Project success checklist

WHY YOU’LL LOVE IT:
This checklist helps you make better decisions, in less time, more of the time, by revealing the impact of any project or decision on the business as a whole.

GET ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE:
Should we give this project or decision the green light?
What will be the broader impact of this decision?
Have we considered all of the perspectives that matter?

YOU’VE GOT IT RIGHT WHEN:
Only the strongest projects get the green light and it’s clear how a decision could impact the business as a whole.

TIPS:
• You can work through the checklist individually, or with your team. An interactive version is also available on our website: www.methodical.io

• We’ve included explanations on the last page in case any of the terms are unfamiliar.

• Each question has space below for to-dos, notes or next steps.

• The Grid book will help you work through unknowns, risks or challenges quickly and easily. Page numbers for the relevant sections are noted next to each question.

• This checklist works best if you pose your project or decision as a specific question, like: “Should we outsource our contact center?” or “Should we hire a permanent project manager?”

• Analyze alternatives separately. If you’re choosing between options, run through the checklist multiple times and compare your results.

• You can also run checklists for different scenarios: best case, worst case and most likely case, for example.
Could this project or decision affect desirability? This checklist guides you through all the factors worth considering.

1. **CUSTOMER VALUES & BELIEFS**
   - If your customers knew about this project or decision would they support it?
     - Yes
     - No
     - Hmmmm, we should look into that
     - They wouldn’t care either way

2. **CUSTOMER GOALS**
   - Will this project or decision make it easier or harder for customers to achieve their goals?
     - Easier
     - Harder
     - We’ve no idea
     - It won’t affect them

3. **ADOPTION BARRIERS**
   - Will this project or decision make it easier or harder for new customers to adopt your product or service?
     - It lowers adoption barriers
     - It makes adoption more difficult
     - We haven’t considered this
     - It doesn’t affect adoption barriers

4. **CATEGORY**
   - Would this project or decision have a broader impact on the product or service category?
     - Positive impact (e.g. creating a whole new level of demand)
     - Negative impact (e.g. sparking a price war, or tarnishing the industry)
     - We’ve not considered this – it’s something to look into
     - There will be no broader impact on the category

5. **TERRITORY**
   - Will this project or decision impact the territories you can operate in?
     - A positive impact
     - A negative impact
     - That’s a good question – we should research that
     - There won’t be an impact

6. **ALTERNATIVES & SUBSTITUTES**
   - How will this project or decision affect your competitiveness?
     - We’re likely to gain market share
     - We’re likely to lose market share
     - We haven’t thought about it
     - It won’t have an impact

7. **PROPOSITION**
   - Will this project or decision make your proposition more or less appealing?
     - More appealing
     - Less appealing
     - We haven’t considered it
     - No impact

8. **BRAND APPEAL**
   - Will this project or decision strengthen or weaken your brand?
     - It will strengthen it
     - It will weaken it
     - We’ve not thought about the impact on our brand
     - It won’t affect our brand

9. **CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**
   - How will this project or decision affect the customer experience?
     - The customer experience will improve
     - The customer experience will suffer
     - We haven’t thought about it
     - The CX will not be affected
Project success checklist — Profitability

How would this project or decision affect your profitability? Let this checklist be your guide.

1. **REVENUE MODEL** (123 - 128)
   How will this project or decision impact your revenue model?
   - It changes it for the better
   - It’s at odds with our revenue model
   - We need to research this
   - There’s no impact

2. **PRICE** (128 - 136)
   How will this project or decision impact your pricing?
   - It brings us closer to the optimum price point
   - It takes us further away from the optimum price
   - We haven’t considered it
   - There is no impact on pricing

3. **VOLUME** (136 - 143)
   How will this project or decision impact sales volumes?
   - Sales will increase
   - Sales will decline
   - We’ve no idea
   - Sales volumes won’t be affected

4. **WITH CUSTOMERS** (146 - 165)
   Would this project or decision affect your bargaining power with customers?
   - It strengthens our bargaining position with customers
   - It weakens our bargaining position with customers
   - We’ve not considered this – it’s something to look into
   - It won’t be affected

5. **WITH SUPPLIERS** (146 - 165)
   Would this project or decision affect your bargaining power with suppliers?
   - It strengthens our bargaining position with suppliers
   - It weakens our bargaining position with suppliers
   - We’ve not considered this
   - It won’t be affected by this decision

6. **RULES & REGULATIONS** (151 - 165)
   Are there any legal concerns about this project or decision?
   - Nope – all above board
   - It’s illegal or bound to attract attention from regulators
   - That’s an interesting point…
   - There’s no legal aspect to consider

7. **FIXED COSTS** (169 - 181)
   How will this project or decision impact your fixed costs?
   - Fixed costs will either fall, or rise an acceptable amount
   - The increase in fixed costs is unacceptable or unaffordable
   - We haven’t considered it
   - Our fixed costs will not be affected

8. **VARIABLE COSTS** (169 - 181)
   How will this project or decision impact your variable costs?
   - Variable costs will fall, or increase acceptably
   - The rise in variable costs will seriously impact contribution margins
   - We haven’t considered this
   - Variable costs will not be affected

9. **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE** (181 - 187)
   Does this project or decision impact capital expenditures?
   - Capital expenditure will fall, or increase an acceptable amount
   - The capital expenditure required poses a serious risk
   - We’ve not thought about it
   - Capex is not affected

WE’VE GOT YOUR BACK: Reading The Grid book sections (shown by the topic title) for any risks or unknowns will bring clarity and confidence to your decision. Visit www.methodical.io to find out more.
# Project success checklist — Longevity

What impact would this project or decision have on your longevity? This checklist covers all the essential perspectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>AWARENESS [191 - 197]</th>
<th>Would this project or decision impact awareness of your brand, products or services?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A positive impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A negative impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve not considered this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness will not be affected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>ACQUISITION [197 - 207]</th>
<th>Will this project or decision impact your ability to acquire new customers?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It'll help us acquire more customers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It will make acquiring customers more difficult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We haven't considered this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It won't affect customer acquisition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>RETENTION [198 - 207]</th>
<th>Will this project or decision affect customer retention?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It will improve retention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retention could suffer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve not thought about it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retention won't be affected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>LEGAL PROTECTION [212 - 219]</th>
<th>Does this project or decision fit with your intellectual property strategy?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It puts our IP at risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We haven't considered this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There's no impact / we don't own any IP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>DURABLE ADVANTAGES [219 - 233]</th>
<th>Does this project or decision affect any durable advantages you have over rivals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It strengthens them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It weakens them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We haven't considered this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There's no impact / we don't have any durable advantages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>COMPETITOR LAG [224 - 233]</th>
<th>Will this project or decision affect competitor lag?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We'll pull further ahead from rivals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rivals will gain ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve not thought about it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There's no impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th>CASH POSITION [239 - 244]</th>
<th>How will this project or decision affect your cash position?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A positive or acceptable impact on our cash position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An unacceptable impact on our cash position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve not considered the consequences for our cash position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Our cash position is not affected by this decision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>SCALABILITY OR CAPACITY [244 - 246]</th>
<th>How will this project or decision affect your scalability or capacity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For the better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For the worse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve no idea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There's no impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9</th>
<th>COMPLEXITY &amp; RIGIDITY [247 - 256]</th>
<th>How will this project or decision impact the complexity or rigidity of the business?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It makes things simpler or more flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It will introduce greater complexity or rigidity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We’ve not thought about this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There's no impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To succeed, every business must pursue three goals: **desirability**, **profitability** and **longevity**. These goals are affected by three forces: the **customer**, the **market**, and the **organization** itself. This reveals a grid of nine factors that together determine the success of every business. Each box contains three essential elements, defined below.

### Desirability
- **Customer Values & Beliefs**: Customers prefer products and services that reflect their values, beliefs or self-image: like riding a Harley, or believing the more megapixels the better.
- **Customer Goals**: Every product or service is a means for customers to achieve a goal they care about. You bait the hook with what the fish wants to eat!
- **Barriers**: Barriers prevent customers from achieving their goals or adopting your offering. A skill required or incompatible technologies for example.

### Profitability
- **Revenue Model**: Your revenue model is how you make money: a fixed price, or charging by the hour, for example.
- **Price**: Pricing typically has the most powerful impact on profitability. Undercharge and you leave profit on the table. Set prices too high and volume suffers.
- **Volume**: Sales volumes are determined by the quantities people buy, and the frequency with which they buy them.

### Longevity
- **Awareness**: People can't become customers unless they know you exist. Raising and maintaining awareness is vital to building and keeping your customer base.
- **Acquisition**: Awareness should lead to acquisition — new customers joining your business. There's no customer base if people won't buy what you're offering.
- **Retention**: Your customer base won't grow if existing customers leave at the same rate as new ones join. Retention — keeping hold of your customers — is often crucial.

### Customer
- **Category**: Your product or service category determines the intensity of the rivalry. Customers like buying from clear categories where comparison is easier.
- **Territory**: Where your business is located and the area you cover impact the size of your opportunity, the regulations you must meet, and the rivals you face.
- **Alternatives & Substitutes**: Alternatives are direct rivals, like competing airlines. Substitutes are indirect rivals, like an airline competing with a train.

### Market
- **With Customers**: Powerful buyers can drive down your margins, so it's important to consider your bargaining power with customers and how it might be changing.
- **With Suppliers**: Bargaining power with suppliers is equally important. Powerful suppliers can also turn the screw on you — growing their profits at the expense of yours.
- **Rules & Regulations**: Every business must comply with basic regulations that limit their power — like tax, or health and safety laws — as well as industry specific regulations.

### Organization
- **Proposition**: The product or service proposition is the concept the customer is buying into. Customers must have clear, obvious reasons to choose it over alternatives.
- **Brand Appeal**: The expectations and associations people have about your business — its brand appeal — affect the desirability of all your products and services.
- **Customer Experience**: If your website is confusing, staff are impolite or returning damaged goods is difficult, desirability will suffer — no matter how good your product.

### Costs
- **Fixed Costs**: Fixed costs, like rent or salaries, stay the same regardless of how much you sell, affecting your break-even point and subsequent profitability.
- **Variable Costs**: Variable costs depend on volumes — like the materials needed to make products. Cars have high variable costs compared to software, for example.
- **Capital Expenditure**: These are longer-term investments, like factories or equipment. Their impact on profits are spread over the useful lifetimes of the assets.

### Adaptability
- **Cash Position**: If you run out of cash, you cannot continue to operate the business. The stronger your cash position, the greater the scope of options you can pursue.
- ** Scalability or Capacity**: Operating at full capacity leaves you unable to plan for the future. If your business cannot scale it cannot grow.
- **Complexity & Rigidity**: Complexity and rigidity within a business can make getting new ideas off the ground or changing direction agonizingly slow — if not impossible.

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**WE'RE HERE TO HELP:** Visit [www.methodical.io](http://www.methodical.io) to learn more about the grid and how it can help your startup, business or project succeed.