



## Selling a Project

### Learning Outcomes

**By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:**

- ✓ Explain what project management is?
- ✓ Identify the skills needed for a project manager in order to manage projects effectively.

## Selling a Project

### Tom Peters

Tom Peters, one of the highest paid consultants of the business world, has written a lot about projects. He says that if you are assigned a project, get excited about it, not defeated. In fact, he suggests we take any project that is given to us and figure out a way to make it even better; not necessarily bigger, but better.

Tom Peters once said, “Never, ever, accept a project or assignment as it is given. Resist the status quo.”

Peters also says that if you haven't been assigned a project but you can see the possibilities, go out and find a project to tackle. Perhaps you had an idea as to how you could redesign your boss's office for increased efficiency, or you were walking through the mall and saw a wellness program advertised that you thought would work in your office. Maybe you heard of something another organization or department is doing that you think would work well in your own.

Project ideas are all around us and if you feel ready to tackle them don't wait for someone to notice you. Bring your idea forward.

The question you have to ask yourself is, “How will I sell it to my manager, or to the powers that be?”

It's pretty clear that you must have the ongoing support of management and key stakeholders before you initiate any project. This will involve both communication and negotiation skills.

Start by determining why the project is worth doing. How do you believe it will benefit the organization? Can you explain how the cost of the project (in time, money, or other resources) will be justified by the outcomes?

Ask yourself:

- Is there a need or an opportunity for this project?
- What is the relative cost in time and money for this project?
- Is there any risk of failure? What would this mean to me?
- Can I get support for my project?
- Will this project affect the bottom line profitability of my organization?

Remember, pet projects that are personally interesting but which will not benefit the company or have a low priority for other people can negatively affect business.

Identify the stakeholders (all of the people you have to get on board if this project is going to be successful). What role will each stakeholder take in the project?

Can you find a project sponsor (someone willing to give you the resources you need to move the project forward) for your idea?

## The Priority Matrix

How do you get your own ideas accepted? How can you be sure these ideas are good enough to push for? There are a number of ways you might do this, but one of the most useful is to create a visual reference to demonstrate our priorities.

### The Priority Matrix

For example, we might create a matrix to identify priority criteria for projects. Below are three criteria to consider but there are other things you might want to consider as well, such as “Will my manager support this project?” If your manager does not support your project it is usually dead in the water.

Project	Benefit	Easy to do	Contribution to priority area	Total
A				
B				
C				
D				

You can make this work by assigning points to each criterion, say on a scale of 1-10, or you may assign points depending on their overall value. For example, contribution to priority area may rate 15 points, while benefit rates 10 points, and easy to do rates 5 points.

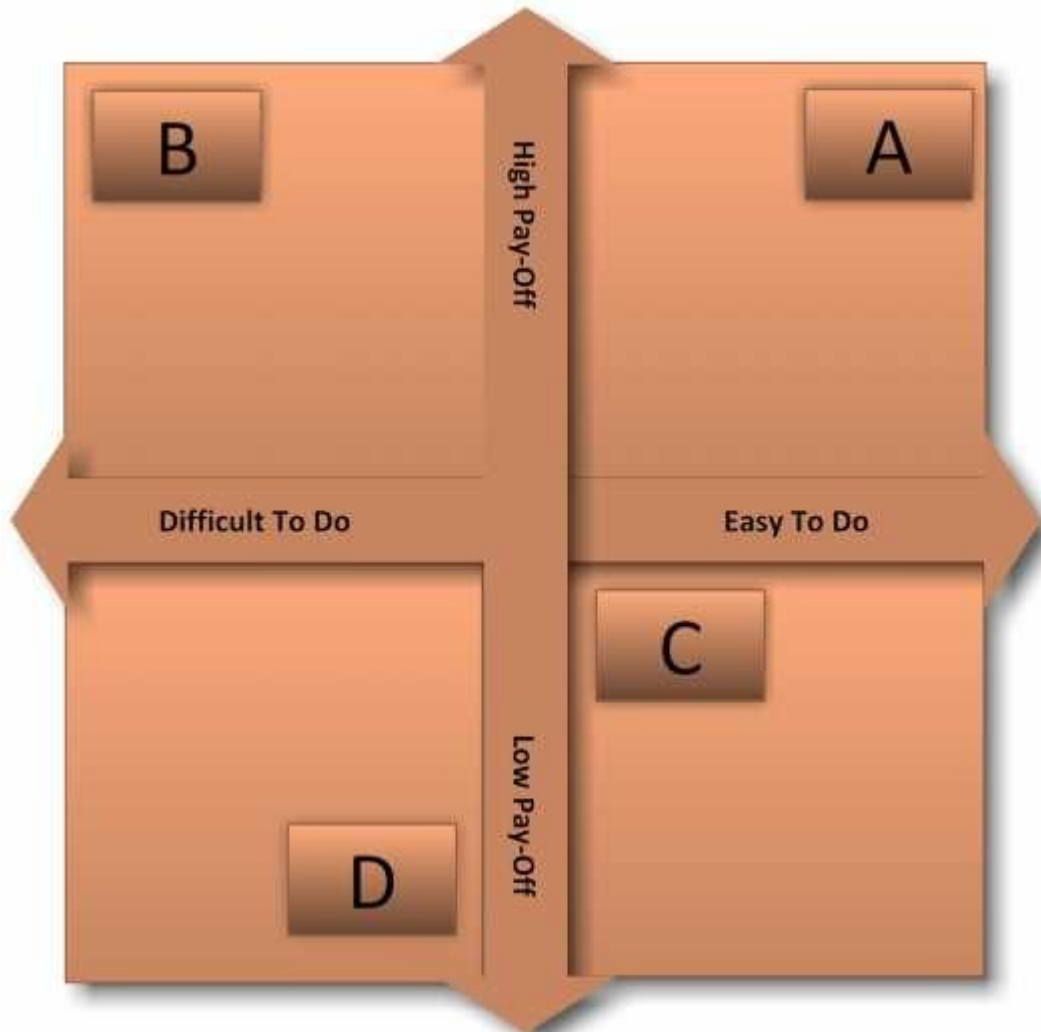
For project A, for example, you may feel the benefit rates 7/10 points, and it is very easy to do so you give it 5/5, but the contribution it would make is not really a priority in your department so it gets no points there. It would only get 15 out of 30 points.

On the other hand, Project B would be quite beneficial, so you will give it another 7/10, but it isn't so easy to do, so it gets 3/10. Nevertheless, it is in a priority area so it earns a 10/15. Thus its total score is 20 out of 30.

Now deciding between the two projects is easy; the one that scored 20 should be the project to do.

## Priority Quadrants

There is another matrix we can use. Draw two bisecting lines. One is for a high payoff vs. a low payoff. The second bisecting line is for difficulty vs. ease of doing a project. Mark each project in the appropriate quadrant.



**Which would you consider a priority?**

1. A
2. C
3. B
4. D

These are simple matrices, but they are graphic and they can sometimes help you make a decision you have been wrestling with.

## Creating a Vision

### The Vision Process

At this stage, you've chosen a project. But do you really know what you're trying to achieve?

Try this exercise: Sit at your desk with a sheet of blank paper in front of you. In an ideal world, what would your project do? Don't think about what it can't do, or why certain things aren't possible. List all ideas and goals, no matter how lofty. You may also want to perform this activity with your project team; it will get them excited about the task ahead.

Let's say that you have an idea to implement a new sales computer program in a small chain of retail stores. What objectives can you envision for the project?

### Sample Brainstorming Diagram



### Defining Objectives

We probably all agree that it's pretty unlikely for NASA to express interest in our new sales system and project us to worldwide fame, but what if?

Now that you've identified some things that ideally would change as a result of the project, what will be the likely change or objective? Let's think about our sample project of a new sales computer program. Some likely objectives would be:

- Our sales will likely increase, making employees happier.
- Our customer service should get better, resulting in happier customers, and hopefully contributing to more sales.
- This may eventually give us the ability to expand.

### Creating a Vision

Now let's narrow the focus down and create a vision statement. This statement should explain what will change and how it will change as a result of your project. It should also be attainable and worthwhile.

**Propose a vision statement for our sales project.**

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### Test Your Knowledge

**Our Project**

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**Possible Objectives**

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**Review**

Project goals also need to be reviewed periodically to make sure you have consensus as you move from stage to stage in a project.

**Inspiring**

Goals should be high but achievable.

**Time-Bound**

Make sure that the deadline for the goal is clear.

**Two Additional Criteria**

When we are working on projects, we have additional criteria to remember, particularly that goals must be **agreed upon** and come with **clear responsibility**.

**Can you identify the goals of your project?**

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**Do these goals fit the criteria for good goals?**

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**Your Project's Goals**

**Set some goals for the project that you brought to class.**

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Objective	Indicator	Priority	Current Level	Target Level
Better customer service	Less hotline traffic			
Happier employees	Turnover reduced			
Improve sales	More add-ons sold			

Now let's identify where these objectives fall in terms of priority on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being minimally important to the project's success and 10 being crucial.

Objective	Indicator	Priority	Current Level	Target Level
Better customer service	Less hotline traffic	6		
Happier employees	Turnover reduced	2		
Improve up-selling	More add-ons sold	10		

Once you've identified priorities, review your objectives. Are there any that we may want to drop? In the example above, making employees happier is minimally important to the success of the project. If this can be achieved with a small amount of work (or as the result of another objective being completed), that's fine. However, if this objective will take a significant amount of time and/or resources, we may want to save it for another project.

Now we should note the current level of performance for each objective and where we would like to be.

Objective	Indicator	Priority	Current Level	Target Level
Better customer service	Less hotline traffic	6	10 per week	2 per week
Happier employees	Turnover reduced	2	Averaging 3 per month	Less than 1 per month
Improve sales	More add-ons sold	10	\$40,000 per month	\$100,000 per month

This chart should be posted where all project members can see it, to keep everyone on track.

### Further Reading:

- ✓ *Project Management: Getting the Job Done on Time and in Budget*  
By Patrick L. Healy, 1997
- ✓ *Project Management*, By Patrick Healey, 2010