A Project Management Pre-Game Checklist for the Not-So-Super-Confident

The question	Your answer	My worry level about this on a scale of 1 to 5 is...
1. Is there anyone who's not taking the project as seriously as I am, and is that going to possibly be a problem?		
2. What are the consequences if the project fails?		
3. Who is someone who I know I can turn to with any stupid question I might have as I work on this project?		
4. Do I trust everyone who's involved in this project with me?		
5. Will I be prepared if I unexpectedly lose a bunch of time working on this because of other duties, or even illness?		
6. Will I be prepared when, inevitably, someone is late on their step of the project?		
7. Have I made a comprehensive list of everything I'm going to need to finish the project?		
8. How confident am I that the timeline will be met?		
9. Who will I be making excuses to if something goes awry? Am I comfortable with that person?		
10. Which parts of the project am I unable to complete all by myself?		
11. Which part of this project is the most intimidating to me?		
12. What would it take to make me feel good about that part before we go forward?		

*If your worry level totals **30** or more, go back through the list, attack the toughest questions, find answers, and re-evaluate before you begin the project.*

Your Project Management Scorecard

As the project moves along, score 1 point for every true answer. Then subtract 1 point for every time you returned to the person who assigned you the project to get more guidance… a passing grade is **5!**

	True or False?
The project started with everyone involved knowing exactly what the goal was.	
What counts as "success" was specifically defined.	
A project calendar was developed and everyone received it, with each individual's assignments and due dates noted.	
A kickoff meeting, or at least a detailed email, included everyone involved.	
A specific deadline was set.	
If a due date was missed, everyone who needed to know about it was informed within a day.	
Everyone was thanked upon the completion of their tasks.	

What The Boss is Looking For When You're Assigned a Major Project

1. Independence. You are being trusted to complete the project on your own and through delegation. The more help you need from above, the less impressive you'll be.

2. Control. The last thing you want is for someone else involved in the project to ask questions of other people instead of you … especially if those questions need to be asked of the person who assigned you this responsibility.

3. Adherence to deadlines. Your request for more time may be perfectly valid and reasonable, but it may make you seem ineffective anyway—in fact, any excuse you make along the way will hurt your image as a capable manager.

4. Communication—not too much, not too little. No one wants an excessive amount of updates documenting every inch of progress, but you shouldn't go totally cold either. Communicate only the essentials and you won't risk coming off as insecure.

5. Opinions. People respect those who complete a difficult task and share what they learned that can make similar efforts better in the future. When turning in a final report, add your specific thoughts to it. There's always something that can be improved—make sure you get credit for calling attention to it.