**Quick & Dirty Project Management**

**Project Management Tips, Tools and Concepts That You Can Use Right Away!**

**What is a Project?**

A project is anything new or anything that’s a change. It has a timeframe: a start and an end.

**The Key to Successful Project Management is to Plan**

Create a plan that’s doable and execute the plan. Expect to spend 10-20% of the total project time on planning.

**TIPS FOR PLANNING**

**Start With Scope**

Scope defines the “deliverables” for your project – the product, service or end result and the work that needs to be accomplished to deliver it. Agreement on scope will keep your project on track. To determine scope, consider:

* What are we going to use it for?
* How is it going to work?
* What problem will it solve?
* What’s NOT going to be included? (out of scope)

**Next, Define the Tasks**

Break it down, then break it down, and then break it down again until the work can be assigned to single individuals (or teams) as manageable pieces and well-defined tasks. Input from others at this stage will help you see things you have missed.

**Then, Schedule the Tasks**

Starting with your list of tasks, add **sequencing** and **duration**.

**Sequencing** considers relationships and dependencies. Think about:

* What needs to be finished before something else can start?
* Where can you do things simultaneously?
* What can happen now or anytime?

**Duration** considers how long each task will take to complete. Work from the task list and be realistic! Some methods for estimating duration include**:**

* PERT or Three-Point Estimate (optimistic time + (4 x most likely time) + pessimistic time)/6
* Add 10% (or more or less based on your personal tendencies) for contingency

**Think About Your Stakeholders**

A stakeholder is anyone who can be impacted by the outcomes of your project. A key stakeholder is anyone who is committed to deliver (and therefore has the most at stake). Stakeholders alone determine whether your project was a success. **Create a Stakeholder Register** to identify your stakeholders and their interests and to plan your communications.

**Think About Risk**

All projects include risk because all projects involve change. Risks impact time and cost. They can be threats (negative impact) or opportunities (positive impact). **Create a Risk Register** to identify risks, assess their probability and impact, and to plan your strategy to deal with them.

**TIPS FOR EXECUTING THE PLAN**

**Remember, Planning is a Continuous Process**

Planning should be progressive and iterative. The plan will change as we go along and learn more. It’s like mapping a new coastline; things will become clearer as they get closer. You should revisit and revise the plan constantly – including scope, schedules and budgets – and communicate changes immediately.

**Communicate!**

Communicate early and often to keep stakeholders engaged, informed and on side.

**Celebrate!**

Before you head off to the next thing, spend some time to celebrate the end of the project and thank those who participated.

**Document!**

In addition to wrapping up loose ends and filing key paperwork, don’t forget to capture lessons learned.