

# INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT

How many of you have had what you thought was a great idea that was going to make you rich and famous? You were so excited about it that you told everybody about it! And then slowly and quietly, it just disappeared into thin air?

Do not bury your ideas! Salute them and honor them! A good idea is a gift from God, but if you do not give it life, nurture it and prosper it, it will remain dormant and soon be forgotten.

When someone has an idea for a new business or project, he or she is usually told to go get a business plan. How much will a business plan cost? Anywhere from \$350 to \$1000. Is the person going to spend that amount of money on an idea that might not materialize? If the answer is “no” then another idea and potential small project might never become a reality.

I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME IDEAS THAT COULD HELP YOU START A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT WITHOUT TOO MUCH RED TAPE, BUT WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW.

## **1. Where to Begin.** Start with an Idea AND WRITE IT DOWN!

What is an Idea? “Any conception existing in the mind as a result of mental understanding, awareness, or activity.”

“An opinion, view or belief. A plan of action; an intention.” *The idea of becoming a Motivational Speaker.* ( The Random House College Dictionary Revised Edition)

## **2. Questions to ask about an Idea.**

After you have written down the idea, here are some questions to ask yourself about developing the idea into a project:

- What is the objective of the project?
- Who will benefit?
- What problem(s) will it solve?
- What will it accomplish?
- How will it be work?
- How will it start?
- When will it start?
- How much will it cost?
- Who will pay for it?
- When will it end?
- Who will do it?
- Who are the interested persons?

## **3. Prepare a Project Proposal**

When you have some answers in your mind, begin to write down your thoughts in the form of a Project Proposal. Include all the answers to the above questions. Try and do this while the idea and your thoughts are still fresh in your mind. Keep adding new thoughts to your proposal until it develops into a presentable format.

When I was learning project management in the early 1970s things were a lot different than they are today. We had typewriters and stencil machines to work with. Not computers. So we did a simple Project Proposal on one or two sheets of paper, and got a tentative approval from the sponsor to go ahead and develop the plans before we incurred any costs for feasibility studies, etc.

We built a basic school and successfully hosted all of the Jaycees International Western Hemisphere Chapter Delegates, (some speaking English and some speaking Spanish) and did

many other projects using this method. The principles of managing a project have not changed. They have simply become more sophisticated as more writers make their contributions to the subject. A Business Plan may also be used as a Project Proposal.

#### **4. Suggested sequence of events in Project Development/Management/Planning.**

- Begin with an Idea
- Do a project proposal - (now called the **Project Definition**)
- Get approval from the people who will have a major control over the project's success
- Do a feasibility study – is the goal attainable?
- Do a general Risk Management Study - (brainstorming for potential problems).
- Prepare a Plan of Action
- Begin building a management team

#### **5. Follow up after Project Plan prepared.**

a. Check to see if the project is too large, that is, has too many goals and objectives, and not sufficient human resources – you will almost always need to do a **WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE – (WBS)** - that is: you break down the project into manageable tasks. By doing this you can more accurately determine the cost to operate the whole project, by summing up the cost of each work package. The **WBS** also makes it easier to estimate the time it will take for the project to move from one stage to the next.

b. Plan to devote sufficient time to the project – allocate a specific time each day, week or month.

c. Make proper financial plans to run the project - do not expect the same member who paid the attorney's fees for incorporation to pay the cost of the stationary, licensing fees, office equipment, etc.

d. Do everything to get proper training for the people who will manage the project - especially the secretary and assistant Project Manager.

e. Maintain properly recorded minutes of the meetings so as to avoid confusion and/or misunderstanding and to maintain the integrity of your business.

f. Complete a detailed and thorough Risk Management Study, and document the Risk Reduction Plans.

#### **6. What to do with the Plan.**

a. If the project can be managed and operated by you alone then go for it! Research all the known facts about the project and become completely knowledgeable so that good decisions are made. If possible, join an association whose members have similar goals as you do for the development of your project.

b. If the project needs a team of people to manage it, then look for potential partners who compliment each other's skills and share the same goals.

c. Find someone who can help you raise the money to launch the project - AND "WORK YOUR PLAN!"

**Copyright (c) 2003 by Eugene Fitz-Ritson, Miami, Florida  
All Rights Reserved**