



BRING ORDER TO CREATIVE CHAOS: PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR WRITERS

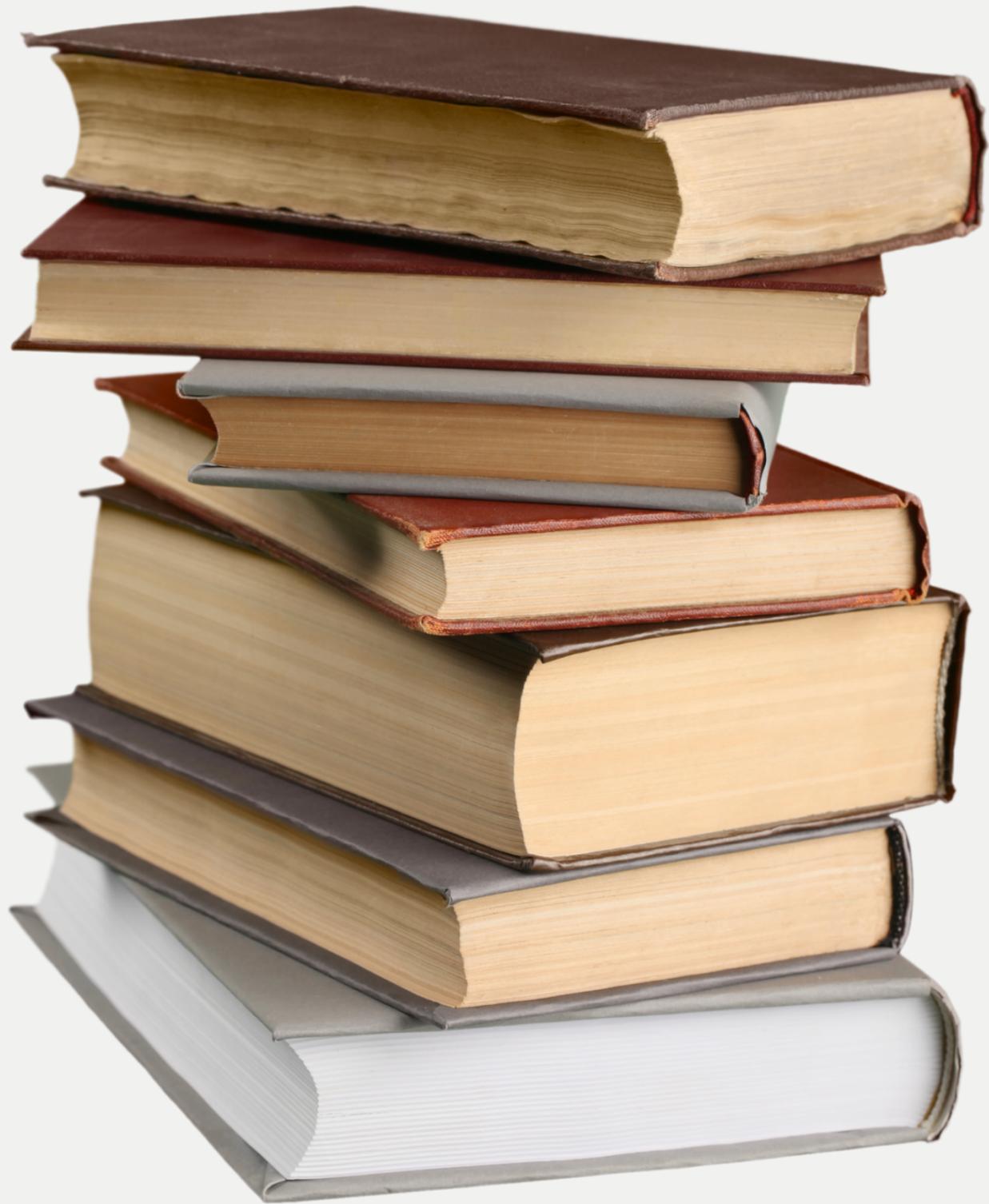
Hi, I'm Kerry!



I'm an

- Author Accelerator certified book coach,
- writer,
- founder of Shadows & Secrets, the writing retreat for mystery and thriller authors, and
- project manager.

I've been managing projects for almost 20 years, mainly in the editorial and digital spheres. This was never supposed to be my career path - I'm a reader and writer at heart -but I learned quickly that without project management, things didn't get done! PM work doesn't always feel the most creative, but what it can do is put frameworks in place to let you make the most of your creative time.



What You'll Learn

TODAY'S TOPICS

- What is project management?
- Why do we need project management?
- Setting SMART goals
- Two key pillars - strategy and schedule
- Kicking off a project
- Project plans
- Project phases, tasks, and milestones (checkpoints)
- Closing a project

What is project management?

In a nutshell, project management is herding cats.

I'm only kind of kidding.

According to the professionals, project management is "**the use of specific knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to deliver something of value to people.**"

If you think, well, I do that every day in a thousand different ways and no one pays me for it, **you're right!**



What is project management?

Seriously though, "A project manager is a professional who organizes, plans, and executes projects while working within restraints like budgets and schedules. Project managers lead entire teams, define project goals, communicate with stakeholders, and see a project through to its closure."

Projects are messy, amorphous things.

Project management applies **order to chaos** so shit gets done.



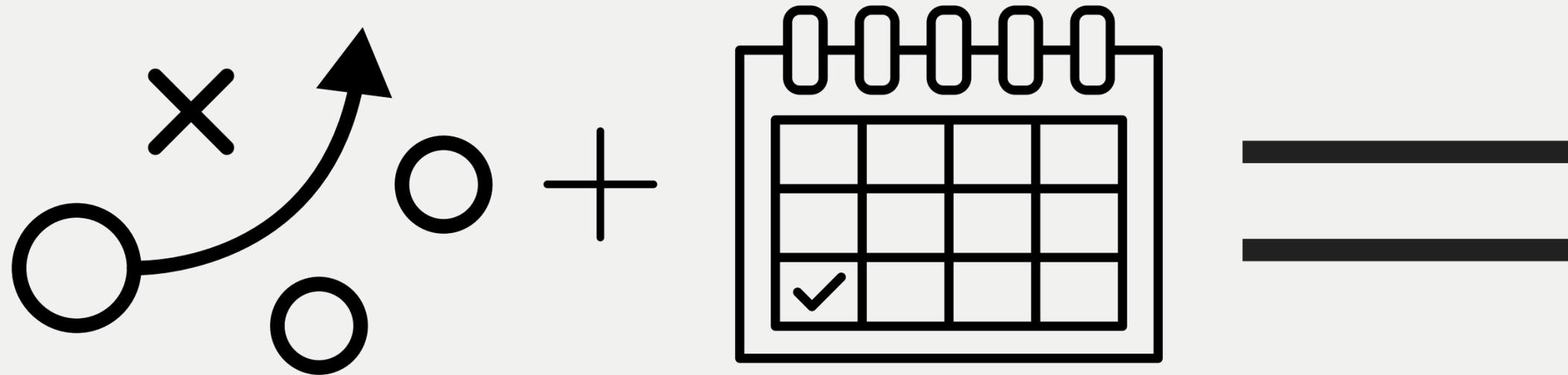
Why do we need project management?

- Provides accountability
 - Plans and deadlines
- Sets and manages expectations
 - Things take longer than we think
- Gives a project direction
 - Defines project parameters
 - Provides a framework for decision-making
- Breaks a complex thing into manageable chunks
- Encourages motivation and confidence
 - Seeing progress builds on itself and keeps things on track
- Avoids burnout and overwhelm



What Makes a Successful Project?

Strategy (Why, What, Who) + Schedule (When, How) = Success



Two Key Pillars

- **The Strategy**

- Why are you writing this book?
- What are you wanting to say?
- Who are you writing for?

- **The Schedule (Project Plan)**

- What are the tasks?
- How long will each task take (estimate, in hours)
- How will you accomplish those things? (How much time can you regularly schedule, daily or weekly?)
- When are you going to start? When do you want to finish?
- How long will it take?

Setting Project Goals

S.M.A.R.T Goals

Specific - what are we doing and who is doing it?

Measurable - how do we define progress?

Achievable - is the timeframe realistic?

Relevant - why is this goal important?

Timely - what's the time-frame/deadline to achieve this goal?

Examples:

- Write the first draft of a historical fiction novel (approx. 90K words) by the end of 2023 (9 months). I will write 2500 words/week for the next 9 months.
- Complete a manuscript evaluation, revision plan, and 1 round of revision in 12 weeks. I will spend 1 week evaluating the ms, 2 weeks completing a revision plan, and will revise 3 chapters/week for 9 weeks.

Where do I start?

KICKOFF! DEFINE YOUR STRATEGY

- Answer the key strategy questions
 - What?
 - Why?
 - Who?
- Make a S.M.A.R.T. goal statement, using what you've created by answering strategy questions.

KICKOFF! DEFINE YOUR SCHEDULE

- What is the (SMART) goal? What does "done" look like?
- How can you break the project down into discrete units/pieces?
- What are the major points along the way?
- Do different phases have different requirements or tasks?

Defining the Work: Phases and Tasks

WHAT IS A PHASE?

- A distinct, larger chunk of project work, which can be broken down into more discrete pieces
- Usually spans multiple weeks or months

WHAT IS A TASK?

- A discrete unit of work; the basic building block of a plan
- Group like tasks together to make up a phase
- Usually spans hours or days

Defining the Work: Milestones

WHAT IS A MILESTONE?

- A specific point in a project, used to indicate project progress
- There is no actionable time associated with a milestone
- Examples: project and phase beginning and end dates, significant tasks completion



Where do I start?

MAKE A PROJECT PLAN

- Identify
 - phases
 - tasks in each phase
 - major milestones
- Define your schedule. When do you want to be done?
- Do some math. Be realistic. Build in some buffer; plan for breaks.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal: I am going to write the first draft of a historical fiction novel of about 90,000 words set in the early 18th century about the pirate Mary Read. I've always wanted to write a book and I now have the time and desire to dedicate the next six months to completing the first draft. I will write 1,000 words a day, at least 4 days per week, for the next 26 weeks in order to finish.

Project Phases:

Plan
Draft
Revise (Iterate)

Project Roadmap

Define Your (S.M.A.R.T.) Goal:		
Project Phases/Tasks	Time (Hours)	Priority (H, M, L)
Plan		
Task 1	2	
Task 2	16	
Task 3	3	
Task 4	1	
Task 5	1	
Task 6	1	
Task 7	1	
Task 8	1	
Task 9	1	
Task 10	1	
Task 11	1	
Total	29	
Draft		
Task	1	
# of scenes x # of hours per scene	280	
Total	281	
Revise		
Task	1	

Your Novel Project Roadmap					
What day will you start? (mm/dd/yy)	5/1/2023				
How many hours per day will you work?	4				
Project Phases/Tasks	Hours	# of Days	Start Date	End Date	Status
Plan					
			5/1/2023	5/19/2023	
Task 1	2	0.5	5/1/2023	5/1/2023	Not Started
Task 2	16	4	5/2/2023	5/8/2023	Not Started
Task 3	3	0.75	5/9/2023	5/9/2023	
Task 4	1	0.25	5/10/2023	5/10/2023	
Task 5	1	0.25	5/11/2023	5/11/2023	
Task 6	1	0.25	5/12/2023	5/12/2023	
Task 7	1	0.25	5/13/2023	5/13/2023	
Task 8	1	0.25	5/14/2023	5/14/2023	
Task 9	1	0.25	5/15/2023	5/15/2023	
Task 10	8	2	5/16/2023	5/18/2023	
Task 11	1	0.25	5/19/2023	5/19/2023	
Draft					
			5/20/2023	8/25/2023	
Task	1	0.25	5/20/2023	5/20/2023	
# of scenes x # of hours per scene	280	70	5/21/2023	8/25/2023	
Revise					
			8/26/2023	9/1/2023	
Task	1	0.25	8/26/2023	8/26/2023	
Task	1	0.25	8/27/2023	8/27/2023	
Task	1	0.25	8/28/2023	8/28/2023	
Task	1	0.25	8/29/2023	8/29/2023	
Task	1	0.25	8/30/2023	8/30/2023	
Task	1	0.25	8/31/2023	8/31/2023	
Task	1	0.25	9/1/2023	9/1/2023	
Total	324				
					Percent Complete 0%

How do I stay on track?

HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS

- Spend time weekly or bi-weekly reviewing your plan.
- Chart your progress.
- Make sure to acknowledge and celebrate!

BE PREPARED TO ADJUST

- If it's not working, don't abandon! Figure out what needs to change to make it work.
- Flexibility is critical. The beauty of the plan is that you define the constant(s) and adjust the remaining variables to make it work.
- I've NEVER had a plan stay constant from start to finish.

Closing a Project!



Closing a Project!



**But
seriously.....**

- Review the strategy and the plan:
 - what worked?
 - what would I have done differently?
- Acknowledge and give thanks
- Celebrate some more! :)

Q + A time!
**What questions do
you have?**

Thank you!

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