Project kickoff meeting agenda

A project kickoff meeting agenda sets out what the first full meeting of a new project must settle: purpose, scope, roles, risks and the first decisions. This kit gives you a timed 90-minute agenda with facilitator instructions, scope questions, a roles and decisions sheet, a risk and decision log, and a filled one-page kickoff brief from a fictional training programme.

90 minutes | 4–14 participants | Online and adaptable in person

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The outcome

By the end of 90 minutes the group has a one-page kickoff brief that names the purpose, three to five success measures, what is in and out of scope, one decision owner for scope changes, the five largest risks with owners, the decisions already made and the date of the first check-in.

Before the session

- For project leads, facilitators and trainers who open a new project or programme with 4–14 people, such as a client training programme, a system rollout or an internal change. Hold the kickoff within the first two weeks, before detailed plans are fixed.
- Meet the sponsor for 20 minutes first. Agree the purpose in two sentences, the fixed constraints such as budget, dates and required rules, and the decisions the sponsor keeps. Ask the sponsor to attend at least the first 30 minutes.
- Send the pre-read three working days before the meeting. Ask each person to bring one success measure, one risk and one question about scope. Share the agenda with the output of each segment.
- Prepare the scope sheet, the roles and decisions sheet and the risk and decision log in one shared document, and choose a note-taker. Turn on captions, send materials early for people who use screen readers, and offer a way to add points in writing or in chat.

Included in this kit

A facilitator run of show, participant worksheets with real tables, reference tables, debrief questions, adaptation notes and a follow-up plan. Use the editable Word copy to tailor examples and prompts before delivery.

Original material by Superglue. Timings are suggestions; adjust them to your participants. This resource has not been independently evaluated.

What is inside

- Kickoff pre-read
- Scope sheet
- Roles and decisions sheet
- Risk log
- Decision log
- Filled example: one-page kickoff brief
- Filled example: risk log
- Facilitator section: run of show, reference tables, debrief and adaptations

Kickoff pre-read

Send this three working days before the meeting. Short answers are enough. The facilitator collects them before the meeting and groups them for the agenda.

Your name and your role in the project

One success measure that someone could check on a date

One risk, or an assumption that nobody has checked

One question about scope that you need answered in the meeting

What you need from others in the project to do your part

Scope sheet

Write one item per row. For each item that is not yet decided, name the person who decides and the date.

Project name, and the purpose in two sentences

_____

_____

In scope	Out of scope	Not yet decided: who decides, by when

Roles and decisions sheet

One row per role. Each deliverable needs one owner. Write a name only when that person has agreed to the role.

Role	Name	Owns	Decides	Must be asked before a decision	Kept informed
Sponsor					
Project lead					
Decision owner for scope changes					
Subject expert					
Trainer or facilitator					
Coordinator or producer					
Representative of the people the project is for					

Risk log

Rate likelihood and impact from 1 (low) to 3 (high). Score = likelihood × impact. Give each of the top five an owner and a next step with a date.

#	Risk or unchecked assumption	Likelihood 1–3	Impact 1–3	Score	Owner	Next step and date
R1						
R2						
R3						
R4						
R5						

Decision log

Record each decision with the person who made it. Write when the team should look at it again.

#	Decision	Who decided	Date	Revisit if
D1				
D2				
D3				
D4				

Filled example: one-page kickoff brief

A fictional training programme, written up by the note-taker after a 90-minute kickoff with the sponsor, the project lead, the provider's lead trainer and five other people.

Item	What the group agreed
Project	New-manager essentials: a programme for 40 newly promoted managers in operations, delivered with an external training provider.
Purpose	Give new managers a shared, practical start: running one-to-ones, setting weekly priorities and preparing a first performance conversation.
Fixed constraints	Budget agreed. Four online modules of two hours on Tuesdays between 3 November and 8 December. No sessions in the last two weeks of December.
Success measures	1. By 8 December, at least 34 of 40 managers have attended three or more modules (sign-in record). 2. By 15 January, each manager reports at least one planned one-to-one using the guide (follow-up form). 3. Evaluation replies from at least 60% of attendees at each module.
In scope	Four live modules, a one-to-one practice guide, a follow-up form after four weeks, and a report to the sponsor in January.
Out of scope	Changes to the performance rating process, training for senior managers, and a new learning platform.
Not yet decided	Whether modules are recorded: the sponsor decides by 13 October. Cohorts mixed or split by site: the project lead decides by 16 October.
Decision owner for scope changes	The sponsor (head of operations). The project lead brings each change request with its effect on cost and dates.
Decisions made today	D1 Modules run on Tuesdays, 13:00–15:00. D2 Pre-work is limited to 20 minutes per module. D3 Attendance is recorded with the training sign-in sheet.
Working rhythm	A 30-minute check-in every Thursday at 09:30. Decisions go in the shared log. Urgent questions go to the project chat.
First check-in	Thursday 8 October, 09:30. Open items first: recording decision, cohort split and risks R1 and R2.

Filled example: risk log

The top five risks from the same fictional kickoff, with scores calculated as likelihood × impact.

#	Risk or unchecked assumption	Likelihood 1–3	Impact 1–3	Score	Owner	Next step and date
R1	Managers cannot leave the floor because nobody covers their shift.	3	3	9	Operations coordinator	Agree shift cover with site leads by 16 October
R2	Examples feel office-based to site managers.	2	2	4	Lead trainer	Collect three real one-to-one situations from site managers by 20 October
R3	The provider’s trainer changes between modules.	1	2	2	Project lead	Confirm named trainers in the contract by 9 October
R4	Assumption: all managers have a laptop with a camera and headset.	2	2	4	IT coordinator	Check the equipment list by 16 October
R5	The January report depends on follow-up replies that may be low.	2	1	2	Project lead	Schedule the follow-up form and one reminder now

Facilitator run of show

1 Open with the purpose and the outputs | 5 minutes

Show the agenda with the output of each segment. Say: “By the end of this meeting we will have a one-page brief that we can all point to.” Name the decision owner, and explain that a disagreement that cannot be settled today goes in the log with a decider and a date. Confirm the break and the end time.

2 Introductions linked to the work | 10 minutes

Each person takes 40 seconds for three things: their role in the project, what they bring, and one question they need answered today. With 14 people this fills the 10 minutes. The note-taker lists the questions so that the group can check at the close that each one was answered or given an owner.

3 Purpose and success measures | 15 minutes

The sponsor states the purpose and the fixed constraints in three minutes. Give four minutes of silent writing: each person drafts one success measure that someone could check on a date, such as “by 8 December, 34 of 40 managers have attended three modules”. Group similar measures for five minutes and agree three to five in the last three minutes. Record a measure that nobody could check as an open question.

4 Scope: in, out and not yet decided | 15 minutes

Use the scope questions. Collect items for eight minutes in three columns: in scope, out of scope and not yet decided. Spend the other seven minutes on the not-yet-decided column: for each item, record who decides and by when. Do not try to settle every item today; a named decider and a date is enough.

5 Roles and decisions | 15 minutes

Complete the roles and decisions sheet. For each role, write the name, what the person owns, which decisions they make and who must be asked before a decision. Check that each deliverable has one owner. Name the decision owner for scope changes and the route for escalations. Do not give a role to someone who is absent without their agreement.

6 Break | 5 minutes

Five minutes away from the screen. The facilitator and the note-taker check the brief for gaps and move open items into the decision log.

7 Risks and assumptions | 12 minutes

In groups of three or four, spend five minutes listing what could stop the project or make it late, including assumptions nobody has checked. Each group gives its two largest risks. Rate each from 1 to 3 for likelihood and impact, and give each of the top five an owner and a next step with a date. The score supports the discussion; it does not predict what will happen.

8 First milestones and working rhythm | 8 minutes

Agree the first three milestones with dates, how the team will meet, such as a 30-minute check-in every week, where documents and decisions are stored, and the channel for urgent questions. Record the date of the first check-in.

9 Read back and close | 5 minutes

The note-taker reads the brief aloud: purpose, measures, scope, owners, risks and decisions. Check the list of questions from the introductions: each one is answered or has an owner. Confirm who sends the brief and by when. Ask each person for one word about the project, or a pass.

Reference tables

90-minute project kickoff meeting agenda

Times assume a 09:00 start. Each segment ends with something written down.

Time	Min	Segment	What the group produces
09:00	5	Open with the purpose and the outputs	Agreed outputs, decision owner and end time
09:05	10	Introductions linked to the work	A list of questions to answer today
09:15	15	Purpose and success measures	Three to five measures that can be checked on a date
09:30	15	Scope: in, out and not yet decided	Scope sheet with a decider and date for each open item
09:45	15	Roles and decisions	Roles sheet with one owner per deliverable
10:00	5	Break	—
10:05	12	Risks and assumptions	Top five risks with owners and next steps
10:17	8	First milestones and working rhythm	Three milestones and the first check-in date
10:25	5	Read back and close	The agreed brief, and who sends it by when

Scope questions to ask

Pick the four or five that fit your project. Ask them in the scope segment, or send them with the pre-read.

Question	Why it matters
Who is this for, and who is not included?	Stops the audience growing without a decision.
What will exist at the end that does not exist now?	Turns the purpose into deliverables that people can check.
What is fixed: dates, budget, rules or tools?	Separates constraints from preferences before planning starts.
What are we deliberately not doing?	Makes the out-of-scope list visible so the team can point to it later.
Which open decision would change the plan most if it went the other way?	Shows which open items need a decider and a date first.
What does the project need from people outside this room?	Names dependencies before they become delays.
What would make us pause or stop the project?	Agrees in advance what a serious problem looks like.
How will someone ask for a change to scope, and who decides?	Gives the scope sheet a route for change instead of a new debate each time.

Debrief and next steps

Questions for reflection

- Which success measure can we check today, and which still needs a starting figure?
- Which not-yet-decided item would change the plan most, and is the person who decides it in this room?
- Which risk did we rate low because nobody here owns it?

Adapt the session

- For a 60-minute version, send the scope sheet and the risk log as pre-work, shorten the introductions to five minutes, and spend the meeting on the not-yet-decided items, roles and the top three risks.
- For groups larger than 14, run the scope and risk segments in parallel groups with one note-taker each, and bring back only the open items and the top risks.
- Online, keep one shared document on screen and paste each segment's question in the chat. Give silent-writing time before open discussion so that people who think in writing or work in a second language can contribute. Make cameras optional.
- If the sponsor cannot attend, record their fixed constraints in the pre-read and send the brief for approval within one working day. Ask for a reply by a set date; do not treat silence as approval.

After the session

Send the one-page brief within one working day and ask each owner to confirm their line. At the first check-in, review the not-yet-decided list and the top five risks before any status update. Look at the success measures again at each milestone, and record every change of scope in the decision log with the date and the person who decided.

Questions people ask

What should be on a project kickoff meeting agenda?

Purpose, success measures, scope, roles and decision rights, risks, first milestones and how the team will work together. Each item should end in something written down, such as a measure, an owner or a date.

How long should a project kickoff meeting be?

60 to 90 minutes for most internal projects with up to 14 people. This agenda runs 90 minutes with a five-minute break. The adaptation notes include a 60-minute version that moves the scope sheet and the risk log to pre-work.

Who should attend a project kickoff meeting?

The sponsor, the project lead, the people who will do most of the work and a representative of the people the project is for. Ask the sponsor to attend at least the first 30 minutes, so that the purpose and constraints come from the person who owns them.

What is the difference between a kickoff meeting and a team charter workshop?

A kickoff settles what the project will deliver and who decides. A team charter workshop agrees how the team will work together. For a long project, run the kickoff first and a charter session within the first month.

What happens after the kickoff meeting?

Send the one-page brief within a working day, ask each owner to confirm their line, and start the first check-in with the open decisions and the top risks.

What is included in the free and editable files?

The open PDF has the pre-read, the scope sheet, the roles and decisions sheet, the risk and decision log, a filled kickoff brief and risk log, and the 90-minute facilitator plan. Subscribers also receive the editable Word file, an Excel workbook with calculated agenda times and risk scores, and a CSV of the agenda.

Use and sharing

Free to use and adapt in your own training sessions, including paid client work. Do not resell or redistribute the unmodified download as a standalone product. Share the resource page instead.