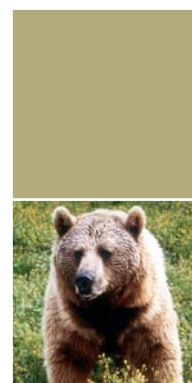


CHAPTER 14

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION



Some animal protection societies manage enormous projects, involving large amounts of resources. Yet only a few use professional project management methods. They may also be poor at feedback and evaluation and therefore their mistakes and shortcomings can be repeated. This means they could be wasting valuable resources, most importantly their hard-won donations and their most valuable asset – their people. They could also be delaying progress towards the achievement of their mission and adding to stress and burn-out. Project management tools can help organisations avoid all of these pitfalls.

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT: THE BASICS

A project is any activity that has:

- A unique task
- A specified target
- A set timescale
- A fixed budget.

Every project should aim to be:

- On time
- To specification
- On budget.

Project analysis: There should be considerable analysis before the start of the project, which gives consideration to the following:

- The project manager's role and responsibilities
- The stakeholders' interests
- Project objectives
- Alternatives
- Risk analysis.

3

PROJECT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

The project manager needs to complete the following planning activities:

- Identify clear project goals
- Define the project boundaries, referred to as 'scoping', what is included and what is not included in the project
- Recruit and build the team
- Agree how team members will work together
- Assess the work in broad terms
- Assign accountability and decide who will do what
- Assess risks and develop contingencies
- Assess potential implications for other departments and stakeholders and consult and involve them
- Assess project resources
- Develop a fundraising strategy with fundraising professionals, if possible
- Develop a project schedule
- Break the project down into manageable parts; sub-projects
- Agree the project budget



- Develop and write up a final project plan.

A brief overview of some of the main project planning activities follows. This is intended to give a general idea of some of the various activities involved, but should be viewed as a starting point.

Identify clear project goals: It is vital to identify clear project goals, ensuring that these provide maximum possible progress towards priority issue goals, as agreed in the organisational strategy.

Formulate your goals so that they are achievement-orientated, and not activity-orientated. For example, you could aim to recruit a certain number of campaigners; this would be an achievement-orientated goal. The goal would be activity-orientated if you aimed to set up a certain number of stalls to recruit new campaigners.

Defining the project scope: A 'scoping' statement does several things:

- It defines the project's place in a larger context
- It describes the major activities of the project
- It puts some boundaries on the project to define what the project will and will not do.

The project scoping statement contains the definition and detailed description of what will be produced by the project and the desired outcomes. It specifies the name and purpose of the project, the project manager's name and a statement of support and approval from the sponsor, if applicable.

Defining the project scope involves:

- Defining what is expected from the project and the criteria that will be used to evaluate results. This is very important as it sets out a template against which progress can be measured. Evaluation is very important for a number of reasons: it provides an opportunity to learn from past mistakes, it extracts useful feedback which can be conveyed to funders, members and supporters, and it identifies areas that can be improved upon
- Explaining how the project will contribute to the overall goals, as set out in the organisational strategy
- Clearly defining the methods, tasks, basic conditions, project objectives and final outcome(s)
- Defining the project boundaries; what is included and not included in the project
- Identifying all the stakeholders, persons or groups of people who are participating in the project, are interested in the project performance, or are constrained by the project
- Establishing the overall direction, expectations and constraints that the team will use when they plan the project.

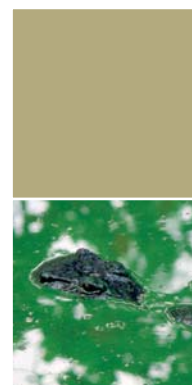
Recruit and build the team: Make sure you have the right people on the team and that they have all the training, development and support they need for the task.

Also ensure that all key stakeholders have some type of representation, to advise the team.

Allocation of responsibilities and accountability: Write out the allocation of responsibilities, including areas of budget responsibility and budgetary approval limits. A key feature of being accountable is being able to show that any money given was used for its intended purpose. To do this, an organisation must keep accurate and up-to-date records.

Assessing risk: Explore what might go wrong, then identify countermeasures to prevent problems from occurring and designate a team member who will be responsible for each countermeasure.

Resource planning: Identify the resources the project requires: personnel, money, equipment, materials, time, facilities etc. Optimise scheduling with respect to all available and procurable resources.





Developing a project schedule: Identify project phases, milestones and outcome schedules. Then schedule all the works that must be accomplished to meet the project key dates and objectives. Communicate the dates by which major accomplishments in the project will be completed to the project's sponsor, to the trustees, supporters, donors and other stakeholders.

Developing the project budget: Identify and calculate the prospective costs of project outcomes. Develop a spending budget, which includes the projected cost of the project.

Writing the project plan: Compile the information gathered in the course of the planning stage into a formal project plan and obtain formal approval from the project sponsor. Agree and document the procedures that will be used to make changes to the plan.

The project plan should include:

- Project goals
- Activities
- Allocation of responsibility with regard to budget and timeline
- Other departments involved
- Risk analysis and contingency planning
- Measurable project targets, and who is responsible for each target
- Progress reporting arrangements.

4 THE PLANNING CYCLE

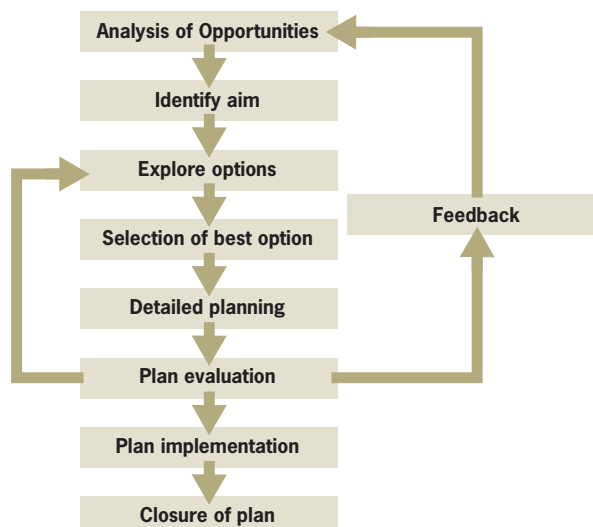
It is best to think of planning as a cycle, not a straight-line process.

Once you have devised a plan you should evaluate whether it is likely to succeed. This evaluation may be based on a number of factors, including cost and likelihood of success and impact. This analysis may show that your plan may cause unwanted consequences, may cost too much, or may simply not work.

In this case you should cycle back to an earlier stage. Alternatively you may have to abandon the plan altogether; the outcome of the planning process may be that it is best to do nothing!

Finally, you should feed back what you have learned from one plan into the next.

The Planning Cycle



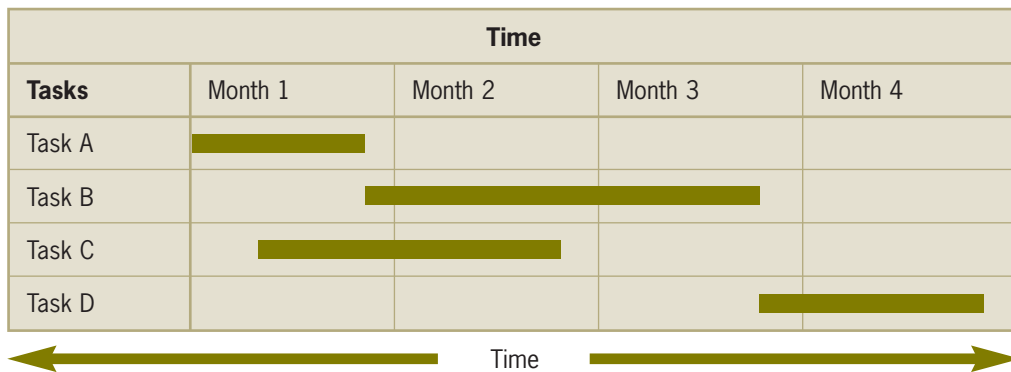
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ESTIMATING TIME ACCURATELY

Gantt Charts and Critical Path Analyses help you to plan all tasks that must be completed as part of a project. They act as the basis both for preparation of a schedule and of resource planning. During management of a project, they allow you to monitor achievement of project goals. They also help you to see where remedial action needs to be taken to get a project back on course.

Gantt Charts can be used to estimate time for small and medium sized projects, and Critical Path Analysis and PERT are generally used for large, complex projects.

Gantt Charts: A Gantt Chart is a time-line chart, which plots project activities against a calendar. Durations for each task are shown graphically on a time scale ranging from hours to a year. Views can be provided of tasks, resources, or resource usage by task, for example:



Gantt Charts:

- Help you to plan out the tasks that need to be completed
- Give you a basis for scheduling when these tasks will be carried out
- Allow you to plan the allocation of resources needed to complete the project
- Help you to manage the dependencies between tasks.

Typically, Gantt Charts indicate the exact duration of specific tasks, but they can also include:

- Relationship between tasks
- Planned and actual completion dates
- Cost of each task
- Person(s) responsible for each task
- Project milestones.

When a project is underway, Gantt Charts are useful for monitoring progress. You can immediately see what should have been achieved at a point in time and can therefore take remedial action to bring the project back on course. This can be essential for the successful and profitable implementation of the project.

Critical Path Analysis and Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) are powerful tools that help you to schedule and manage complex projects. They were developed in the 1950s to control large defence projects and have been used routinely since then.

The benefit of using Critical Path Analysis techniques over Gantt Charts is that Critical Path Analysis identifies tasks that must be completed on time for the whole project to be completed on time, and also identifies which tasks can be delayed for a while if resources need to be reallocated to catch up on missed tasks.





The disadvantage of Critical Path Analysis is that the relation of tasks to time is not as immediately obvious in complex projects as it is in Gantt Charts. This can make them more difficult to understand for someone who is not familiar with the technique.

A further benefit of Critical Path Analysis is that it helps you to identify the minimum length of time needed to complete a project. Where you need to run an accelerated project, it helps you to identify which project steps you should accelerate to complete the project within the available time. This helps you to minimise cost while still achieving your objective.

The Critical Path represents the sequence of tasks or events that directly affect the completion of a project. Knowing the Critical Path allows the project manager to shorten or at least control a project's schedule by focusing on those tasks that directly affect the project's completion.

Critical Path Analysis is an effective and powerful method of assessing:

- What tasks must be carried out
- Where parallel activity can be performed
- The shortest time in which you can complete a project
- Resources needed to execute a project
- The sequence of activities, scheduling and timings involved
- Task priorities
- The most efficient way of shortening time on urgent projects.

As with Gantt Charts, project managers in practise tend to use software tools like Microsoft Project to create Critical Path Analysis charts. Not only do these make them easier to draw, they also make modification of plans easier and provide facilities for monitoring progress against plans.

PERT (Programme Evaluation and Review Technique) is a variation on Critical Path Analysis that takes a slightly more sceptical view of time estimates made for each project stage. To use it, estimate the shortest possible time each activity will take, the most likely length of time and the longest time that might be taken, if the activity takes longer than expected.

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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO PROJECT SIZE

Large-scale projects: If a large-scale project is considered, it can be useful to carry out a smaller scale version, a pilot project, in order to test the project and methodology. This enables an assessment of value to be carried out, before launching into a major project that will involve a significant time and resource commitment. It will also:

- Allow operational problems to be anticipated and solved at an early stage
- Provide a positive practical example to bring funders and other stakeholders on board.

Simple projects are often best managed using simple timetables and action plans. These should be prepared and negotiated with project staff. These should contain sufficient control points to monitor project progress and take any appropriate remedial action.

Planning should aim to make the task easier, not to build unnecessary workloads. The simplest method for the task is often the best option.

EVALUATION

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An important stage of project management is evaluation. This cannot be done unless SMART targets (particularly measurable and timed targets) are agreed in advance. Evaluation is vital if the organisation is to continuously improve its performance and avoid repeating past mistakes. On no account should evaluation be viewed as a 'witch hunt', to apportion blame for project problems. It should be viewed as an important organisational tool to help learning and organisational development, maximising effectiveness (and therefore mission fulfilment).

There are many reasons why projects fail, including:

- Poor planning
- Time scales too ambitious
- Insufficient risk analysis
- Poor budgetary control
- No change/delay notices
- Lack of procedures
- Lack of effective monitoring and control
- Project manager was not empowered
- Team responsibilities were not clear



FURTHER RESOURCES

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Websites

Create a Gantt Chart in Excel

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/assistance/HA010346051033.aspx>

Gantt Chart and Timeline Centre

www.smartdraw.com/resources/centres/gantt/

Mind Tools – Project Planning

www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_PPM.htm

Project Management Institute

www.pmi.org/info/default.asp

Books

The Definitive Guide to Project Management: The Fast Track to Getting the Job Done on Time and on Budget

Sebastian Nokes

Publisher: Financial Times Prentice Hall

ISBN: 0273663976



Project Management, 3rd Ed.

Harvey Maylor

Publisher: FT Prentice Hall

ISBN: 0273655418



Project Management

Mike Field, Laurie Keller
Publisher: Thomson Learning
ISBN: 1861522746

Project Management for Dummies

Stanley Portney
Publisher: John Wiley and Sons Inc
ISBN: 076455283X

