

Your Easy Project Plan!

An easy and professional
project plan to support successful delivery



Natalie Bramble

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Extract:

Easy Project Plans

Project Plans can be complex or as simple as you need to make them. This project plan get's into a bit of detail and is suitable for beginners and intermediate planners.

The thing is you either need information from people who are involved in a project or you need to give information to people who are going to support your project.

Follow this guide and you'll soon have a fantastic project plan at your fingertips ready for the next grant or tender opportunity; sponsor or partner!

Download the manual and template and start filling it out as you work through the eCourse.

Disclaimer

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About the Author



Natalie Bramble

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Natalie is a popular trainer and assessor for Diploma and Certificate IV Governance and has developed RTO training material for programs including the Diploma of Project Management.

Often customizing governance training for funding audits and board requirements, Natalie has delivered training and facilitated planning and workshop sessions across Australia working with Councils, Non-Government Organisations, Not-for-profit and businesses. Boards, Chairs, CEOs, project and management staff also gain valuable insights and achieve their development goals through her mentoring programs. Natalie specialises in increasing individual and community capacity through awareness, education and support.

'Fun', 'Relevant', 'Entertaining' and 'Practical' are just some of the words participants use to describe Natalie's engaging presentation style.

She holds the TAE (Trainer Assessment) qualification, has studied Bachelor of Business (Tourism Management) and has a Post-Graduate qualification in Entrepreneurial Management, is due to complete her Masters in the first half of 2013 and holds certification in other disciplines including governance and project management. Natalie is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance.

'I just wanted to say a HUGE thank you for the amazing training in Byron last month, your delivery was fantastic and the content was just what we needed.'

'After doing the training we have just secured two major sponsors. I am the social butterfly rather than an amazing writer, thanks for giving us the tools to make this happen'

Alice Cadwell, General Manager Spaghetti Circus Inc.

*This manual is designed to be read as you complete your
Easy Project Management Plan from the provided template
and watch the eCourse provided to you*

These resources are available FREE at www.nataliebramble.com.au

What is a project plan?

The great thing about doing a project plan is that it helps you, your team and project partners know exactly what the project is about, who is involved and what needs to happen to get it off the ground.

This particular plan has been used by a number of different organisations to do everything from developing a project outline for a grant application; developing each event element of a month long festival to documenting a building extension to provide to corporate sponsors.

1. The Name

Before you get too excited, this step is better saved until last! It's like writing an assignment - while you can be clear about what you want to say, you need to see how it develops and looks before giving it a name.

If you have already done some work in this area and came up with your name - fabulous, you may read the last page in this workbook.

For the rest of us, just skip over the following three fields:

- Project Title
- Brief Description
- Project Alignment

2. Project Background

It's useful to understand the background to the project. Also consider documenting the reasons why you are doing the project. Here are a few questions to ask yourself when writing this.

- What was the need that drove the project?
- How does this project meet that need?
- Were there other solutions that were being considered?
- If so, why was this project selected above the other solutions?
- Who supports the project?
- Is there any community/iindustry demand for the project?

3. Scope Statement

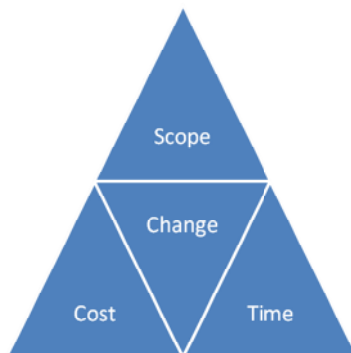
A common term in projects is 'scope'. Scope refers to the boundaries of a project in terms of who, what, where, how and when.

You may have heard the term 'scope creep', which refers to projects that are moving beyond what was originally agreed. If you believe scope creep is happening to your project you must stop and reflect on the impacts that the changes have overall to the project.

One of the fundamental principles of Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) is the Scope Triangle (also known as Quality Triangle).

The basis is that 3 main things affect your project:

1. Scope
2. Cost
3. Time



Whenever one of these changes, it affects the others. So when scope changes to include an additional room, this will increase the time the project needs to be completed and the cost. Likewise, if an element is removed from scope it has potential to reduce the time and cost.

The below three elements contribute to your scope statement.

1. Project Objectives
2. Project Outcomes
3. Quality Statement

Project Objectives

This is really addressing the 'why'. Why are we doing the project? Another way of thinking about objectives is 'purpose'. I know you have said there is a need and/or demand but that does not necessarily lead to a project being put forward. So, what is it about this project that has made you propose or commit to exploring the project? What objectives are you seeking to achieve?

Project Outcomes

Outcomes can be tangible and include purchasing 100 chairs, renovations of the building or intangible such as individuals feeling their sense of community has improved. Think about measurable success indicators. What do they look like?

Quality Statement

Before you begin the project it is important to be clear about what quality goals need to be met. For some of you, this could be adherence to specific legislation and for others it may be a statement that the first client interview will occur within 10 minutes of arrival.

One last thing... inclusions and exclusions

I know we've talked about scope creep and how important it is to define the boundaries of the project so here is where we get more specific.

Be sure to clearly specify what the project will include and what it won't

4. Project Success

What measures will determine that the project was a success?

It is important to be holistic when setting these measures as you will use them to benchmark against during and after the project. Remember to also ask your sponsors and/or partners what success looks like to them.

One of the frustrations that many of us face with projects is that the goal posts for success measures change if they are not written down clearly, communicated and reported against regularly, during and after the project.

It is important that you are clear about the measures of success and specific about the measures of those — are they percentages or numbers?

An example of a specific measure of success would be:

Success Criteria	Measure
Number of attendees	350

Identify any barriers

Let's think through this one! What is going to hold you back? Reflect on what you said the project will deliver and the success measures.

Funding is probably a standard one but perhaps others may include lack of procedures to manage the new program/service; delays in contractor timelines etc.

You may prefer to note these items in the risk register that follows. I like separating the two as the risk register only asks for major risks, yet there are a number of things that may happen which have the potential to hold back, delay or derail the project.

5. Resources

What resources are required to complete the project and what do you have available? It's important to identify any gaps in these now and discuss how you will resolve these.

Resources could be anything—consider these areas:

- financial
- human
- equipment
- Infrastructure
- knowledge

6. Assumptions

In our eagerness and with a positive outlook, we tend to make a lot of assumptions about the project. If for example we are delivering a series of workshops, we assume that the people who signed up for the first workshop will continue until the end.

Realistically we know that there is a failure rate but do we put anything in place to address this assumption?

What assumptions are you making? How will you address these?

7. Risk Register

By now, you have probably identified a theme in the previous three areas: project success, resources and assumptions. Now is the time to combine those areas together with any other risks that you have identified.

Ideally, you would have a risk register that addressed each one however for the purpose of the plan, you only need to detail the major project risks and comment on how you will avoid or manage those.

If you have stated that controls will include additional things such as resources go back to this section and ensure that you have included them.

8. Project Manager

Stakeholders want to know who is managing the project and the knowledge, skills and experience they have, particularly in delivering similar projects.

Be sure to include a brief position statement about the role's responsibilities. Also include a short biography for the project manager.

9. Project Team Members

Projects need good leaders as much as they need good team members! In particular, consider any experience and/or knowledge gaps there may be in the existing project and stakeholders and address this by appointing suitable people to the team.

Be clear about what positions are on the team and the role each of these have in the project.

10. Stakeholder Analysis

One thing that everyone needs to know is, who else is involved in the project and how!

Stakeholders can be individuals or organisations who have involvement in the project. It is important to understand their motivation.

It's also a good chance to really analyse what you bring to the relationship as much as what they are offering you.

Let's cover the main points here:

Their interests

By asking this question of your stakeholders you will ensure that you are clearer about how you can assist them and what they are getting out of the relationship.

What we want

I'm sure you'll have some definite ideas around this!

Perceived attitudes/risks

Now is the time to bring out the devil's advocate. In particular, we need to explore any perceived risks there may be with stakeholders.

11. Timeline

Choose a start and end date of your project, even though this might change, it needs to be written down as a guide. Be realistic with your dates!

If the start or end dates changes you might need to implement change control.

Now, it is time to identify major milestones for the project and when they think they will happen. Use the 'Project Success' section to help create milestones.

Milestones assist to identify key events in the project and also remind the team and stakeholders why you are doing the project. Remember to celebrate your milestones as the project goes forward!

12. Budget

Under estimate your income and over estimate the expenses! This allows a little 'fat' in the budget for those unexpected expenses that always arise and gives a little margin for error.

If the project is multi-staged over a long time you may need to account for CPI increases.

When you are costing a project, think about the tangible and intangible costs. The budget should also show assumptions and any income reliance such as grant and/or sponsorship funding. If there is reliance, it's important to write down what expense item it is connected too. If the reliance is connected to the concrete slab then there isn't much point in commencing procurement of supplies to build the shed unless the funding for the slab is secured!

As this budget is usually based on estimations it will need to be finalised and then revised and renewed as the project progresses.

It is essential to make key stakeholders aware of any big changes, to ensure that it does not impact upon the scope or time of the project.

Further Resources:

Our Community fact sheets:

- http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=731
- http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/financial/financial_article.jsp?articleid=2204

Training and/or Mentoring: Call me! – 0409 814 654 or email natalie@nbmanagement.com.au

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