Identifying Project Risks

10 Questions to Answer with Your Team

☐ **1.** **Is the project or solution non-compelling, or a bad fit for the team?** A bad fit means it doesn't fall within the general professional or technical arenas in which your company or your colleagues have expertise.

☐ **2.** **Will the project scope entail operating in unfamiliar territory?** Even if it's a reasonable fit, if a project involves requirements your team has never worked with before, can you ensure that everyone will come up to speed quickly enough to be successful on the project?

☐ **3.** **Are the project requirements and features vague or complex?** Poorly defined requirements, or the need to implement many complicated features that must interact correctly, will vastly increase the potential for problems.

☐ **4.** **Are the requirements pitted against an aggressive schedule?** Time limits of some sort exist on almost every project. Will there be enough time to implement the requested features at the desired quality level?

☐ **5.** **Are too few personnel and resources available for the project?** Since it's easy to underestimate these needs, what are your fallback alternatives?

☐ **6.** **Will coordination with many different collaborators be needed?** Any time you involve many people, it means complex hand-offs. If your project will include client or third party collaborators, how will people interact?

☐ **7.** **Are the primary collaborators unfamiliar to the project team?** If and when it does become necessary to recruit one or more new contributors, how will you be able to verify whether they can do the job?

☐ **8.** **Are project team members discouraged from raising concerns?** Do you want people to raise red flags when they see potential problems, or do you prefer everyone to maintain a stiff upper lip, and work 24/7 if needed?

☐ **9.** **Are there insufficient review and/or test cycles in the schedule?** Is enough time allocated for review and testing iterations? If project delays add up, can you afford to reduce testing and still deliver a quality product?

☐ **10.** **Are there no standard protocols for managing scope changes?** When the inevitable "add-on requests" materialize, think about how they'll affect the project. If unavoidable, will you have some kind of a method or system, such as a project change request, to adjust the official budget and schedule?