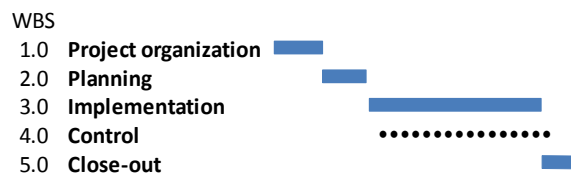


Life's a project. You've just been assigned a project. Maybe it's big, like developing a new facility, or perhaps it's small, like creating the booth at the next trade show. But the principles of project management are the same, and this one page will get you started.

Gantt chart

The first step in organizing any project is to brainstorm all its tasks, how long they'll take and what their sequence should be. Those ideas should then be organized into a time line (an idea of Henry Gantt, so it's often called a Gantt chart).



Your project team will help you develop the Gantt chart which will, in turn, help you draft a budget, identify the types of vendors you'll need to hire, and set the key decision points. The right column is a generic list of tasks, called a Work Breakdown Schedule.

Resources

There are lots of online and software tools for managing projects and all their information. Try www.gantter.com for a simple, sharable version.

You can read about project management on Wikipedia and in books like *Project Management for Dummies*. Many colleges and universities have project management programs (the one offered by the University of Wisconsin's Executive Education is excellent). There are many project management associations.

Tips

- Give yourself time to plan
- Talk to someone who's led a similar project
- Know when to dive into the details
- Don't let the early days slip away
- Make sure everyone sees the big picture
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

A successful project is a great career-builder, so training and equipping yourself to run projects is smart to do.

Generic Work Breakdown Schedule (WBS)

1. Project organization

- 1.1. Assign project manager
- 1.2. Draft Work Breakdown Schedule
- 1.3. Set preliminary goals, budget, deadline
- 1.4. Establish the team
- 1.5. Establish communications protocol
- 1.6. Set up project file system
- 1.7. *Tips*
 - Leadership starts on the first day
 - Balance the team's talent and styles

2. Planning

- 2.1. Write 1-page goal statement
- 2.2. Update Work Breakdown Schedule
- 2.3. Conduct analyses
- 2.4. Create conceptual solutions
- 2.5. Refine alternatives
- 2.6. Assess risks
- 2.7. Conduct cost/benefit analyses (iterative)
- 2.8. Choose final solution
- 2.9. Assess contingencies for money, time
- 2.10. Finalize budget, deadlines
- 2.11. Set Go/No-Go points
- 2.12. *Tips*
 - Planning is creative, so give it time
 - Projects must serve the business plan

3. Implementation

- 3.1. Provide, obtain financing
- 3.2. Select vendors
- 3.3. Establish quality protocols
- 3.4. Key vendor task 1 [with subtasks]
- 3.5. Key vendor task 2, etc.
- 3.6. Key internal task 1 [with subtasks]
- 3.7. Key internal task 2, etc.
- 3.8. Win approvals (bank, board, gov't, etc.)
- 3.9. *Tips*
 - Be decisive
 - Change reluctantly, but be open

4. Control

- 4.1. Set up financial variance reports
- 4.2. Review progress with team often
- 4.3. Report progress to the boss monthly
- 4.4. Evaluate team and vendor performance
- 4.5. *Tips*
 - Pounce on time, money variances
 - Congratulate good problem-solvers

5. Close-out

- 5.1. Formally close out vendor contracts
- 5.2. Celebrate success
- 5.3. Evaluate process
- 5.4. Evaluate results
- 5.5. *Tips*
 - Be a stickler for a clean set of files
 - Take this chance to learn and brag