



# SILENCE FAILS ASSESSMENT

## Will Your Project Succeed?

Consider a current project or a project that you've recently completed.

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Project Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 1: Fact-Free Planning

Yes No

1. Are the timelines, budgets, materials, and personnel established for this initiative realistic—given the deliverables required? (If you answer “Yes” on this question, go to the next section. If you answer “No,” answer questions 1a–1c below.)

1a. If the resources are not realistic, have you fully discussed all of your concerns with the person(s) who could change them to make them realistic (e.g., project sponsors, resource managers, etc.)?

1b. Are you confident that the person(s) who can make the changes will take the actions required to adjust the resources, deliverables, or other elements of scope so that the initiative can succeed?

1c. If the person(s) who can make the changes to the resources or the deliverable or other elements of scope do so, will it be enough to make the project a success?

Score for Fact-Free Planning (add up the checks under “No”): \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2: AWOL Sponsors

Yes No

2. Is your sponsor providing the kind of active involvement and support this initiative needs to be successful (e.g., convincing reluctant stakeholders, supporting you in policy meetings, working behind the scenes to keep the initiative on track)? (If you answer “Yes” on this question, go to the next section. If you answer “No,” answer questions 2a–2c below.)

2a. If you are not getting the level of support you need from your sponsor, have you fully discussed all of your concerns with him/her?

2b. Are you confident that your sponsor will soon become as actively involved as you need him/her to be?

2c. Is your sponsor’s active involvement going to be enough to make the project a success?

Score for AWOL Sponsorship (add up the checks under “No”): \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3: Skirting

Yes No

3. Are the right stakeholders supporting the priority setting process with this initiative? (e.g., not exerting inappropriate influence; bypassing channels to change the scope, schedule, or resources; pulling rank to get their way; or cutting deals on the side in a way that threatens the initiative)? (If you answer “Yes” on this question, go to the next section. If you answer “No,” answer questions 3a–3c below.)

3a. If a powerful person is exerting inappropriate influence on your project, have you discussed your concerns with him/her?

3b. Are you confident that this person will stop exerting his/her influence in inappropriate ways—e.g., bypassing channels, pulling rank, cutting deals, etc?

3c. If this person stops exerting his/her influence in inappropriate ways, will that be enough to make the project a success?

Score for Skirting (add up the checks under “No”): \_\_\_\_\_



**Section 4: Project Chicken**

Yes No

4. Are people giving you honest, accurate and timely information regarding the status of your initiative, allowing you to get a clear view of where it stands? (If you answer "Yes" on this question, go to the next section. If you answer "No," answer questions 4a–4c below.)

4a. If a person is failing to get you honest, accurate, or timely information on the status of the project, have you discussed your concerns with him/her?

4b. Are you confident that this person will start getting you honest, accurate, and timely information on the status of the project?

4c. If this person starts getting you honest, accurate, and timely information, will that be enough to make the project a success?

**Score for Project Chicken (add up the checks under "No"):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 5: Team Failures**

Yes No

5. Are team members performing up to your expectations and keeping commitments, and are they sufficiently competent to see the initiative through to the end? (If you answer "Yes" on this question, follow the instructions below to score your assessment. If you answer "No," answer questions 5a–5c below.)

5a. If a person is not performing up to your expectations (i.e., he/she does not have the right competencies, talents, time, etc.) or if a resource manager is not assigning qualified candidates, have you discussed your concerns with him/her?

5b. Are you confident that this person will begin performing up to your expectations?

5c. If this person begins to perform up to your expectations, will that be enough to make the project a success?

**Score for Team Failures (add up the checks under "No"):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section Score:**

The section with the highest number of no responses is your weakest section.

Overall Score (add up the total score from each section):

0: Your initiative has a good chance of success.

1-4: Your initiative has a few issues, but if you deal with the problem areas, there is still a good chance that your initiative will succeed. Unfortunately, if you fail to address even one of these crucial conversations, there is a 61 percent chance that your project will go over in budget, schedule, and scope.

5-9: Your initiative is in jeopardy. You have one or more big problems and possibly several smaller problems that you need to address to get your project back on track.

10-14: You have three to four major conversations that you need to hold and hold well.

15-20: Speak up! Your initiative is doomed!

