



IAF Africa Conference 2005

The FastPLAN™ Project Planning Method

Presented By Jerome Passmore, CPF PMP



Introductions

Please...

- Introduce yourself (name, where from, what you do?)



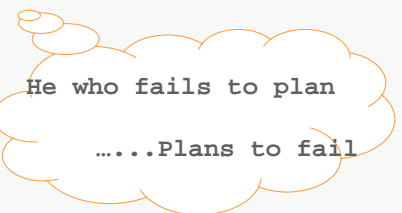
Session Objective

- Participate in crafting a sound work breakdown structure and network diagram in planning the scope of a project, using accelerated tools and techniques



Key Project Planning Concepts

Principles, Definitions and Terms



Why Project Plans Fail

- Corporate goals are not understood
- Plans encompass too much in too little time
- Plans are based on insufficient data
- No attempt to systematise the planning process
- No one knows the ultimate objective
- Not enough time has been given for proper estimating
- People are not working towards same objectives

Harold Kerzner, "Project Management – A systems approach to planning, scheduling and controlling" 2003 8th Ed.

Consequences of Poor Planning

- Project initiation without defined requirements
- Wild enthusiasm
- Disillusionment with the initial results
- Panic as things start to fall apart
- Search for the guilty
- Punishment of the innocent
- Praise and honour for the Non-Participants

4 Reasons for Project Planning

- To eliminate or reduce uncertainty
- To improve efficiency of project organisation
- To obtain a better understanding of the objectives
- To provide a sound basis for monitoring and controlling work

Harold Kerzner, "Project Management – A systems approach to planning, scheduling and controlling" 2003 8th Ed.

6 P's of Project Planning

- Proper
- Planning
- Prevents
- Poor
- Project
- Performance

Value of Collaborative Work Sessions

- **BENCHMARK STUDIES** have shown that **collaborative work sessions...**
- Reduce the risk of scope creep from 80% to 10%
- Accelerate the early project lifecycle phases (including Scope Initiation, Planning, Definition) by 30 – 40%
- Reduce the overall project elapsed time and workforce effort by 5 – 15%

Capers Jones "Software Assessments, Benchmarks, and Best Practices", 2000

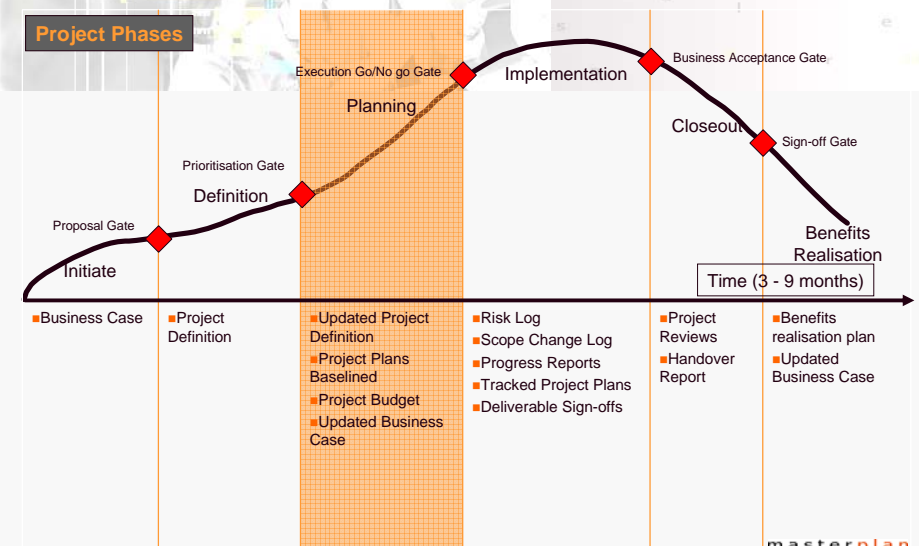
What is the FastPLAN™ Method?

- A **participative, interactive, and structured** project planning session in which a facilitator **guides** the participants (project sponsor, manager and team members) through a series of **pre-defined project planning steps** to arrive at clearly defined project plan that is **created, understood and accepted** by all participants.

Let's get Technical

- Combines the project management tools and techniques of a work breakdown structure (WBS) and the precedence diagramming method (PDM) into a simultaneous facilitation technique.

Project Lifecycle





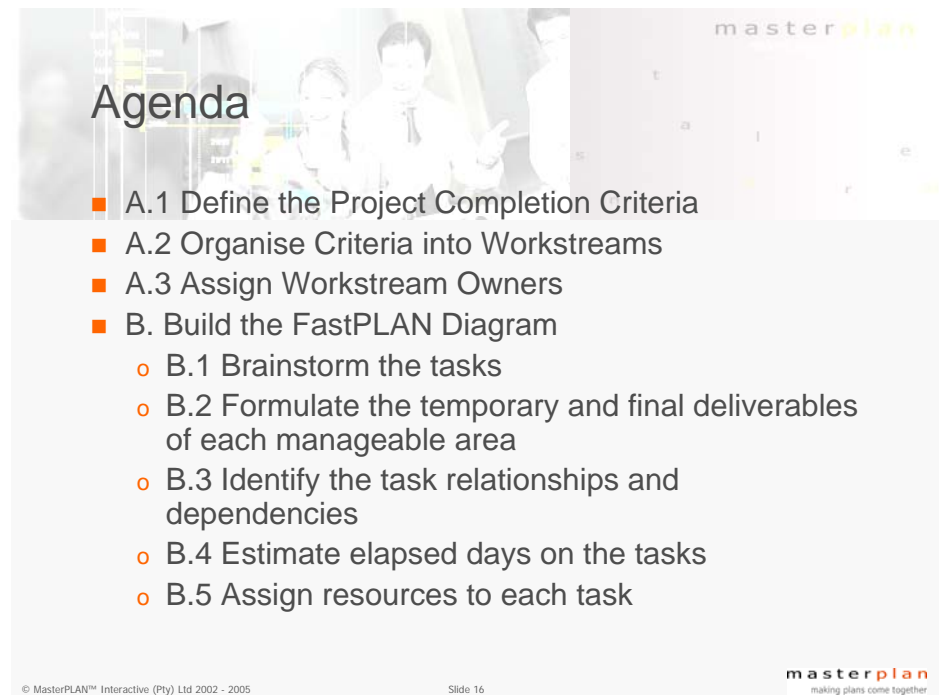
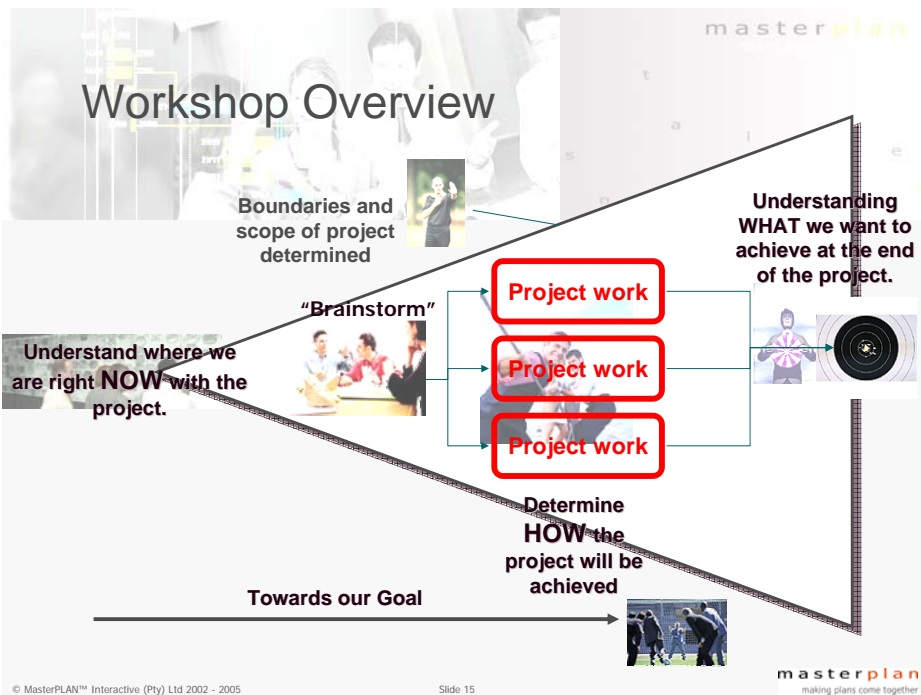
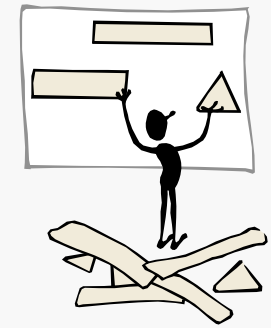
The FastPLAN Workshop

Agenda Overview and Facilitated Process



The Project Planning Context

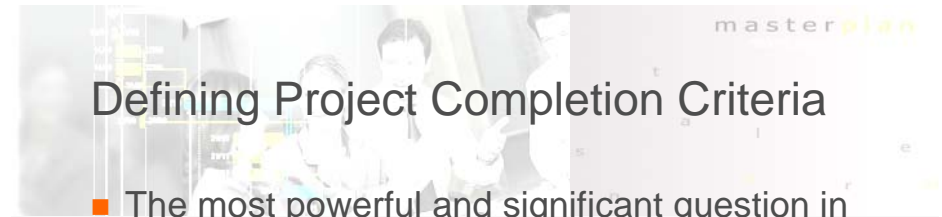
- Develop the Project Problem-Opportunity Statement
- Define the Project Completion Criteria
- Develop WBS
 - Brainstorm Activities
- Develop Network Diagram
 - Estimate Task Durations
 - Assign Resources
- Perform Critical Path Analysis
- Develop Timeline
- Resource Planning
- Develop Project Budget
- Establish Project Baseline
- Approval for Implementation Phase





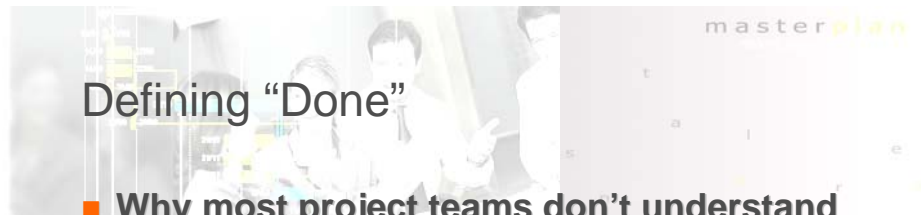
Facilitating “Project Completion Criteria”

Defining “done” for the project, organising into workstreams and identifying the owners



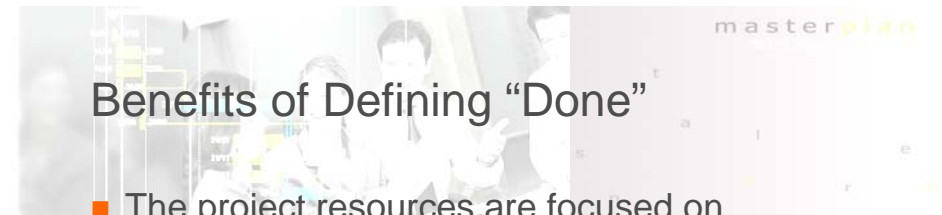
Defining Project Completion Criteria

- The most powerful and significant question in your project planning process.
 - “What does it mean to be done with this project?”



Defining “Done”

- **Why most project teams don’t understand what it means to be done?**
 - Rarely are people focussed on outcomes.
 - The team has typically been operating on sets of different assumptions.
 - Semantic disconnects
 - A focus on advocacy and turf issues
 - Rarely think cross-functions and cross disciplines (out of silos)



Benefits of Defining “Done”

- The project resources are focused on outcomes, successes and thus expressing expectations.
- Provides basis for future project decisions and common understanding of the project.

How To Facilitate It!

- Your key concepts
 - Using a listing group technique, create a composite list on flipchart of high-level project deliverables which are quantifiable objectives and measurement criteria.
 - Not end or overall objective – but important outcomes to be delivered.
 - Act as planning anchors - plan what is important.
 - Be persistent
 - Watch out for the semantics game
 - Keep an open list of assumptions
 - Take the team out of their frame of reference
 - Go with your team's terminology not your own
 - Ask the right type of questions that will ignite a wealth of responses

Business Case

- The 1st IAF Africa Conference has been such a success, and to benefit from lessons learnt SAFNET has decided that preparations for the 2nd Conference should start immediately following this close of the conference. It was agreed amongst the IAF members that the next conference will be held in Durban, the last week of October 2006.
- You as a team (of energetic volunteers) are responsible for planning, managing and executing this next conference as a project.

Enough with the Theory

- Now in your teams, **facilitate what “done” means for our project!**
- Your **design question**, “What are the project completion criteria, we need to deliver to be done with the project?”
- Your **facilitative question**, “Imagine you are presenting the project closeout report to the SAFNET Board for their review and approval. What do they define as being done with this project? What is on their checklist for being done?”
- Title your notes, “Done means...”
- Make your lists
- Begin with “To have...?”
- You have 15 mins. to facilitate as much of the definition of done as you can.

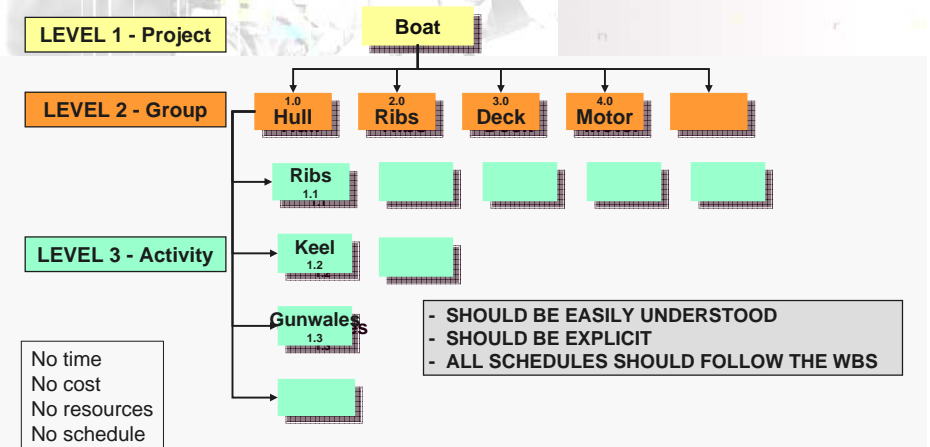
Create the Workstreams

- Having established the project completion criteria (clear statements of overall scope), the project must now be organised (“connected”) into manageable areas of responsibility known as “workstreams”?
- This creates the 1st level of a project work breakdown.

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

- Organises and defines a grouping of project activities
- Is deliverable not task orientated.
- Defines total scope of the project
- Decomposed to a level where confidence of estimates are high.
- 8 / 80 heuristic – no deliverable shorter than 12 hours or longer than 80 hours.
- Builds team consensus and buy-in
- Forms foundation for all project planning, estimating and controlling.
- Most important of all PM tools.

Preliminary WBS for Boat Project



Facilitating the Grouping of Workstreams and Owners

How To Facilitate It!

- Your key concepts
 - Creating manageable areas of work based upon a grouping of deliverables.
 - Using a grouping or clustering group technique, allow the group to cluster and organise.
 - Ask for meaningful headlines and a clear one line description of the workstream.
 - Expect some reluctance to owning workstreams.
 - Use colours or symbols to make connections.

Facilitating the Grouping of Workstreams and Owners

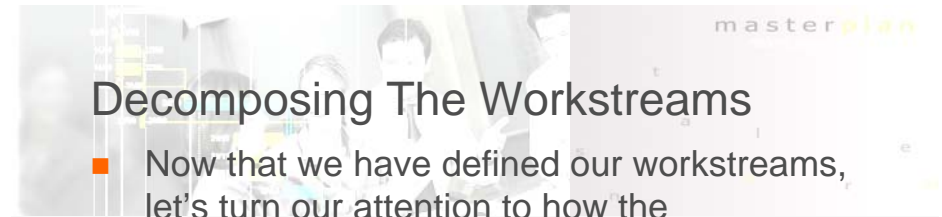
Enough with the Theory

- Now in your teams, **organise your project completion criteria into workstreams.**
- Your **design question**, “How can the project completion criteria be organised into a workstream?”
- Your **facilitative question**, “Keeping your eye on your “definition of done”, what logical connections or “clusters” can you see start to emerge from our lists of “done”...?”
 - Give the “workstream” a meaningful headline that describes the end result to be produced and measured.
 - Ask, “Whom might we assign the following workstream...?”
- Title your notes, “Workstreams”
- Use colours or symbols to make connections.
- You have 10 mins. to facilitate as much of the workstream clustering as you can.



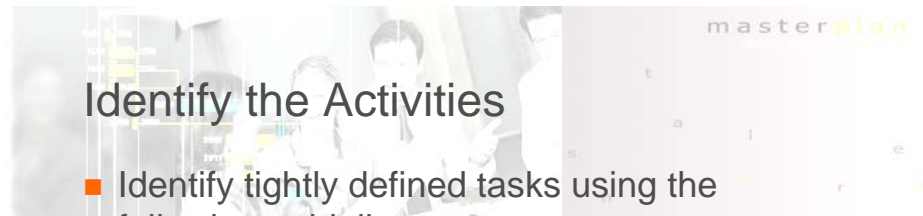
Facilitating the FastPLAN Diagram

Decomposing the workstreams into tasks and deliverables and mapping these in terms of their dependencies.



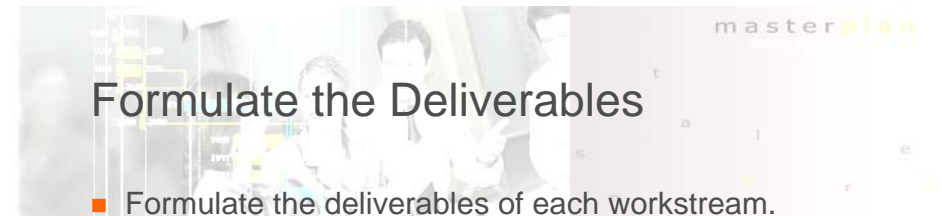
Decomposing The Workstreams

- Now that we have defined our workstreams, let's turn our attention to how the *workstreams* must be achieved? What activities must be completed to measure progress against a baseline?
- Decompose the *workstreams* into specific and measurable activities and deliverables
- This creates the 2nd level of a project work breakdown structure



Identify the Activities

- Identify tightly defined tasks using the following guidelines:
 - Clear beginning and end
 - You know when it's finished
 - Clearly distinguished from other tasks
 - Assignable to one organisation element (person, team, department)
 - One person can be accountable as task owner
 - Duration manageable (1 – 2 weeks)
 - Labeled consistently with similar tasks
 - Task progress can be measured objectively



Formulate the Deliverables

- Formulate the deliverables of each workstream. Deliverables are the overall results of completing some or all activities in a workstream.
- Deliverables can be:
 - Final (to be handed over to users at project completion e.g. product specs, business processes)
 - Or Temporary (produced during project for review and sign-off e.g. feasibility report)
- For each deliverable always specify the format and content in which it must be produced e.g. documented, presented.

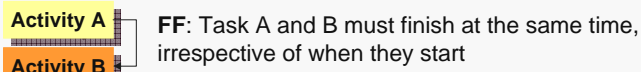
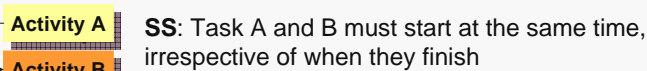
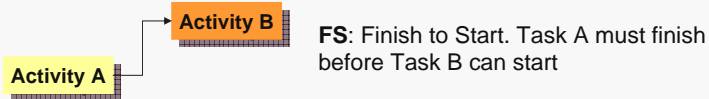
FastPLAN Diagram

- Represents activities and their interrelations in a logic diagram of relationships, which shows:
 - Relationships, dependencies and the critical path (when the time dimension is added).
- Evaluate the activities and determine the relationships in terms of input and outputs:
 - Which activities are dependent on other activities' outputs for their inputs?
 - Can other tasks that are not dependent on other tasks be scheduled concurrently?

FastPLAN Diagram (Cont.)

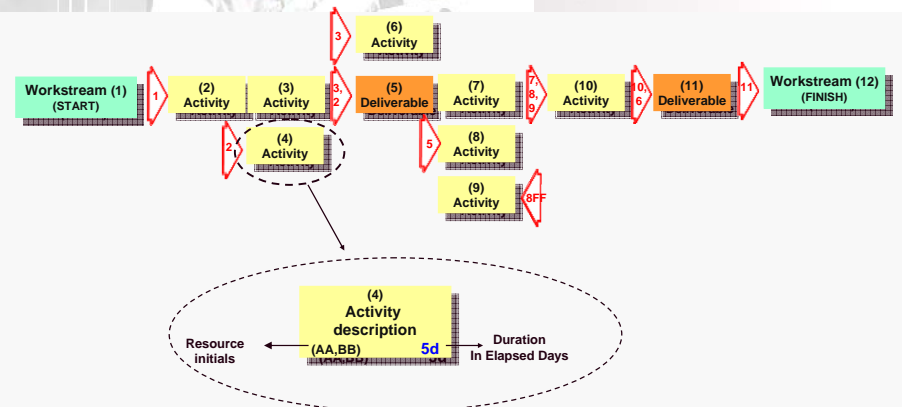
- Types of dependencies:
 - Hard logic = Mandatory, i.e., must define the requirements before starting the coding.
 - Soft logic = Discretionary, i.e., the carpets must be replaced by the time the walls are painted, so that the tenants can move in before the last weekend of the month.
- Allows for the estimation of elapsed day(s) duration on each activities to calculate total project duration and schedule.

Activity Relationships



FastPLAN Diagram Example

(Using the FacilitateIT™ Card System)



How To Facilitate It!

- For each workstream:
 1. Identify between 8 – 12 activities (where we'll place our efforts and resources).
 2. As you identify the activities, determine which activities are dependent on other task outputs (their completion) for their inputs (starting) and arrange them in terms of their dependencies (FS, FF,SS)
 3. Formulate the deliverables (the overall results of completing the tasks within the each workstream).
 4. On each activity get the team to estimate of elapsed day(s) (activity duration) on each activities.
 5. Get the workstream owner to assign possible resources to each activity.

Enough with the Theory

- Now in your teams, **decompose your workstreams into activities and deliverables, and map them out according to their relationships.**
- Your **design question**, “How must the workstreams be achieved? What activities must be completed to measure progress against a baseline”
- Your **facilitative question (to identify activities)**, “Our workstream is too...to complete this workstream, what are the major things we have to do” alternatively you can ask (work backwards), “Our workstream is too...our final deliverable might be a conference programme where the deliverable is posted onto the IAF website. Before that the deliverable was developed and documented. Before that, we held email reviews on each theme of the conference. Before that... etc”.
- Your **facilitative question (to formulate deliverables)**, “If we successfully complete all these activities, what overall result will be achieved which we can measure objectively...in what format must our deliverable be produced”. (And probe further...) “Glancing through our activities again do you notice any other important results produced by some of the activities which would be important for us to measure and quality assure”.

FastPLAN Diagram Tips

- Develop a scrip sheet of planning verbs (helpful in developing questions for more focused activity definition).
- Remember you are using “hard” logic and not preferred logic (which is not easy to represent on the diagram – better done with a scheduling tool).
- Decompose the activity definition at the level in which the team is comfortable to manage.

Session Debrief

- How might you use the FastPLAN project planning method in your world?
- What are some of your key challenges?

Thank You!

- “Interest is the highest expression of respect.”
 - Thank you for your attention and interest in a subject that we are passionate about!



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