Scope Creep Checklist For Managing Client Expectations

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Managing Client Expectations:
Contract Scope Checklist

Instructions:

Use the checklist below to make sure that you include important details in your contract that will help you price the work right and manage client expectations throughout the engagement.

First, check the orange boxes next to the contract categories and types of work that are relevant for your contract. Some of these categories, like Terms and Conditions, and Payment, are relevant for any contract. Other categories, like Meetings and Travel, may only apply to some contracts.

Then, under each category that is relevant, make sure you have included that detail in your contract. Check the box for each item once it is in your contract.
Don't see the type of work you do? Add other types of work to the end of this checklist and add the details that you know are important to include in the contract in order to complete the work successfully.

1. Terms and Conditions

- ☐ Standard terms and conditions
  - Every contract should include standard terms and conditions (e.g., individuals or business entities entering into the contract, payment terms, disclaimers, limitations of liability, confidentiality, arbitration clause) that have been developed or reviewed by an attorney. If you work at a firm, they will likely have standard terms and conditions already. If you work independently or are starting a firm, do not skip creating and including these in every contract. It is worth the professional legal fees associated with them. The terms and conditions are there for your protection!

2. Project Management

- Client engagement management
  - For all contracts, even small ones, include some project management time for you to manage the scope, budget, team, etc. and complete key tasks like tracking billable time and invoicing.
- Project management services
  - If a client hires you to project manage the successful completion of a process or initiative or them and their staff (i.e., project management a service you are providing to the client), include a detailed project management section in your contract scope of work with specifics about what project management services you will provide (e.g., developing and managing a project plan, preparing for meetings, managing the project budget).
- Activities
  - Indicate specific project management activities (e.g., weekly one-hour check- in calls, budget review, updating project plans, progress reports or presentations).
  - Because many unforeseen things occur during engagements, project management often takes more work than initially expected. Make sure you include some contingency hours or amounts in the budget for unforeseen project management needs.

3. Meetings

- Total number of meetings
  - Indicate the total number of meetings for the engagement.
  - If you are not sure how many meetings there will be, you can indicate the upper threshold (e.g., up to 10 meetings).
- Location/type of meetings
  - Indicate if they are in-person, conference calls, online, or webinars. If they are in-person and the client has more than one location, indicate the precise location.
- Duration of meetings
  - Indicate how long the meetings are (e.g., four two-hour meetings).
- Attendees
  - Indicate how many and what type of consultants under your contract, including you, will attend the meetings (e.g., two principals, one partner, and two associates).
- Roles
  - Indicate the specific roles that you and the consultants under your contract will have in the meetings (e.g., presenting, facilitating, note-taking).

- Meeting preparation
    - Indicate any specific preparation you will do prior to the meetings (e.g., schedule the meeting; develop an agenda, slide deck, or work plan; draft product specifications).
- Meeting follow-up
    - Indicate any specific follow-up you will do after the meetings (e.g., debrief
    - meetings or calls, minutes, notes, revisions of documents).

4. Travel

- Total amount of travel
    - Indicate how much travel you will do during the engagement. If you do not know, you can indicate the upper threshold (e.g., up to five round trips).
- Travellers, travel locations, and mode of transport
    - Indicate which consultants will be traveling during the engagement, the travel destinations for each trip or batch of trips by consultant or consultant type, and the mode of transportation (e.g., one principal and two research associates will make three trips by plane to the company headquarters in Atlanta, GA).
- Total rates
    - Indicate the rates you will charge for travel time (e.g., charge half of customary professional rates for travel time).
- Travel expenses
    - Indicate if travel expenses will be charged in addition to professional rates or included in the contract budget cap.

5. Responsibilities

- Client responsibilities
    - Indicate specific work that the client will be responsible for (e.g., project management, scheduling, securing a location, logistics, budget management, document submission).
- Client dependencies
    - Indicate if the client needs to do something before you can start or complete work under the contract (e.g., assign a point person, agree to a project plan, provide data or information, provide access to a shared work platform, complete legal work).
    - Indicate the form of the things that the client will need to provide you (e.g., processed data in an Excel format, finalized audit statements from the last full three years, signed memoranda of understanding among all three parties).

- Indicate the timing of dependencies (e.g., provide processed data within 1 month of contract execution, approve the project plan within 7 days after it is delivered, complete and approve the marketing budget prior to phase 2 of the project).

6. Deliverables

- Deliverables
  - Indicate what quantifiable goods/tangible products you will be responsible for under the contract (e.g., report, manual, grant application, curriculum, strategic plan, financial analysis).
- Roles and responsibilities
  - Indicate who is responsible for creating, completing, reviewing, and approving contract deliverables.
- Form and format
  - Indicate the specific form and format that each deliverable should take (e.g., detailed, professionally printed narrative report with appendices; electronic PowerPoint slide deck; presentation to the steering committee; Word document that summarizes key findings and decisions; software product).
- Timing
  - Indicate the timing for the drafting, review, completion, and approval of each deliverable, including any key milestones that must be met during the process (e.g., the first draft of the report will be due November 4, 2019, by close of business; interviews for the strategic plan will be completed within 40 days of the onset of the project).
  - If you have a deliverables-based contract, which means that payment will only be made upon completion of specified deliverables or process milestones, indicate a payment amount or percentage for each deliverable (e.g., $20,000 will be paid upon submission of the first draft of the report, 30% of the contract payment will be made upon completion and approval of the first deliverable).
- Review and approval process
  - Indicate the review and approval process, including how many rounds of review will be part of the contract scope and the levels and type of approval that will be required (e.g., two rounds of review by the planning team, approval by the Northeast Division Director and advisory committee)

7. Payment

- Payment terms
  - Indicate upon what basis you will be paid (e.g., time and materials with or without a budget cap, flat or fixed fee, retainer, or upon completion of deliverables or milestones).

- ▫ Scope and budget changes
    - Indicate the process by which changes to the scope and budget will be proposed and approved (e.g., prior written approval is required for any changes to the scope and budget). This should also be reviewed by an attorney and may be included in the terms and conditions.

What if... the client isn't sure that they want you to do a certain aspect of the work? You can include the work in the contract scope as an option and include a second price for that specific piece of work.

8. Other

- ▫ Detail:

- ▫ Detail:

- ▫ Detail:

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