

How Project Managers Can Use ChatGPT Effectively

An easy-to-read guide for planning, communication and project delivery

Expanded from the supplied "How Project Managers Can Use ChatGPT" infographic, credited in the image to Template22.com.

What this guide helps you do

Use ChatGPT to turn project information into useful drafts, identify gaps, compare options and prepare decisions. The project manager remains responsible for validating the work, securing agreement and maintaining the approved project records.

Start with one useful task

1. Choose a task you already do regularly: meeting minutes, a risk review or a weekly status update.
2. Gather the latest relevant records. Give each source a name, version and date.
3. Explain the result you need, the audience and the required format.
4. Review the draft against the sources, correct gaps and confirm actions with the team.
5. Put the agreed result into your normal project tools and records.

Find the section you need

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The infographic's percentages, charts and scores are illustrations. They are not evidence of productivity gains or project performance. Examples in this guide are fictional.

A repeatable workflow

Use the same six steps whenever you ask ChatGPT to help with project work. Repeat the review step when the information changes.

Step	What the project manager does	Result
1. Define	Name the task, audience and decision it will support.	A clear purpose
2. Prepare	Provide current, relevant, permitted sources and explain which record is authoritative.	Reliable context
3. Ask	Describe the output, constraints and handling of missing information.	A focused request
4. Check	Compare facts, calculations, commitments and references with the evidence.	A verified draft
5. Agree and use	Confirm with owners or approvers; save the agreed result in the project record.	An actionable output
6. Refresh	Add new facts, update the version and repeat checks.	A current record

1. Define the purpose

“Help me manage my project” is too broad. “Prepare a one-page update showing the decisions needed from the sponsor this week” gives the work a useful target.

2. Prepare the context

Supply the project objective, scope, dates, budget basis, current status and relevant extracts. Include the reporting cut-off date and timezone. Remove personal or confidential information that your organisation does not permit you to share.

3. Ask for the draft

Specify columns, length and audience. Ask for unknowns to be labelled “TBC” and proposals to be separated from agreed facts. If the source is unclear or unreadable, ask ChatGPT to identify the missing material.

4. Check the evidence

Check numbers in your spreadsheet, dependencies in your schedule, and decisions in the approved records. A second ChatGPT review can help find gaps, but it does not establish that the answer is correct.

5–6. Use it and keep it current

Confirm responsibilities and due dates with the people involved. Apply your normal approval process before changing a baseline or issuing commitments. Record the approved version and use that version for the next update.

Practical boundary: ChatGPT only knows the information available to it in the task. Do not assume it has read your email, project system or latest documents unless the relevant access is available and the sources have been checked.

12. Write prompts that work

The image suggests Role + Context + Task + Format + Constraints. Use this as a helpful structure, rather than a rule you must follow every time.

Part	What to include
Role	The perspective you need, such as a PM assistant or a reviewer.
Context	Project goal, relevant sources, current situation and reporting date.
Task	The specific work to complete.
Format	A table, checklist, email or short report, with required headings.
Constraints	Limits, approved facts, missing-data handling and review boundaries.

Copy and adapt this prompt

Help me as a project management assistant.

Project: [name, objective and delivery approach].

Sources: [file names, versions and dates]. Use [source] for approved dates and [source] for actual progress.

Task: [specific result].

Audience: [team, customer or sponsor].

Output: [format, headings, columns and length].

Constraints: [budget, deadline, scope and organisational rules]. Use only the supplied project facts. Separate confirmed facts, assumptions and recommendations. Mark missing information TBC. Do not invent owners, dates, approvals or progress figures. Flag conflicting sources.

Before finishing, list the items I need to verify.

Improve the response with a precise follow-up

If the result is...	Ask...
Too general	Make each action specific. Show the expected result and the decision required.
Too long	Reduce this to one page. Keep decisions, key risks and next steps.
Unclear about evidence	Show which source supports each date, figure and reported decision.
Full of assumptions	Separate facts from assumptions and list the questions that resolve the assumptions.
Unrealistic	Check this against the stated capacity, dependencies and constraints. Show what cannot be achieved.

Build a small prompt bank

Save prompts that work for recurring tasks. Keep the prompt structure, but refresh the data, version and reporting date each time. Reusing last week's answer without updating its sources can carry old errors forward.

Prompting guidance: OpenAI recommends providing the goal, context, output and boundaries as needed, then refining the result with follow-up messages. See the source note on page 10.

1-2. Planning and requirements

1. Project planning

Use ChatGPT to structure a first draft of the plan, clarify deliverables and expose gaps before agreeing a baseline. A work breakdown structure (WBS) divides the project into manageable pieces of work.

1. Prepare: provide the brief, objectives, scope limits, deadline, constraints and known approvals.
2. Ask: draft deliverables, work packages, milestones, dependencies and assumptions.
3. Check: review completeness with delivery specialists and confirm what is outside scope.
4. Use: agree owners, estimates and approval gates; put the validated plan into your project system.

Using the attached approved brief, draft a project plan for [project]. Include objectives, scope in/out, deliverables, WBS, milestones, dependencies, acceptance criteria and approval gates. Preserve approved dates. Mark proposed dates and owners as suggestions. List the questions that must be answered before baselining the plan.

Expected output: a structured plan and an open-questions list. Check that each work package produces an identifiable result and that completion can be demonstrated.

2. Requirements management

Use ChatGPT to turn rough requests into clear, testable requirements. A user story describes who needs something, what they need and why. Acceptance criteria describe the conditions that must be met.

1. Prepare: provide stakeholder notes, relevant standards or policies, and any existing requirement IDs.
2. Ask: extract requirements, identify ambiguity and propose acceptance criteria.
3. Check: confirm meaning, priority and feasibility with stakeholders and technical leads.
4. Use: record approved requirements and link them to deliverables and tests.

Convert these notes into a requirements table with ID, requirement, source, rationale, priority if stated, proposed acceptance criteria and open questions. Preserve existing IDs. Identify duplicates, conflicts and missing detail. Do not add functionality unless it is clearly labelled as a suggestion. Then propose links to the supplied deliverables and tests; flag missing links.

Expected output: a requirements register and proposed traceability links. Traceability shows how a requirement connects to delivery and verification. Check that each approved requirement has an agreed way to test it.

PM decision: stakeholders approve the requirements. Technical leads confirm feasibility. ChatGPT's wording does not create an agreement or approval.

3 & 10. Schedule, cost and resources

3. Schedule management

Use ChatGPT to organise activities, question dependencies and compare recovery options. Duration is elapsed working time; effort is the amount of labour needed. They are not interchangeable.

1. Prepare: provide task IDs, dependencies, estimates, calendars, capacity and the approved baseline.
2. Ask: identify missing logic, affected milestones and practical recovery options.
3. Check: validate dates and resource limits in the scheduling tool with task owners.
4. Use: agree the chosen response and record any authorised baseline change.

Review this activity table against baseline [version] as of [date]. Show dependency gaps, delayed tasks, likely milestone impacts and three recovery options. For each option show cost, capacity, quality and risk tradeoffs. State what information is needed to verify the critical path. Do not claim a critical path from incomplete dependencies or calendars.

Expected output: schedule observations and a recovery-options table. The critical path is the sequence of dependent activities that determines the earliest project finish under the schedule assumptions; verify it in the actual schedule.

10. Cost and resource management

Use ChatGPT to organise cost categories, explain variances and explore capacity options. Estimates are planning assumptions until validated; an invoice or actual cost needs a source record.

1. Prepare: provide baseline budget, actuals, commitments, remaining estimates, currency and reporting date.
2. Ask: compare planned and actual spending and calculate a forecast using your chosen method.
3. Check: verify arithmetic, double counting, rates, taxes and assumptions in the financial records.
4. Use: discuss variances with owners and agree actions through normal budget controls.

Using this cost table, show budget, actuals, remaining forecast, forecast total and variance by category. For this analysis use forecast total = actuals + estimated remaining cost, and variance = forecast total – budget. Positive variance means over budget. Keep commitments separate unless the remaining estimate already includes them; flag uncertainty. State currency and date. Identify capacity conflicts using the supplied availability table.

Worked check: a budget of 100,000, actuals of 40,000 and estimated remaining cost of 65,000 gives a forecast of 105,000 and an overrun of 5,000. This example is fictional and excludes tax or exchange-rate effects.

PM decision: approve spending and staffing through your organisation's controls. Confirm that recovery actions are affordable and people are actually available.

4 & 9. Risks and problem solving

4. Risk management

A risk is an uncertain event that could affect the project. An issue is a problem that has already happened. Use ChatGPT to broaden the review and improve response plans.

1. Prepare: share scope, dependencies, assumptions, lessons learned and the existing risk register.
2. Ask: identify candidate risks and write each as cause, possible event and impact.
3. Check: agree probability, impact and priority using your organisation's scales.
4. Use: confirm owners, mitigation actions, triggers and contingencies; review regularly.

Review these project records and propose additions to the risk register. For each show cause, uncertain event, impact, evidence, proposed owner role, mitigation, trigger and contingency. Separate risks from current issues. Use our supplied scoring scale; if no score is supported, mark it TBC. Do not treat proposed risks as confirmed facts.

Expected output: candidate risks and response actions. Mitigation reduces likelihood or impact; a contingency is a planned response if the risk occurs. Check that actions have agreed owners and due dates.

9. Problem solving

Use ChatGPT to organise the evidence and compare options when delivery is blocked. Root-cause techniques such as "five whys" generate hypotheses that need investigation.

1. Prepare: state what happened, when, expected behaviour, impact and evidence collected.
2. Ask: distinguish symptoms, confirmed facts, possible causes and missing evidence.
3. Check: test the hypotheses with the responsible specialists.
4. Use: choose a response, assign actions and measure whether the problem is resolved.

Analyse this project issue using only the supplied evidence. Separate symptoms, confirmed causes, possible causes and unknowns. Suggest questions to test each possible cause. Compare response options by time, cost, quality, risk and feasibility. Use only supplied estimates; mark other values TBC. State the decision required and a measurable success check.

Expected output: an evidence table and an options comparison. Avoid choosing an option because it has an impressive-looking score: scoring depends on agreed criteria, weights and reliable inputs.

PM decision: escalate according to impact and authority limits. Validate the remedy with the people who understand the affected work.

5–6. Communication and stakeholders

5. Communication management

Use ChatGPT to make messages clearer and tailor detail to the reader. Executives usually need impact and decisions; delivery teams need specific actions and dependencies.

1. Prepare: supply verified facts, audience, purpose and the decision or response required.
2. Ask: draft the message in the right tone and length.
3. Check: verify names, dates, figures, commitments and recipient relevance.
4. Use: obtain any required review and send through your normal channel.

Draft a [length] update for [audience] from these verified facts. Lead with the impact and decision needed. Include progress, risks, next steps and the response deadline if supplied. Keep the tone calm and direct. Preserve approved dates and figures. Do not create promises or imply approval. Leave missing details TBC. Produce a draft for my review.

Expected output: a message the audience can act on. Check whether the reader can understand what changed, why it matters and what they need to do.

6. Stakeholder management

Use ChatGPT to organise stakeholder needs and plan engagement. Influence and interest are working assessments to validate, rather than facts to infer from a job title.

1. Prepare: provide roles, decision rights, known concerns and agreed communication preferences.
2. Ask: draft an engagement plan and identify information gaps.
3. Check: validate assumptions through discussions and the governance model.
4. Use: agree who communicates, how often and how concerns are recorded.

Create a stakeholder engagement table from these notes: stakeholder role, decision rights, known needs, current concerns, influence/interest if supported, engagement action, channel, frequency and responsible role. Flag inferred assessments for validation. Identify missing stakeholders without inventing identities. Recommend questions for our next stakeholder discussion.

Expected output: a stakeholder plan and a questions list. A high-influence, high-interest stakeholder may need close engagement, but adapt the approach to their role, preferences and actual project impact.

Make the plan useful

Record actual concerns and decisions after each engagement. When a concern becomes a delivery problem, link it to the issue log. Ask ChatGPT to summarise themes from those records, then check the summary with the people involved.

PM decision: relationships require direct engagement. AI-generated stakeholder assessments are a starting point for a conversation.

7–8. Reports, records and meetings

7. Reporting and documentation

Use ChatGPT to bring scattered updates into a consistent report. Define Red/Amber/Green (RAG) criteria before asking it to assign a status. Progress percentages need an agreed calculation basis.

1. Prepare: provide the current plan, verified actuals, logs, reporting date and status criteria.
2. Ask: draft a concise report with evidence references and decisions needed.
3. Check: reconcile figures, dates and statuses across all sections.
4. Use: review with owners, issue the approved report and retain its source version.

Prepare a one-page status report as of [date] from these records. Include overall status, milestone progress, costs, major risks/issues, changes, decisions needed and next-period actions. Apply the supplied RAG criteria; if evidence is insufficient, show "status not confirmed". Reference the source for each figure and milestone. Flag contradictions. Do not invent a completion percentage.

Expected output: an evidence-based status draft. Check that the headline status agrees with the detail and that the report explains the impact of exceptions.

8. Meeting productivity

Use ChatGPT before a meeting to prepare a focused agenda and after it to organise the record. A discussion is not automatically a decision, and a suggestion is not automatically an assigned action.

1. Prepare: name the meeting purpose, decisions needed, attendees by role and time available.
2. Ask before: create an agenda with time boxes, pre-reading and a result for each item.
3. Ask after: extract decisions, actions and unresolved questions from the notes.
4. Check and use: confirm the record with participants and update the action and decision logs.

Turn these meeting notes into minutes with a brief summary, decisions, actions and unresolved questions. For decisions include what was agreed, who approved it if recorded, and the source reference. For actions show action, owner, due date and dependency. Use TBC where no owner or date was agreed. Keep proposals separate from decisions. Do not imply everyone agreed when the notes do not say so.

Expected output: concise minutes and an action table. Review incomplete actions with the team rather than silently assigning an owner or deadline.

Practical check: use recordings or transcripts only when permitted by your organisation and participants' arrangements. If the notes are incomplete, ask for clarification before treating the minutes as an authoritative record.

11. Team leadership and closure

11. Team leadership

Use ChatGPT to prepare coaching discussions, clarify responsibilities and explore workload problems. Leadership decisions need your understanding of people and the situation.

1. Prepare: provide relevant, permitted facts about roles, work and specific observed behaviour.
2. Ask: draft questions, feedback wording or options for improving coordination.
3. Check: remove unsupported judgments and verify the examples.
4. Use: have the conversation, listen to the person and agree realistic actions together.

Help me prepare a constructive discussion about [specific delivery behaviour]. Facts: [observations and agreed expectations]. Draft a neutral opening, questions to understand obstacles, support options and a structure for agreeing next steps. Focus on observable behaviour and project impact. Do not infer motivation or personality. Leave the action plan open for discussion.

Expected output: a conversation guide. For example, "The handover arrived two days after the agreed date" is a verifiable observation; "You are not committed" is an unsupported judgment.

Clarify responsibilities

A RACI matrix records who is Responsible for doing work, Accountable for the result, Consulted for input and Informed of progress. Ask ChatGPT to draft a matrix from agreed roles, then confirm it with the team. Follow your organisation's accountability rules.

Draft a RACI table for these deliverables using the supplied role descriptions. Explain ambiguous responsibilities and missing decision rights. Label every unconfirmed assignment as proposed. List questions we should resolve with the team before adopting the matrix.

Apply the guide at project closure

1. Gather acceptance records, unresolved items, costs, benefits measures and handover requirements.
2. Ask ChatGPT to draft a closure checklist, handover summary and lessons learned from those sources.
3. Check that acceptance and ownership are evidenced. Separate delivered outcomes from benefits still to be measured.
4. Secure the required sign-offs, confirm ongoing owners and archive the approved records.

Using these delivery and acceptance records, draft a closure summary. Show deliverables accepted with evidence, outstanding items, operational owners, final cost position, benefits still to be measured and lessons learned. Separate observations from recommendations. Flag missing sign-offs and do not describe the project as closed until the required approvals are recorded.

PM decision: recognise the team's contribution and turn lessons into specific improvements for future projects.

Worked example and final checklist

Example: a delayed network migration

Fictional situation: the approved cutover is 20 November 2026. Equipment expected on 6 November is now forecast for 13 November. Delivery is unconfirmed. Testing needs three working days after installation. The team works Monday to Friday. The schedule extract does not state installation duration.

1. Prepare the latest schedule extract, vendor update, resource calendar and approval requirements.
2. Ask ChatGPT for impact analysis and options using those sources.
3. Check vendor dates, installation effort, testing prerequisites and the permitted change window.
4. Bring validated options to the decision owner; record the chosen action and approval.

Assess this equipment delay against the approved cutover date. Keep the baseline unchanged. Separate confirmed facts, forecasts and missing information. Explain which tasks could be affected. Compare waiting, using suitable alternative equipment, and rescheduling the cutover. Do not invent availability, costs or installation duration. Show the evidence and approval needed for each option.

What a useful answer should recognise

The delay creates a risk to cutover, but the exact impact cannot be established without installation duration, verified delivery and resource availability. A credible response identifies those gaps, assigns no unagreed commitments and presents options for validation. It should not declare the cutover achievable just because dates appear close together.

Check before using any output

- Are the sources current, identifiable and appropriate to share?
- Do dates, names, costs and reported decisions match the records?
- Are confirmed facts separate from assumptions and recommendations?
- Have calculations, schedule logic and capacity been verified?
- Are missing items and conflicting sources visible?
- Have owners and due dates been agreed by the people involved?
- Does the output follow the required scope, format and approval process?
- Will the approved version be saved in the project's normal records?

Your first week

Day 1: practise on a meeting summary. Day 2: improve a status update. Day 3: review requirements or risks. Day 4: compare responses to one delivery issue. Day 5: save your best prompts and record what needed correction. Measure time saved alongside errors caught and rework required.

Source notes

Framework: supplied Template22.com infographic, "How Project Managers Can Use ChatGPT". This guide expands its 12 themes with original workflows and fictional examples.

Prompting reference: OpenAI, "Prompting", ChatGPT Learn, <https://learn.chatgpt.com/docs/prompting> (accessed 6 October 2026). Product features and connected-source availability depend on the account and workspace. The practical PM workflows are guidance, not an OpenAI-endorsed project management standard.