

Daniel Hall Presents



Episode 143

**Secrets of Using Project Management to
Complete More Projects So You Can Make
More Money**

with Jacqueline Grant

**Promise: How the Project Management
Methodology Can Be Applied to All Your
Projects**

Thank you for having me. I am a member of the Real Fast Community, so I am very, very happy to be here. Here's my big promise. Everyone uses the word "project". We hear it all of the time, but I'm going to tell you what a project is, as well as what it is not. **You'll learn exactly what a project is, and how the benefits of this globally accepted and recognize the project management methodology can be applied to your business, your book writing, as well as your personal and professional projects.** With this knowledge, you'll be able to execute them more efficiently and more effectively, thus saving time and money.

What is a Project?

A “project” is a unique endeavor undertaken with a specific beginning and specific end time to produce a specific product, service, or result. So, in essence, anything and everything can be a project. And, what does a real project plan really consist of? Let’s ask this question. Would you like to know, in advance of starting any project, how long it will take, how much it will cost, what you’ll need to perform the various tasks, and what tasks you need to do each and every day? If you are anything like me, sometimes I’ll wake up and wonder, “What am I going to do today?” If you have a project plan, you’ll know exactly what to do every day, and how to get to your end goal quicker, faster, and with great results!

Why Should I Use Project Management?

It gives you the best practices that big business uses. Why should you use those big business practices? It’s because they are tested, tried, and true. If you can benefit from what the big guys do, it will help you in your business as well.

Define the Scope of Your Project

Well, one word that we use in project management is “scope,” and one thing that can technically derail any project is not having a clearly defined scope. When you have a clearly defined scope, I call it the, “who, what, where, why, and how” of your project. If you can think through all of those “W’s with an H at the end” you’ll be able to clearly define your projects, so that when opportunities and those shiny objects come your way, you’ll know exactly what is a part of your project and what is not.

When you think about who your project or your book is for, it’s not just about who the end result reader is, but who else needs to be involved to help you get to your end result. Who are the surrounding people that need to be your support? Who are you going to use as a publisher? Who are you going to use to read the manuscript and proofread it? There are all of these “who’s,” not just one “who”. It’s many “who’s,” and the deeper you can dig, the better. What is your project about? What is your book about? Why is it important? How are you going to develop it? If you think through all of the “who, what, where, when, why, and how,” you’ll be able to have a clearly defined scope that keeps you on track.

Why Should I Identify the Scope of My Project?

Well, one thing you always want to do is survey your end user. Who is your target audience? Take a survey and ask them questions that are important to your particular project because you are going to be able to get what we call “requirements”. **What is the end result, and what is your end user requiring from your particular product, service, or result?** When you can interview them and are able to get their wording, their thoughts, and you can put that into your project, then it’s going to become a match for your target audience because they are going to see themselves in your project.

That's the very first step. That's what we call "requirements gathering". It's when you get all of the information from your target audience, who is your prospective reader, if you are creating a book, let's say. Then, once you have gathered those requirements, you develop your plan. This is where we, as visionaries, come in, and we have to think through everything from "A to Z" before we actually start doing anything.

Again, as part of this planning, you have to be able to look at risk and what types of tasks you need to accomplish. With that good project management plan, and all of the details that are incorporated in that, you'll be able to make sure that if any risk occurs, or if anything happens, you'll have a plan to be able to take care of it. You won't try to take care of it in the midst of your actual project.

Here's an example. You may recall the days of Katrina, when that very terrible event happened. There was not a very great plan in place, and thus, when the event happened, they were trying to figure out what to do in the midst of the event itself. If you have a good plan in place in advance, if and when a risk occurs, then you just go into action. You just put that plan into place, and you're saving time, you're saving money, and you have a better outcome.

When you think through the risk, and you think through all of the steps that need to be taken, then you can look at all of the aspects of the project from a number of different perspectives. That way, you'll be able to account for anything that might happen. If you are anything like me, or any of the clients that I work with, the original plan is never what happens at the end.

So, when you look at the entire projects from different perspectives, and you incorporate the other people, who might either be your readers or those who might be helping you with the project, you get outside your own head, and you're able to see things from other perspectives. Those people become part of your project team because they can give you other perspectives besides your own. So, it gives you additional insight.

Are There Ways to Go About Identifying the Risks?

One thing you can do is look at previous, similar projects. The Real Fast Results podcast is one source that allows you to look into what others have done in different aspects of publishing, writing, and getting stuck in the writing process. So, you can learn from others who have done similar previous projects and pull from that what might apply to your specific project.

How Do I Develop a Plan for Each Risk Identified?

The great thing about project management is that it helps you to qualify and quantify your risks. In other words, you can qualify them by identifying whether they are a high, medium, or low type of risk, and you can attach a dollar figure to those risks so that when you are putting together your schedule and your budget for your project. Then, should those risks occur, you have a budget for that already.

That's one of the best things about this. Before you actually start a project, you can now all of the financial outlays that might be necessary, and you know all of the timeframes of every task that you have to accomplish. That way, you know how long your project might be, and if there are any delays, you know how to incorporate that into the schedule.

This causes you to feel more accomplished because you are on-time, and you're on-budget, and should any risk occur, you have a plan for that as well. You'll be much more at ease, mentally, this way, and in the team that you're working with, everyone will know their role, what they are supposed to do, and what they are responsible for. So, this just makes the entire experience much more enjoyable.

What's Next?

You've identified the "requirements" of a project, the scope of your project, and you've identified the risk. So, you know what you are going to do if those risk happen to occur. **After that, you are going to monitor and control.** As you start to execute your project, you are going to make sure that you always go back to your plan. We all have those business plans that sit on our shelves, they build dust, and we never look at them again. A project plan is actually a living document.

You always want to go back and make sure... This is what we call "iteration," which just means you go back and make sure that what you are actually doing is what you planned to do in the beginning. Once more, we can get off the path following those shiny objects that I referred to earlier, and where we start may not necessarily be where we end up. We might go off on a tangent, and then we have to work our way back to what we originally planned to do.

When you do your "iterations," or those monitoring and controlling types of activities, you are always checking back, through milestones, to make sure that what you actually decided to do in the beginning is what you are doing as you execute the project. So, if you are starting off by writing a book about "A," it doesn't end up being a book about "C". If so, it means you are off track, so you always want to make sure that what you decided in the beginning is what you are doing as you execute. Some projects can be pretty long. They might take three months, six months, a year, or more to complete them, and it can be very easy to get off track.

What Else Should I Consider?

Well, one basic management saying is, "You can't manage what you can't measure." So, it's important to document what you're doing so that as you go back and check, you have some documentation to refer to that will allow you to say, "If I'm going to make an 8 ½ x 11 book, and now that we've gone through the writing and editing process, I don't end up with a book that is 6 x 8." We want to make sure that what we decided in the beginning is actually what we are going to create at the end. That's what we are going to have as our outcome.

Those monitoring and controlling aspects are important, but you also want to make sure to get feedback from the right target audience. You want to get feedback to make sure that what you are creating is still applicable because things change so quickly, especially if it's something that's technology

related. Since things change so quickly, the demand may have changed. So, you always want to go back and check to see that what you are creating is still applicable to your target audience. That way, when you finish the project, you can make sure it's going to be something that's in demand for the population that might want your book, your course, and so forth.

Why is This Important?

The basics of project management is being able to adjust to market conditions, which again, makes it perfect for entrepreneurs, writers, speakers, and small business owners. When you are able to adjust on the fly, that gives you a competitive edge. That gives you market accessibility as the market quickly changes. The reason why project management even became such a hot topic... It has been around for ages, but if you remember, around 2008 and 2010 we had a great economic downturn. Companies were laying off staff, and they had to learn how to do more with fewer people.

Once things turned around, they didn't go back to hiring the same amount of people that they had before. They learned how to operate on a lean basis, and they continued to do that. That's why the demand for a project management skill set is so high. Companies want to do more with less, and likewise, as entrepreneurs, coaches, and authors, we often start on their own, and we grow and scale slowly. So, this is a way that we can operate in a very lean manner, but still have the effectiveness of big business.

What Should I Do After I Get Feedback and Modify My Project?

You can move on to close your project. This doesn't entail just handing a finished project over to the public or making it accessible to them, but also documenting what worked and what didn't. That way, when you start a new project, or the next version of your project, you have your own "lessons learned" to refer back to. The next time you do a similar project, you'll have your own documentation to know what to do, how to do it, what did work, and what didn't work. Thusly, you'll be able to do that project even more efficiently.

This is just one more way that you have the fruits of your completed project to benefit from. So, not only do you have the satisfaction of getting it done, but this gives you the momentum to move forward into the next project, and the next one, and the next one. It's such a satisfying feeling because, now, you have success under your belt, you have a strategy that you can follow, a roadmap that you can follow, and you can take your next project to new heights because you have success to build upon. That's a great foundation.

Is There Anything Else You'd Like to Add?

I want to share with you the idea that you are already a project manager. You have, likely, already come up with strategies and processes to create the things you've already pursued, whether this involved a professional endeavor or your own business. You are already a project manager, but when you implement project management methodology on top of your subject matter expertise, everything you do will become super-charged.

If you are already a project manager, you can take this methodology, apply it, and have a step-by-step plan. That way, you'll never have to wonder what to do next, or what to do on any given day. Some questions that I often get asked are, "How can I create my own project plan," or, "What needs to happen to have my own project plan," or, "How long does it take to create my own project plan?" The answers to those questions are different for every project because every project is unique. However, there are ways to be able to calculate based on previous or similar projects what your project might require, as far as time, cost, and scope.

So, the questions that I most often get are, "How long does it take," and, "Can I create my own?" My answers are, "Yes, you can create your own," and how long it would take will depend on the results of similar or previous projects. With a step-by-step, detailed plan, you can make what you are trying to do even more effective. **Just to tie it all together, the five processes of project management are:**

1. Initiating – Where you are gathering all of your historical information, looking into any previous projects, and researching your end user, such as finding out what they want.
2. The Planning Process – This is where you plan out your schedule, your budget, and the tasks that need to be done.
3. Executing – This is when you actually start to do the project that you have planned.
4. Monitoring & Controlling – This is where you are always going back and checking to make sure that you are on track with what you said you were going to do in the beginning.
5. Closing Out the Project – The process of handing a finished project over to the public or making it accessible to them, as well as documenting what worked and what didn't.

What If I Like to Be More Free Flowing?

Project management, or what we call the "waterfall," foundational way of doing project management requires you to plan out everything before you get started. What you are referring to is known as "agile project management". You may have heard that term before. It's one that many people are referring to these days. "Everyone wants to be agile." Well, "agile" really just means flexible, and "agile project management," just refers to the fact that we don't know everything ahead of time. The truth is that we can't plan for everything ahead of time, so we start with what we do know.

We go through what we call a "sprint," working with what we do know, and by the end of that sprint, we have more information. So, we do another sprint, and in that way, you are doing your project management in sections or phases. This gives you the ability to plan and work with what you do know until you complete that split and gain more information. You gain more information by getting feedback from what we call your "stakeholders," which are the people who are on your team and the people who would be the end users of your project.

This is another aspect of project management. It's built upon the foundation of traditional project management. Again, "agile project management," is where you work in sprints based on what you do have. This is also called, "progressive elaboration," which just means you are working with what you have until you have more information. So, you can still manage your projects in this way.

Actually, in this marketplace, more projects are moving towards that combination of traditional project management and agile project management because most projects, these days, can't be planned very far in advance. That's because things just change so quickly nowadays, such as suppliers, technology, and so on. Things change rapidly, and the way to be able to respond to those changes is by working in smaller increments, as opposed to trying to plan out an entire project. This is especially true if it's rather large and takes a long time. Things are more apt to change the longer a project goes on.

When I train my students, who want to become certified in project management, they often find that they have done project management, but they've been calling the steps and the process something different. They have created their own process, that's all. The strategy is much the same.

Connecting with Jacqueline

My email address is JGrant@The-Management-Academy.com. If you suffer from "shiny object syndrome," and you have multiple projects and can't seem to determine which to do or which is most beneficial, I have a gift for you. This gift is meant to help you pick through your various projects and make sure that you are working on the most profitable one. If you go to <https://bit.ly/myprojectpicker-daniel>, you'll get a free app. This isn't available in The App Store. It's something that I'm giving to this audience, specifically.

Again, this will help you to pick through your projects, and often, the results are surprising. The one that you think would be the most profitable, often times is not. This tool will give you a ranking which will let you know what project you should work on first!

Resource:

<https://bit.ly/myprojectpicker-daniel>

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