



Hey Project Sponsor – We Need Your Help Please!

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First, let's define **Sponsor**. According to the Project Management Institute's, *The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®) Guide*, the **Sponsor** "is the person or group [of people] that provides the financial resources, in cash or in kind, for the project." As defined by Wikipedia.com, "...(t)he project sponsor will be a senior executive in a corporation who is responsible to the business for the success of the project."

While the project sponsor may not be involved in the day-to-day operations of the project in usual circumstances, he/she is the champion of the project. Additionally, the project sponsor does have quite a few responsibilities, including:

- Developing the business case for the project
- Securing funding for the project
- Selecting the project manager to support the project
- Assisting in the development of the project scope and charter
- Securing resources for the project – human resources, facilities, equipment, etc.
- Assisting with identifying the stakeholders for the project
- Clarifying any questions regarding the project scope once the project is underway
- Reviewing and approving any changes to the schedule and budget if such changes exceed the project manager's authority
- Monitoring the progress of the project
- Providing direction to the project manager on federal, state or international regulations or any other compliance requirements for specific industries that may exist
- Assisting the project manager by getting involved in making key go/no go decisions, authorizing changes in the scope of the project, solving problems that arise, and helping to secure additional resources for the project if necessary

If contract resources are required for the project, the sponsor will review and approve procurement strategies and plans. The sponsor will assist in selecting the most appropriate vendors for the project and will negotiate contracts with the selected vendors. Depending on the authority level of the project manager, the sponsor may be involved in, or oversee another individual responsible for, authorizing contractor work and reviewing all contractor invoices, including authorizing payment for the work.

The project sponsor should also work closely with the project manager to measure the project's performance against the project baseline, identifying any variances from the project plan in areas of cost, scope, schedule and quality. If required, the project sponsor will take the lead on ensuring that corrective actions are put in place to avoid such variances and keep the project moving forward.



Project managers I have spoken to, from a variety of industries, tell me that when they have a sponsor who is involved their job becomes easier. They have the support they need to ensure the project is successful and feel, frankly, that there is someone higher up in the organization “who has their back.”

In summary, the project sponsor is the person or persons the project manager and the project team can turn to for support on the project. The sponsor should have reach throughout the organization to ensure that the project manager gets what he/she needs to ensure project success.

In your opinion, what else can the project sponsor do to help on the project? What other support do you as a project manager need?