



Best Practices



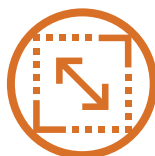
Destigmatize The Label

The label itself – small project or minor project – implies easy, fast, inexpensive, simple, and/or unimportant. Many or all of those may be untrue, so work continuously to inform and educate all stakeholders, including the internal client.



Define Scope Clearly

Ambiguous or evolving scope is the #1 driver of cost overruns and delays. Invest time at the front end to nail down requirements and warn/guard against “scope creep.”



Right-Size Procurement and Delivery Processes

Do not apply the same procedures, processes, and contracts used for large/major projects.

Applying overly complex procedures slows progress, so develop a streamlined approach tailored to small projects. Consider JOC or task order contracts and/or bundling/clustering projects if allowed.



Budget & Schedule Realistically

Small budgets leave little room for the unexpected. To fully understand programmatic goals & expectations, then create a realistic estimate that includes appropriate contingencies for unknown conditions. The same for the project schedule. Allot adequate time for design, plus reviews and estimates, and account for long-lead items that could be in play even on a small project.



Staffing & Workload Management

When projects are treated as a side task, communication gaps, delays, and cost or schedule impacts often follow. A dedicated small project management team ensures accountability and consistent stakeholder engagement from kickoff through closeout. Balancing PM workloads is equally critical; overextended managers may burn out and/or be spread so thin that oversight and communication suffer. Using data-driven metrics to assess capacity and align resources helps maintain performance and deliver better project outcomes.



Build Early and Ongoing Stakeholder Alignment

Proactively involving end users, facilities and operations teams, regulatory authorities, and adjacent occupants to help clarify expectations, surface constraints, and address concerns before construction begins. Maintaining that alignment throughout the project reduces rework, minimizes delays, and supports smoother execution and turnover.



Communicate Often and Clearly

Establish clear communication and decision-making protocols up front and stick to them. Stay in regular touch with the project team, end users, and other stakeholders and share meeting minutes (with action items) soon after all meetings.



Identify and Manage Risk

Small projects may have the same risk of exposure as larger ones but with fewer resources to manage them. Identify risks early and develop a project-specific plan for managing them.



Logistics & Constraints

Projects in constrained or hard-to-access areas — whether inside active facilities or offsite — often require specialized equipment, added safety measures, off-hours work, permitting, and multi-team coordination. Recognizing logistics early helps explain higher costs relative to scope, sets clear expectations, and supports project justification during review and approval.



Standardize Tools and Templates

Having, using, and continuously improving standardized contracts, forms, checklists, and templates saves time, reduces errors, and promotes consistency.



Conduct Lessons Learned After Every Project

Capturing what worked (and what didn't) at or after project closeout builds institutional knowledge and improves performance over time. Consider formalizing the use of a Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE).