Introduction

You know-the people on our projects, stakeholders or customers, who inject the problems causing scope creep? Sometimes we think the scope creeps are scary looking or mean, when in reality they are those who we like the most; they bring us doughnuts, take us out to lunch, and you want to do everything for them so they are always asking for little extras. Managing those people and preventing scope creep from happening is essential if you want to stay on track.

Source: https://www.sooperarticles.com/business-articles/project--management-articles/7-tips-managing-scope-creep-your-project-96-3984.html

1. Define the Scope of Your Project

First, be sure you define the scope of your project. It may seem elementary, but I am amazed at how many project managers do not identify their project's scope. You want more than just an idea of what it is; you must know and define the scope up front before the project starts, not after. Define it, agree on it with your stakeholders and baseline it.

2, Track Changes

Second, log changes throughout the duration of the project. As you document a change, evaluate how it will impact your project, and take it to the change control board to make the call on what to do-will you put it on hold, or approve and implement the change? It's important that you as the project manager not make that decision; otherwise, you will be left holding the project bag

3. Rebaseline the Project

Simply re-baseline the schedule or project plan when changes are approved or incorporated into the project. The statistic many constantly look at, including Gardner, is the number of failed projects which, according to one source, is 75%. Most of that is attributed to not taking control of change and re-baselining the project plan or schedule when changes are made. Look at it this way: if you are in a room with ten project managers, nearly eight of you are managing failed projects. Two of you are successfully managing changes to scope, with the slight difference being something as small as whether or not you are rebaselining project plans..

4. Request Additional Funding if Necessary

Request additional funding or resources when changes have been approved and you've rebaselined the project. Sometimes it's hard to go back and request additional resources to make those changes happen but if the changes have been agreed to and you don't, you are back at the 75% statistic.

5. Listen and Watch for Signs

Watch for the signs. Watch your team for behaviors that signal something is not quite right, such as when things get too quiet, where people are working but you're not getting any signals or the feedback is always that things are okay. It's always good to go back and look at what is actually being completed and evaluate if you really are on track. Are they taking the cookies and brownies from the scope creeps and implementing their changes quietly only for you to find out at the end of the project that your scope creeped and you didn't know about it?.

6. Set Priorities

This goes back to the previous step of logging changes and having your change control board evaluate and prioritize the changes. This usually happens when several groups or stakeholders from different business units bring changes to you and it becomes a squabble. Let the change control board decide which changes need to be approved to avoid being put into a position you don't want to be in.

7. Avoid Traps

Possibly you have heard a scope creep casually say, "While you are doing that, could you do this too?" Or, "All you have to do is this...." Or they have a simple solution even though they've never done it before. The one I love the most is, "It will not take that long." Based on what, or on whose assessment? Based on the judgment of someone who has never done it before? Based on no change or evaluation? These are small traps we find ourselves in that put us in the 75% margin of failed projects.