

Studio Survival:

Keep Your Multimedia Shop in The Black and On The Map

Speaker: Richard Harrington – RHED Pixel

Time/Date: Monday (July 18, 2005) 9:00am — 5:00pm

Audience level: All

Presentation Abstract:

As a manager or business owner, it's up to you to take the lead and set the example. Join small business owner and certified project management professional Richard Harrington as he shows you important practices to keep your shop in the black and on the map. Topics include pricing services, marketing your services, billing effectively, managing employees and contractors, archiving and organizing your projects, and keeping clients happy.

Services Offered

- Capabilities
 - Internal
 - External
 - Make vs. Buy
 - Scaling over time

- Competitive Advantages
 - Unique
 - Perception
 - Positioning

- Outsourcing
 - Local
 - National
 - International
 - Researching

- Partnering
 - Formal
 - Informal

Pricing

- Rates for Services
 - Competitive Analysis
 - Websites
 - Similar Industries
 - Financial Need
 - 40-60% Billable Time
 - Overhead
 - Savings
 - Three Components
 - People
 - Gear
 - Facility
 - Charge for the Assumptions
 - Creative Design
 - Shipping
 - Archiving

- Material Costs
 - Constantly Change
 - Look for Savings
 - Compare Vendors at least Annually
 - Think Bulk/Group Leverage
 - DVPA Buyer's Club
 - User Groups
 - Build Costs In
 - Track Usage at Employee Level

- Overhead
 - Rent
 - Leases
 - Utilities (Especially Communications)
 - Amenities
 - Marketing
 - Employee Benefits
 - Recruitment

Bidding

- Rates for Services
 - Keep Rate Sheet
 - Use Spreadsheet

- Time Estimates
 - Historical Data
 - Time Logs Similar Projects
 - Past Budgets
 - Analysis
 - $(1O+4M+1P) \div 6$
 - Used by Government

- Peer Review
 - Number Checking
 - Forgotten Charges
 - Plausibility
 - “Second Opinion”

- External Review
 - Peers in Different Market
 - Strategic partners
 - Subject matter experts

- Collective Knowledge
 - Time Estimation
 - Incremental Improvement
 - Vendor Selection
 - Risk Management

- Work Breakdown Structure
 - Key to budgeting
 - Identify the major tasks that need to be completed
 - Keep breaking the job down into smaller pieces until you can accurately budget it and create time estimates
 - Use Organizational Chart Maker in PowerPoint or OmniGraffle to outline and share
 - Be sure to get input from client and team

- Fixed Price Contracts:
 - Growing in Popularity
 - Protect both parties if written properly
 - Frequently favor the client, not vendor
 - Important to CLEARLY define the product and service to be delivered
 - Need to provide protection to you if the scope of the project changes
 - Keep accurate time records
 - Bottom Line:
 - Say what you are going to do
 - Do what you say
 - Update along the way
 - Track changes and get approval for each as they arise

Marketing

- Advertising
 - Trade Journals
 - Business Magazines
 - Professional Associations
- Business Cards
 - Best Advertisement
 - Need to look professional
- Direct Mail
 - Post Cards affordable option
- Website
 - Most important
 - Get links that connect to your site
 - Hosting Options
- Demo Reels
- Press Releases
 - Newsworthy
 - Look for Angle
 - Provide Pictures via link
 - Send out monthly
- Trade Publications

Networking

- Professional Associations
- Trade Groups
- Conferences
- Online Forums

Proposals

- Quick Response
 - What is needed
 - Level of detail
- Library of Resources
 - Photos
 - Bios
 - Samples
 - Past Proposals
- Getting Started
 - Who are you trying to reach?
 - Why do you need to reach them?
 - What are you trying to say?
 - What do you mean?
 - What challenges are in the way?
 - What are the requirements?
 - Who's on your team?
- Refining the Message
 - Read the RFP
 - Review the past
 - Discuss with Project Sponsor
 - Gather the team
 - Gather outside information
 - Create a treatment
 - Define the goal
- Brainstorming Session
 - Gather up to 10 team members
 - Distribute RFP/project requirements in advance
 - Appoint a moderator
 - Ensure equal participation
 - Document ALL ideas
 - Keep it moving/fun

- The Written Word
 - Catch & keep attention
 - Your ARE selling something
 - Avoid boilerplate language
 - Write with your audience in mind at all times
 - Let personality show through

- Finishing the Proposal
 - Fresh proofread by two people with fresh view
 - Review hard copy with red pen
 - Internal review EARLY
 - Get all sponsors to sign draft
 - Review outside normal setting
 - Check for odd line breaks
 - Look for garbled print
 - Distribute and annotate PDF
 - Confirm and test output device
 - Confirm requirements of RFP
 - Determine binding materials
 - Do not hand off at final stages
 - Ensure personal delivery

Designing Effective Speaker Support

- Seven Deadly Sins
 1. Too few slides
 2. Too many words
 3. No 'road signs' (where are you going?)
 4. Reliance on gimmicks (no sound fx)
 5. Ignoring design
 6. Not rehearsing
 7. Forgetting your audience

- How to Avoid Bad Slides
 - Limit fonts used
 - Use a heavy font
 - Avoid stock templates (Create your own templates)
 - 3-7 bullets per page (A bullet is 2 - 5 words)
 - Readability test
 - Design for the back of the room
 - Justification & capitalization
 - Consider screen vs. print
 - Use images
 - Ensure ease of change
 - Utilize style guide
 - Distribute template & Design master slides

Project Management

The Bottom Line: Project Management is a collection business practices that work. It is not a fad, it is not new, it is just getting the attention it deserves. As the pace at which you have to produce quickens, you will likely find that your budget and workforce are shrinking. By employing an organized, tactical approach you can thrive in the changing film and video industry. You can never be too busy to manage a project.

Triple Constraint: All projects are bound by three primary constraints. Learning to balance these is essential to your success.

1. **Scope:** What is the work that must be completed?
2. **Schedule:** What are the time constraints for the project?
3. **Budget:** What are the financial constraints of the project?

*There is a fourth force at work that holds all three together, **QUALITY**.*
Simply put, Good, Fast, Cheap... Pick Two!

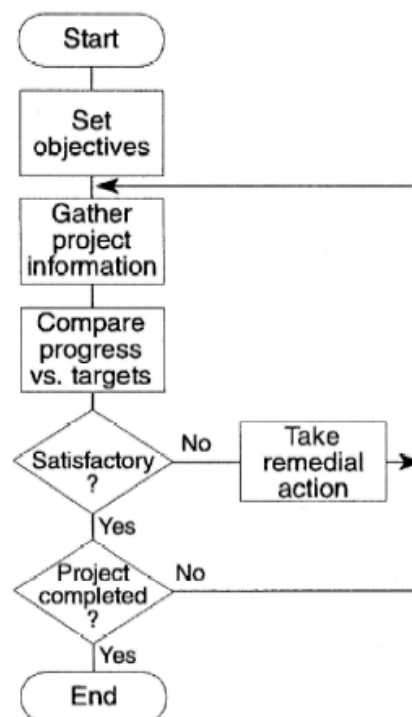
Characteristics of a Project:

- Purpose
- Temporary
- Unique
- Resources
- Cost/Time Constraints
- Interdependencies
- Life Cycle – Tasks
- Conflict
- Risk

Project Objectives:

- Schedule
- Performance
- Cost

Project Control Cycle:



Project Scoping Document

(2 - 1 0 p a g e s)

- **Project Name**
- **Executive Summary**
- **Background**
- **Project Scope (High Level)**
 - A. Project Objectives
 - B. Deliverables
 - C. Organizations
 - D. Interfaces Required
 - E. Assumptions
 - F. Constraints
 - G. Evaluation Criteria
 - H. Risks
 - I. Rewards
 - J. Budgets
 - K. Schedules (Due Dates)
 - L. Project Team Readiness
- **Key Roles**
 - A. Executive Sponsor
 - B. Project Manager
 - C. Business Experts
 - D. Technical Experts
- **Signature Lines - Sign Off “Charter”**

Managing employees

- Successful Team Start Up
 - Agree on the Team Purpose
 - Identify the Project Stakeholders
 - Identify the Limits of the Team's Work
 - Identify the Team Roles
 - Agree on the Ground Rules
 - Decide on Team Logistics
- Effective Team Membership
 - Take Responsibility
 - Follow Through
 - Listen Actively
 - Communicate Clearly
 - Provide Feedback
 - Accept Feedback

Managing contractors

- Clear Expectations
- Job rate vs. hourly rate
- Reporting frequency
- Supervision

Time Tracking

- Use of Software Systems
 - QuickBooks
- Frequency
- In Progress Reports
 - Communicate to the client where the project is at
 - Best to be proactive... delaying 'bad' news only makes it worse
 - Do not be overly optimistic or pessimistic... be realistic
 - Identify milestones complete
 - Report percentage complete on tasks in progress
 - Identify tasks not yet started
 - Agree on regularity of reports with clients in advance

Billing

- Bid
 - Original Estimate
- Budget
 - Scope of Work Statement
 - What was initially agreed upon by the client
- Change Orders
 - Written Communication
- Final Bill
 - Incorporates Client Constraints
 - Initial Budget
 - Change Orders
 - May be Lower or Higher... be honest
- Delivering the Bill
 - PDF
 - Hard Copy
 - Fax
 - With Deliverables
 - Face-to-Face
- Accepting the Bill
 - Review Changes
 - Use Discounts
 - Use Deadlines
- Collections
 - Run Accounts Receivable Reports
 - Call Accounts Payable
 - Be Polite
 - Call in Advance
 - Place into Contracts
 - Incremental Billing/Deposits

Archiving Projects

- Optical Media Archive All Non-Timecode Sources
- Archive Project Files Nightly
- Music/Stock Footage Licenses
- Archive Charge
- Hard Drive Policy

Keeping Clients Happy

- Open Communication
- Frequent Communication
- Value Added Services
- Debriefs
- Prompt Return of Assets
- Pass on Praise Up the “Chain of Command”
- Be seen as a resource

Resources

- www.pmi.org
- www.intuit.com
- www.creativecow.net
- www.dv.com
- www.rhedpixel.com