

Strategic Project Management Plan for Noah's Ark

Adapted from *Strategic Project Management Made Simple: Practical Tools for Leaders and Teams* by Terry Schmidt, John Wiley & Sons, © 2009

Get the Strategic Edge

In today's world, being equipped with the best strategic management tools is essential – no matter what your field. Since ancient times, leaders and teams have looked for better ways to organize and implement complex project and strategic plans. That's why, when Noah built the ark, he may have used the simple approach described here.

Based on three decades of assisting hundreds of teams worldwide, we have developed a systematic process that helps teams plan and execute strategic change. This process begins by asking *The Four Critical Strategic Project Questions*. The answers to those questions flesh out the Logical Framework, a dynamic planning matrix which is summarized here and described in detail on the website www.ManagementPro.com as well as in my recent books and articles.

Introducing the Logical Framework

The "LogFrame" is a 4x4 matrix based on a set of interlocking concepts. It applies the principles of smart management and common sense to clarify the project's *strategic hypothesis*, using *If-then* logic. The completed matrix communicates a complicated project strategy clearly and understandably on a single sheet of paper.

The *Four Critical Strategic Questions* are inherently embedded in the LogFrame matrix, and their answers help teams address the critical issues upfront.

Noah's Big Opportunity

Do you wish you could have been there long ago when God instructed Noah to build an ark? Maybe the message came via a memo carved in stone or typed on God's personal stationery:

Dear Noah,

I have decided to make it rain, real hard, for 40 days and 40 nights. Noah, I want you to build an ark big enough to hold a pair of all the animals on earth (and people) so you can restore life on earth and ensure the long-term survival of human and animal life.

Get everything necessary ready before the big rains start. Build a seaworthy ark, bring a pair of each type of animal and people aboard, along with necessary supplies. Use the Logical Framework for your project plan and be clear about Objectives, measures, and risks. Choose your project team, including your naval architect spouse Noelle. Don't feel pressured just because the future of civilization depends on your strategic project management skills. The rain starts in six months. Good luck.

*Yours truly,
God*

The following pages summarize Noah's project plan using the LogFrame Approach.

For projects of any size, this approach is an ideal starting point to help teams and task forces rapidly design sound projects that are measurable, risk-reduced, and actionable.

Objectives	Success Measures	Verification	Assumptions
Goal			
Purpose			
Outcomes			
Inputs			

1. What are we trying to accomplish and why?
2. How will we measure success?
3. What other conditions must exist?
4. How do we get there?

Objectives	Success Measures	Verification	Assumptions
Goal ▶ Big Picture Objective which project supports	Measures of Goal Achievement (quality, quantity, time)	Info sources to monitor and verify Goal Measures	To reach Goal: External conditions needed to reach Goal and beyond
Purpose ▶ Change expected by producing Outcomes	Success conditions expected at end of project	Info sources to monitor and verify Purpose Measures	To reach Purpose: External conditions needed to achieve Purpose
Outcomes ▶ Specific results needed from project team	Description of completed deliverables	Info sources to monitor and verify Outcome Measures	To produce Outcomes: External conditions needed to produce Outcomes
Inputs ▶ Activities, Resources and Responsibilities	Resource Budget and Schedule	Info sources to monitor and verify inputs	To obtain & manage Inputs: External conditions necessary to obtain and manage Inputs

Developing the Project Design: Noah's Ark Project

To create their plan, Noah's team asked *The Four Critical Strategic Project Questions*, and plugged the answers into the LogFrame grid.

Question #1: What are we trying to accomplish and why?

Answering this question helps construct a logical hierarchy of Objectives using *If-then* logic. Noah's team knew that *if* they built an ark (and loaded people and supplies), *then* they could survive the flood; and *if* they survived the flood, *then* they could ensure long-term survival. These *If-then* links form a *strategic hypothesis*, the backbone of sound projects. This question helps distinguish project deliverables (Outcomes) from strategic intent (Purpose and Goal).

Question #2: How will we measure success?

At each level in the hierarchy (Goal, Purpose, Outcomes), the team identified success measures (quality, quantity and time) along with means of verification. Success measures lead to shared understanding of what Objectives mean and provide aiming points. Verifications define the source of data to determine measures.





Question #3: What other conditions must exist?

Every project is influenced by factors outside the project. This question illuminates uncertain Assumptions which are critical to success. Analyzing these risk factors helps reduce problems in advance.

Question #4: How do we get there?

The project Input level identifies tasks needed to produce Outcomes, along with necessary resources, responsibilities and schedule. This level constitutes conventional project management.

Noah's Logical Framework for the Ark Project

	Objectives	Success Measures	Verification	Assumptions
Then 	Goal: Ensure the long-term survival of human and animal life on earth.	Measures of Goal Achievement: 1.1 All species propagate within their next gestation cycle and continue to multiply. 1.2 After 100 years, total # of animals is > # before the flood.	1.1 Birth rates. 1.2 Census count after 100 years.	Assumptions to reach Goal: 1. No environmental catastrophes (e.g., tidal wave). 2. Plant life returns after flood. 3. Animals reproduce.
If 	Purpose: Survive the flood.	Purpose Measures: 1. Ark lands with 100% of animals and humans who boarded still alive, healthy and fertile.	1.1 Review passenger manifest. 1.2 Conduct health tests.	Assumptions to achieve Purpose: 1. Rainfall stops in 40 days; water subsides in 20 days. 2. Severe storms do not damage ark. 3. Food and supplies sufficient. 4. Operations and maintenance systems on ark do their job.
Then 	Outcomes: 1. Ark built. 2. Ark loaded with necessary supplies. 3. Animals and people collected and loaded.	Outcome Measures: 1. By week 20, seaworthy ark is built according to design. Ark capable of holding one pair of all the animals on earth. 2. Ark is loaded with supplies & equipment. Supplies include X lbs. of food per animal per day; medical and maintenance equipment, seeds, etc. 3. At least 1 healthy breeding pair of each species are aboard ark by week 22.	1. Physical inspection and float tests. 2. Compare against supply equipment list. 3. Health tests for all animals on checklist.	Assumptions to produce Outcomes: 1. Rain will not start before six months. 2. Good weather for construction. 3. All animals on board are on checklist.
If 				

Then
If

Inputs: How team will produce Outcomes			Schedule						Assumptions for Inputs:
ACTIVITIES:	WHO RESPONSIBLE?	BUDGET	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	
1. Ark built									1. Adequate labor and lumber available. 2. People and animals cooperate. All will be ready to board before rains begin. 3. Necessary permits can be obtained quickly. 4. Noelle available to help. 5. The memo is genuine.
1.1 Design the ark			█						
1.2 Hire labor			█	█					
1.3 Cut lumber				█	█	█			
1.4 Construct ark				█	█	█	█		
2. Ark loaded									
2.1 Determine supplies needed			█						
2.2 Collect/load supplies				█	█	█			
3. Animals loaded									
3.1 Identify types of animals			█						
3.2 Build holding pens			█	█					
3.3 Capture animals				█	█				
3.4 Check health/gender				█	█				
3.5 Load animals							█		

The Input level of the LogFrame helps clarify schedule, responsibilities, and resource requirements, and responsibilities. These can be summarized on the LogFrame or broken out separately

Responsibility Chart

Inputs:	Responsibilities									
Action Steps:	God	Noah	Noelle	Ham	Shemp	Moe	Sue	Workers	Animals	
1.1 Design the ark	A	P	R	P	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.2 Hire labor	-	R	-	-	-	-	-	P	-	-
1.3 Cut lumber	-	-	I	R	-	-	-	P	-	-
1.4 Construct ark	I	R	A	P	-	-	-	P	-	-
hull	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
deck	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
interior details	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.1 Determine supplies needed	C	A	-	-	-	-	R	-	-	-
2.2 Collect/load supplies	-	I	-	-	-	-	R	P	-	-
3.1 Identify types of animals	A	I	-	R	-	P	-	-	C	-
3.2 Build holding pens	-	-	-	P	R	-	-	P	-	-
3.3 Capture animals	-	-	-	-	P	R	-	P	P	-
3.4 Check health/gender	-	-	-	R	P	P	P	-	P	-
3.5 Load animals	I	A	P	R	-	-	-	P	P	-

R = Responsible to do I = Must be informed A = Approves
 P = Participates C = Maybe consulted

Resource Budget

Inputs:	Resource Budget				
Action Steps:	A. Materials/supplies needed	B. Cost	C. Manpower needed	D. Cost	E. Total Cost
1.1 Design the ark	Blueprint materials	-	Architect, 2 weeks	-	-
1.2 Hire labor		-	25 strong men	-	-
1.3 Cut lumber	Saws, trees	-	50 man-days	-	-
1.4 Construct ark (hull, deck, interior details):	Nails, saws, jigs, lumber	-	260 man-days	-	-
hull		-		-	-
deck		-		-	-
interior details		-		-	-
2.1 Determine supplies needed		-	2 man-days	-	-
2.2 Collect/load supplies	Food, medicine, equip	-	10 man-days	-	-
3.1 Identify types of animals	Zoologist	-		-	-
3.2 Build holding pens	Nails, saws, jigs, lumber	-	10 man-days	-	-
3.3 Capture animals	Mating bait and calls	-	Trappers, 20 days	-	-
3.4 Check health/gender	Vet kits	-	Vet, 20 days	-	-
3.5 Load animals		-	10 man-days	-	-
Total Cost B + D =		B	+	D	E = Total Cost

Reviewing The Project's Strategic Hypothesis

After the project is designed from a top-down strategic perspective with the four questions, the logic can be tested bottom up. Savvy leaders recognize and manage *The Implementation Equation*TM, which offers a dynamic view of the project based on a clear *strategic hypothesis*. Applying our *If-then* logic, and working up from the Inputs, we can say (reading up from bottom):

- *If* we do the Input activities, and if linking Assumptions are valid, *then* we can build an ark (and load animals and supplies).
- *If* we build an ark (and load animals and supplies), and *if* linking Assumptions are valid, *then* we can survive the flood.
- *If* we survive the flood, and if linking Assumptions are valid, *then* we can rebuild life.

This logic allows teams to identify and analyze all the necessary factors needed for success.

Multiple Applications

Multiple clients in diverse situations have found that the LogFrame accelerates initial planning and improves the quality of project management.

This thinking and planning process adds value in many settings, including strategic planning, marketing, information technology, process improvement, research, engineering, production, human resources, and other topics.

The *Four Critical Strategic Project Questions* provide an intuitive, jargon-free way to develop sound projects. The LogFrame matrix organizes these questions and helps teams design projects in a way that covers all the issues.

Objectives	Success Measures	Verification	Assumptions
Goal		Then	and
Purpose	If	Then	and
Outcomes	If	Then	and
Inputs	If		

The LogFrame builds shared understanding, promotes communication, and increases trust. The LogFrame's common logic and standard vocabulary helps teams start faster and execute projects that deliver results.

Review the free special report *Turn Strategy Into Action* to better understand the LogFrame structure and learn about the high-payoff ways to use this approach.

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