Questions to Ask at Each Project Phase

Purpose: This tool helps you integrate the people perspective at every step of the project. Use these questions during planning sessions, team stand-ups, or sponsor check-ins to make sure you're not just building the solution, you're building readiness.

Initiation

- Why are we doing this project and who says it matters?

- Who will be impacted if this succeeds... or if it fails?

- Is our sponsor ready to be visible and vocal throughout the effort?

- Are we talking about outcomes in terms of behavior, not just system features?

- Who needs to be at the table before we lock in scope and timeline?

Planning

- What will people have to do differently because of this change?

- Who are our most important stakeholders, and what do they care about?

- How will we keep people informed along the way?

- When and how will people get a chance to weigh in before launch?

- Are training, communications, and readiness checks part of the master plan or just "extras"?

Execution

- Are we hearing any resistance? If so, are we treating it like data or like a problem?

- Have people managers been equipped to support their teams?

- What stories or quotes are emerging that can help build momentum?

- Are we listening to feedback and adjusting as we go?

- Is our help desk or support team ready for Day 1?

Closing

- Did we meet our people-side success measures—not just delivery milestones?

- Are users adopting the change, or just tolerating it?

- Have we captured what we learned (both technically and culturally)?

- Who modeled the right behaviors and how are we recognizing them?

- What will keep this change going after the project team disbands?

Sustainment

- Who owns this change now that the project is over?

- Are we tracking adoption and usage as part of performance management?

- What regular reminders, refreshers, or recognitions are built into operations?

- Are users still getting the support they need?

- Is this now "how we work" or does it still feel like "the project"?

Pro Tips

Bring 2 - 3 of these questions into every phase gate review. They'll prompt richer conversations than charts alone.

Let the team take turns answering. Everyone sees the project from a different angle, and those views matter.

Don't wait until go-live to ask how people feel about the change. Start early and keep asking.