Your First Two Weeks on a Project

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You don't have to complete everything on this checklist, and you certainly don't have to do it all yourself. Start with the questions that matter most to your involvement. The aim is to become useful and informed, not to acquire a second full-time job.

The two-week structure is a guide, not a timetable. Some questions need answering on day one; others may take longer. Adapt the pace to your role and the Project.

First things first — ask these early

- **Why does the Project exist?** Ask what problem it is trying to solve, or what opportunity it is pursuing.
- **Why have I been invited?** Clarify what Business knowledge or perspective is needed from you.
- **Does anything need attention now?** Check for urgent Business input, reviews, workshops, decisions or deadlines. Confirm who is responsible and authorised.
- **Who is my main contact?** Find out who can explain your involvement and help you reach the right people. If no contact has been named, ask for one.

Week One — build your picture

- **What will success look like?** Ask what will change and what colleagues, customers or the Business will notice.
- **Who should I speak to?** Ask for a stakeholder map or organisation chart if available. Prioritise a manageable number of relevant conversations.
- **Can someone introduce me?** An appropriate introduction can help people understand why you are getting in touch.
- **What do different people think?** Listen to how stakeholders describe the purpose, priorities and intended outcomes. Differences are worth noting, not automatically treating as errors.

Week Two — turn information into understanding

- **Where do accounts agree or differ?** Compare what you have heard and distinguish established facts from assumptions or unresolved questions.
- **What do I still need to know?** Identify the important gaps and who can help address them.
- **What stage is the Project at?** Find out whether it is in Discovery, design, delivery, testing or another stage, and how you can contribute.
- **What is expected of me — and what can I authorise?** Clarify whether you advise, review, test, provide information or make decisions. Do not assume you can approve on behalf of the whole Business.
- **How will this fit with my day job?** Discuss likely time commitments and competing priorities with the appropriate people.
- **Have I understood correctly?** Check your summary with your Project contact and agree your next contribution.

Remember: After two weeks, you do not need to know everything. You should know more about what matters, what remains uncertain, and who can help.