[Name of Project] - Project Proposal

Project Manager: This person has the primary role in planning and executing the project
Sponsor: This person has the authority to move the project forward in the organization
Prepared by: [names]

Revision History – *(There is no need to fill this out until after the proposal has been reviewed, agreed upon, and then revised.)*

Revision date	Revised by	Approved by	Description of change

Project Goal

The project goal states the desired results in a way that is S.M.A.R.T. (**S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-Bound)

Problem/Opportunity Definition

The problem statement should be as factual as possible, and should avoid assumptions. It should put the problem in context of where it appears in the organization and what functions/operations it effects.

Proposed Solution

(Before completing this section, fill in the "This Solution vs. Alternative Solutions" section. That section will only give a short description of the solution; this section will give more detail.)

The proposed solution should be specific in terms of exactly what it does and does not affect. This is an important conversation that sets the stage for the rest of the project. This is the place to begin to understand everyone's expectations of the project.

This Solution vs. Alternative Solutions

It is rare that there is only one way to address a problem or to reach a goal. Before proposing a specific solution, it's important to consider all of the options. Remember, proposed solutions should be solutions that someone might realistically consider. Describe each solution in very few words (e.g. bring in a contractor to do renovations), and list the pros and cons and a high level estimate of the up-front cost and 5-year ROI. These numbers should match the ones in the cost benefit analysis section below.

Solution	Pros	Cons	Up-Front Cost	5-year ROI
Describe the solution (<10 words)	List bullets	List bullets	Overall cost to implement solution	Return on Investment over 5 years

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Project Selection & Ranking Criteria

Organization leaders may be deciding between multiple potential projects. If you are proposing this project, it is you responsibility to document why it might deserve priority over the others. You are defining where it falls in terms of selection & ranking criteria. The selection & ranking criteria are the criteria decision-makers will use to compare projects against each other when selecting between or prioritizing projects. Specifically, you should be able to answer these questions (answers go in the table, below):

Project impact areas:

How does this project benefit the organization? Specifically, which of the following areas does it address? (Select all that apply)

❑ Compliance/Regulatory ❑ Performance Improvement/Cost reduction ❑ Revenue increase

Portfolio fit and interdependencies

What is the project alignment with the overall organizational strategy, and with other projects that the organization is pursuing?

Project urgency

How quickly must the organization attempt the project? Why?

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Cost/Benefit Analysis

Benefits should go deeper than the ones shown in the selection and ranking criteria above. This is the place to describe them in more detail.

Tangible Benefits

List the measureable benefits that correspond with the problem/opportunity. These are measureable benefits associated with completing the project. For example, they might reduce the amount of time or money needed to complete a task.

Assumptions Driving Value – this is where you list any assumptions that you are making when listing this as a benefit?

Intangible Benefits

List the intangible benefits, which are difficult to measure but still important. They might, for example, have a positive impact on the culture or the perception of an organization.

Assumptions Driving Value – this is where you list any assumptions that you are making when listing this as a benefit?

Every project has costs. Even if the project does not require the purchase of any new equipment or external services, it still takes labor hours of the staff who will work on the project. These are the high level costs associated with the project? Keep in mind: project costs can be complex, but they generally fall into these categories.

Cost Categories	Amount
Internal Labor hours	
External costs	Sum of costs below
Labor (consultants, contract labor)	
Equipment, hardware or software	
List other costs such as travel & training	

Financial Return

What is the financial return on this investment?

Success Criteria

It isn't easy to identify the criteria by which a project will be judged a success or failure. Stakeholder groups and individuals may all be holding different conceptions of what success looks like for the project. Documenting the success criteria, as you understand it, is an important first step to avoiding the issues that can arise from those mismatched assumptions.

These are the primary success criteria by which the finished project will be judged. They are very important, and very difficult to nail down. It may help to think about each stakeholder group, and how they would answer the following questions: The project will be successful when we know _____, when we have_____, when we can _____, when we are _____.

Tip: A good requirement is something that is necessary, clear, verifiable and attainable!

Scope

The project scope statement defines the project and describes what needs to be done. This preliminary scope statement documents the boundaries of the project. Said another way, the scope outlines what is and what isn't part of the project. This is very important because it will impact time and cost if the scope changes. Defining the scope is incredibly important, because changes to the scope will affect the schedule, budget, and or quality of the project. Even more important than defining the scope is making sure that project stakeholders all understand and agree to the scope. We'll get into that later in this course.

Major project activities

List the major activities – don't get too detailed here.

Out of scope activities

List activities that are outside of the scope but still critical to the success of the project, and activities that are not critical to the success of the project, but there is potential that someone might assume that they are being addressed by the project when actually they are not.

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Major Obstacles/Constraints and Risks

Every project has obstacles and risks. If you ignore them and hope they won't happen, that is a recipe for trouble down the road. It is better to understand them from the beginning.

Project obstacles/constraints are those things that are certain to occur and will get in the way of project success. For example, regular operational cycles will certainly impact a project schedule.

Project risks are those things that might occur and get in the way of project success. For example, the possibility of losing staff to other projects.

Schedule Overview

Finally, no project is fully defined until you have at least an outline of the project schedule. This is a high level schedule – the detail will come later. This high-level schedule helps people make decisions, but executors will need to be able to fill in the blanks later. Here, you answer the questions:

1. What are the major milestones of the project? Milestones are events that will receive attention. These are the things that people ask about in the elevator, even if they have very little understanding of the project. A milestone could be the completion of a key deliverable, important decision made, or the attaining of a critical piece of information. Keep in mind that beginning the work on the project is a milestone. It is important to list when you expect planning to begin, and when you expect work to begin, so that it is clear that if those dates slip, the expected end date might slip.

2. What are the external milestones that affect the project, even though they aren't part of the project? For example, perhaps all professors need to enter their grades before a specific change to the system can be made.

3. What is the impact of late delivery, or falling behind on the schedule?

4. What is the estimated completion date of the project?