Project Management: Tip Sheet

What is a Project?

A project has distinctive attributes that distinguish it from ongoing work or business operations. Projects are temporary in nature. Projects exist to bring about a product, service or to achieve a goal that hasn't existed before. In this sense, a project is unique. A project is completed when its goals and objectives are accomplished. It is these goals that drive the project, and all the planning and implementation efforts undertaken to achieve them.

The Process:

Once you've determined that you are in fact undertaking a project, it's time to get started. Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques applied to project activities in order to meet the project requirements. Project management is a process that includes planning, putting the project plan into action, and measuring progress and performance.

Answer the following questions:

1. What are your objectives?
2. What is the scope of your project? In other words what are you trying to achieve and what is the work involved and the process used to achieve your desired outcomes?
3. What are the resources needed to carry out this project?
4. Is there a cost? If so what is your budget?
5. Consider quality, the combination of the standards and criteria to which the project's products must be delivered for them to perform effectively.
6. Are there any risks? Do any potential external events exist that will have a negative impact on your project? If so how can you minimize these risks?
7. What is the expected timeframe of this project?

Project Lifecycle:

Initiation Phase: During the first of these phases, the initiation phase, the project objective or need is identified.

Planning Phase: The project is further developed in as much detail as possible and the steps necessary to meet the project's objective are planned. In this step, the team identifies all of the work to be done. The project's tasks and resource requirements are identified, along with the strategy for producing them. A project plan is created outlining the activities, tasks, dependencies, and timeframes.

Implementation Phase: During the third phase, the implementation phase, the project plan is put into motion and the work of the project is performed.

Closing Phase: During this phase all outstanding work is completed and the project comes to an end.

Project environment:
In order to carry out a successful project, it is important to ensure that your project environment fosters success. Account for cultural, political, social and physical differences to arise. Expect a diverse environment and adapt when necessary.

Skills:
There is no magic formula for a successful project however, the following skills are an asset when attempting to produce the best possible results for your project.
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills
- Leadership
- Motivation
- Negotiation
- A positive attitude