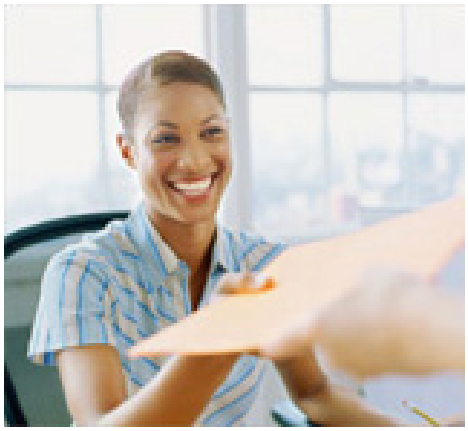
# Project Management Made Easy



Project management is vital to the success of any project. While it's easy to get overwhelmed when faced with a large project you can help ensure smooth transitions by having a good project management system. At first glance, all you see is a huge end result that is supposed to occur at some distant point in the future, with no clear plan of how to get from A to B. Project management is actually quite easy, when you have the right road map…

## BITE-SIZED PROJECT MANAGEMENT IS BETTER

Every project, no matter how large, is just a series of smaller tasks. The point of project management is to figure out what those tasks are, and list them in the order in which they need to be completed. For example, if you are putting together your company's annual budget, the steps might include:

- create a chart of accounts
- gather financial data from each department
- list big expenditures for the next year
- calculate cost projections
- compile the report

It seems a lot less overwhelming when you focus on smaller tasks. And if a particular step still seems too big, break it down even further. Get to the cellular level, if that's the project management strategy that works for you.

## WORK BACKWARD

Your next step is to create a project management schedule that will allow you to complete the project on time. Start at the end and work your way backward from your final deadline. Ask yourself when each previous step must be completed for the next step to happen on time. If your deadline for the budget is 11/1, you might need the cost projections by 10/20 so you have time to write the report. You must have the list of expenditures and financial data by 10/13 to give you time to calculate cost projections, so plan to finalize your chart of accounts by 10/7. This is the main function of project management. Planning will help your project management process flow much better. By setting smaller "milestones" along the way, you can see progress toward your goal, know that you are on track to complete the project in time, and remove some of the pressure of "THE DEADLINE".

## YOUR "PROJECT MANAGEMENT BOX"

Another key to successful project management is organizing your materials. Project files are unlike your other home and office files – they are temporary, and will only be used until the project is completed. So assign a separate drawer or portable hanging file box for your project paperwork. You might also need storage for larger project tools. For example, when remodeling the kitchen, you might have a tub with flooring samples, wallpaper swatches, paint brushes, and cabinet hardware. Give yourself as much room as you need.

## STAYING ON TOP OF WHAT YOUR TEAM IS DOING

If your project involves other people, it's important to have a project management system for keeping everyone on track. Create a log of tasks for which each person is responsible with milestones and deadlines for each. Be sure to schedule regular team meetings so you have time for brainstorming, group problem-solving, and following up with each member to make sure he or she hasn't hit a roadblock along the way.

These simple project management strategies will help you break down and finish the projects that are you responsibility. Decide what project management solutions work for you and always stick with it.

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