

Project Planning Steps from the start

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March 30, 2008

Executive Summary

So your project is now a project. You have a budget and an expectation to deliver something against a timeline. Well done, you are the Project Manager! To assist you on your journey, certain ground rules and project planning should be agreed upon. This is where you build your roadmap of understanding between stakeholders, the executive and their accountabilities.

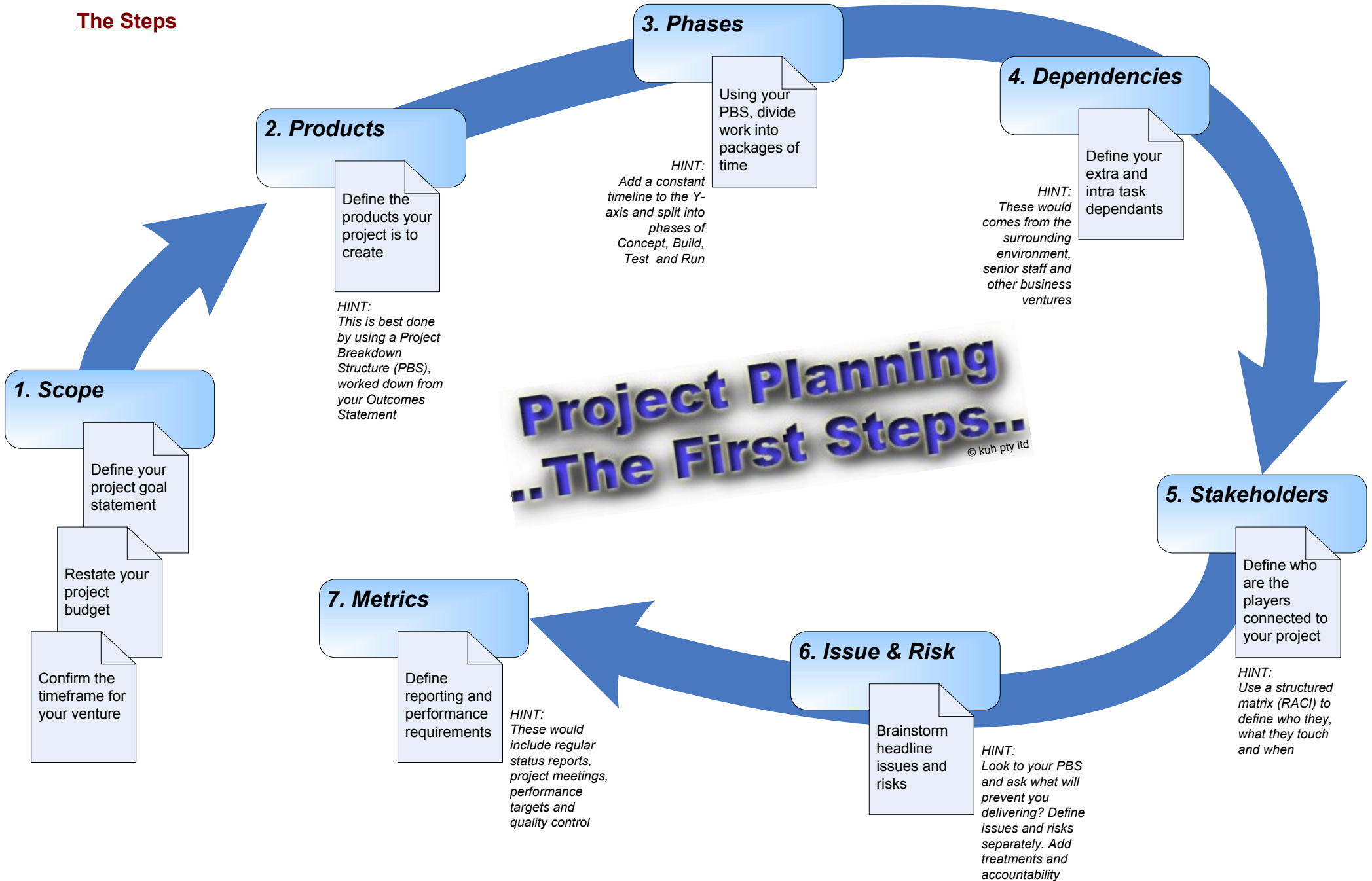
Herein are presented logical steps whereby you, the Project Manager, may use to define your project by making transparent its' scope, stakeholders, effort, products, finances, dependencies, method and risk.

The best way to achieve maximum results is to lock all the keys players in a room and work through these steps in a facilitated workshop session. Use whiteboards, key cards, activities and collaboration to hold interest and motivations high and keep them goal focused. Each module should be quick and to the point to avoid apathy with positive outcomes documented later that can form the foundation of your formal project management plan.

This is the beginning of your road as a team and all will be working together closely in the near future. This is your chance to start building rapport with your team and also for the team to begin knowing their project peers

Let's begin...!

The Steps



Final Thoughts

These steps have been designed to provide minimum project information to enable a collaborative, smooth and transparent project working environment. It can typically be completed in two hours however will vary with the magnitude of the project.

Once you have completed one cycle of this process, you should have the following pieces of butchers paper or whiteboard prints:

1. Project identification and measurement criteria (Step 1 and 7)
2. A Product Breakdown Structure showing project deliverables and roughly divided into a phased project timeline (Steps 2 and 3)
3. A matrix defining your project dependencies (Step 4)
4. A matrix defining your project stakeholders and their high-level responsibility and accountability (Step 5)
5. A matrix defining headline issues and risks including treatment action and assigned responsibility (Step 6).

This information should later be distilled off-line, entering into your project control system and distributed to your team.

Remember, this should be an energetic and scalable process that flows and keeps enthusiasms high. Hence this should be viewed as a high-level discovery process only. Further loops may be run at regular intervals or form part of your regular status meetings to increase the level of detail. Particular focus should be on issue, risk and stakeholder management.

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Glenn McTaggart has been involved in delivering change via programs of work for over ten years. He provides professional services that explore new and proven approaches in linking organisational change and transformation with the value of effective program and project management concepts. For further information on the content of this paper and discussion on how Glenn can assist your project organisation please contact the author today.

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