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Signs Your Project Prioritization Criteria just won't work!

1 They include "Strategic Alignment".

This is the big one, the one we see all the time. A list of 4 or 5 criteria and one of them is "Strategic Alignment" or "Business Value" or something similar. This approach is pretty much useless for various reasons including;

- Your key stakeholders will each have a different definition of "Strategic Alignment" which makes it useless as a criterion
- There is no clear way to measure strategic alignment making it difficult to differentiate between projects
- This approach is open to "game playing" with people over-promising in order to get their project approved

[This video will show you how to correctly incorporate strategic value into your criteria list.](#)

Whose
definition?

+

Did you use
AHP?

+

Broken into
sub-criteria

+

With good
scales

2 You have 15 criteria.

Research shows that you should never have more than 9 criteria in each level for a multi-criteria model.

For prioritization, 5 is better in the first level ! The idea of prioritization is to focus on supporting the most important goals of your organization.

If you have 15 goals - which become criteria - then you need to create a sub-criteria of the majors criteria!

[This ebook shares 80 + sample project prioritization criteria for you to get started - check them out.](#)

3 Your criteria are really flags.

"Is this project required for compliance / legal reasons?"

This question is not a criterion. If your project is required, you don't need to prioritize it, you simply do it. If your project is not mandatory, the answer won't help you prioritize.

"Flags" are questions that can force a project "in" or "out", but that don't really help you prioritize. Other "flags" might be safety impact, environmental impact, etc.

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4 Your criterion is really a constraint.

Some factors are constraints, not criteria. Your job, when selecting projects, is to maximize the "value" you deliver while staying within your constraints.

Common constraints include;

- Budget / cost
- Level of effort
- The capacity of your facilities (e.g. factory space, time on a key machine, etc.)

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Here are some more useful resources to improve your project success rates:

- [Ultimate guide to project prioritization](#)
- [How to improve project success rates?](#)
- [The best project prioritization methods and techniques](#)