

Blueprint Creation Tips

Productizing your service means creating a rich, detailed Blueprint that will empower repeatable, high-quality delivery of project-based services. Blueprints are not simply project templates but real, 3-dimensional service execution frameworks that contain workflows, schedules, task guides, document templates, effort estimates based on historical data, role definitions, risk registers, costing information, and approval rules.

Here are some quick tips, based on eTask's experience of multiple service productization that will help you plan and build your Blueprints, highlighting the most important decision points and guidance on the process of information gathering and structuring:



DISCOVER

1. Get the Big Picture

- Look at the forest, not the trees
- Look at your processes from end to end:
 - *What activities are repeatable?*
 - *Where are the decision points?*
 - *How are the phases ordered and structured?*

2. If you don't think you have any common processes, think again

- Examine GANTT charts for projects to assess commonality
- Look for common patterns, structures and activities

3. Don't drive by looking in the rear-view mirror

- Now is a good moment to evaluate if the way you always ran a certain type of project is the correct one or if there is scope for simplification and streamlining



ANALYZE

1. The 80/20 Rule

- Every project is NOT different: All projects delivering similar services should have the same lifecycle and framework
 - *80% of project components are repeated in every project of a certain type*
 - *20% differ based on requirements, scope and specifications*
- Find what's similar about the approach, the framework, the process of designing and delivering each project
 - *Reduce the risk and uncertainty of that 80% by focusing on what is common, repeatable and consistent*
 - *Empower the Project Manager to concentrate on the 20% of what's really important and different in each project*

2. Delivery is paramount

- Clearly define the set of deliverables, both Internal and external
- Create templates/examples to guide consistency

3. Top-down vs Bottom-up

- The top levels of a Blueprint (e.g., WBS structure, phases, lifecycle) should be designed with a top-down approach to avoid being bogged down by details
- However, at task level, especially for complex tasks, bottom-up definition ensures realistic planning



BUILD

1. Recycle and Reuse

- Try to create re-usable objects (Tasks, Activities, Document templates) that can be applied several times during the project lifecycle (e.g., Tests, User Cases, Review Meetings). This ensures efficiency and consistency

2. Microscope vs. Binocular

- A very mature process can have tasks that drill down to the most detailed level of operation
- A less mature process can proceed from a 'higher altitude'
- The level of detail can also be a deliberate choice, ideally balancing the need for consistency and governance with the risk of micro-managing and overprescribing

3. Don't forget the instructions

- Important/complicated tasks should contain appropriate guides - not only formal instructions or examples but also tips and consideration based on experience
- Review with resources that have performed those tasks in the past - they can provide a first-person perspective



USE & LEARN

1. Lay down the law

- The best project plan is worthless unless it is followed properly in the actual implementation
- Good governance and control rules should be built-in to help compliance with the best-practice framework
- Precise definition of skills required, instructions, approval levels, roles and process flows empowers effective control
- Quality is built at every level of a process, from basic tasks to general phases

2. Learn by doing

- Identify deviations from original (e.g. efforts and costs, new or deleted activities/tasks, modified guides and instructions)
- Update Blueprint where deviations are core-process changes, not when they occur for one-off reasons
- Record qualitative feedback from users to support new implementations

3. Relax: perfection is a process, not a state

- Blueprints cannot be expected to be perfect and cover every detail and possibility but to evolve naturally and mature a bit more every time a new project based on them is executed
- The secret of a successful Blueprint is to achieve a robust framework covering 80% of a certain process, leaving enough flexibility to the project managers to tailor each project instance to the customers' needs while making sure that the most important steps and engagement rules are implemented and respected.

Bottom Line

- **Productizing can help you reduce costs and improve margins by increasing the repeatable success of your project-based-services**
- **Blueprinting your process is an essential component of Productizing it**
- **When Blueprinting, look at creating complete but agile processes that can guide and help service delivery**
- **Creating a good Blueprint requires a little time but delivers huge benefits**
- **Stop improvising, start Blueprinting**