frequency of its use, its cost, and the skill level of operators and maintenance people. This evaluation needs to be made on a feature-by-feature basis. Automation can increase or decrease the required skill levels. It can save time -- or cost time if it is not reliable. Whatever the situation, the scope needs to define what is to be, and what is not to be automated.

Please visit our WEBSITE.

<http://www.americanpresstech.com>

Machine image

Machine image is defined by scope. Are the quality standards to be used in the construction of the equipment appropriate to the environment and culture where it is to be installed? Will it look out-of-place? Will your employees or customers perceive it as junk or overkill?

Process knowledge

Creating a proper project scope does require up-front process knowledge. To make cost effective decisions, a thorough understanding of your needs, processes, and available technology is essential. Carefully creating and documenting a project's scope can be a big help in determining what is needed, what is not, and how to best accomplish the objectives. A well written scope will enable everyone to clearly visualize the end result. There should not be any gaps, ambiguities, or disagreements about the finished product.

Price/scope relationship

Price is a meaningless number without being tied to a defined scope. Too often, decisions are made based on price without any consideration for scope. Different people make different assumptions. When this happens, project failure is almost assured. Accurately defining needs and properly calculating project cost prior to issuing any purchase orders almost guarantees a successful project. Regardless of how difficult, or time consuming it is to properly select a scope, failure to do so almost guarantees a poor outcome.

Maximizing return

The proper scope is the one that produces the maximum benefit for the resources invested. Careful examination and comparison of several options is required to determine the best scope. Often, it helps to examine the big picture. Is this project addressing a localized problem? Or, is it a merely a symptom of a much larger issue? Project scopes that correct symptoms without correcting underlying, larger issues seldom maximize return and often lead to disappointment. If the best option produces an adequate return for the investment, getting the project approved should not be a problem. If it does not produce an adequate return, abandon the project.

Level of detail

The scope should provide enough detail to insure the requirements for a successful project are met. It needs to remove assumptions and ambiguities so everyone envisions the same finished result. The scope should not be so detailed that the big picture is lost in the details. Too much detail can stifle vendor creativity and force unnecessary inefficiencies. Fortunately, industry standards and ratings exist for most needs and can usually be used to simplify specifications.

Regardless of who the vendor of choice is, we believe you should expect and demand a clearly defined scope with which you are comfortable before proceeding with any project. A project scope with which we are comfortable is an integral part of all of our proposals. We attribute our outstanding success rate to this discipline.

Please visit our WEBSITE.

<http://www.americanpresstech.com>