

6 Questions to Ask Before You Start a Task

This worksheet can help you (or someone to whom you assign tasks) explore and understand the scope and requirements for a project. It provides a great guideline for making sure misunderstandings and missteps are avoided. *See page 2 for more information on each question.*

Project: _____

- 1. What is the task's goal or outcome?**
- 2. What actions, assistance or resources are required?**
- 3. When is it due, overall? Are there due dates for various steps?**
- 4. How will it affect my other work/projects?**
- 5. What obstacles might occur that I should plan for?**
- 6. What authority do I have to complete this task?**

Here is additional information for understanding the questions and how they can help you succeed with this project.

1. What is the task's goal or outcome?

Capture in clear, concise terms what it is you are agreeing to deliver. Ask as many questions as needed to make sure you understand what others are expecting.

2. What actions, assistance or resources are required?

Identify upfront the specific actions or steps that will be involved in completing the task. As you list these actions/steps, think about where you might need help or additional resources.

3. When is it due, overall? Are there due dates for various steps?

Seek clarification on the final deadline and make sure you're comfortable committing to it. Breaking the project into steps and assigning each step a due date can help you stay on track.

4. How will it affect my other work/projects?

Make sure you are not taking on too much at once. If need be, consult with your boss or team to reprioritize other projects so you can meet this task's deadline without compromising the quality of your work or your health.

5. What obstacles might occur that I should plan for?

Think back on recent projects. What types of things come up that cause delays or problems? How might these things be prevented this time? What else might cause a setback? How will you handle it?

6. What authority do I have to complete this task?

Ensure that you know what you are and are not authorized to do in terms of spending money, assigning work to other employees/departments, using company resources, etc.

Excerpted from the Leader's Guide to the training program *A Leader's Guide to Delegating*.

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