



Williamson-Consulting

Yacht Project Management

***A Practical Guide to
Yacht Projects
-Handbook-***

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Yacht Project Planning

"Planning is everything. The plan is nothing"

General Dwight D Eisenhower

- The emphasis of project planning for a new or refit yacht is identifying and estimating the work to be done. Avoid producing a Gantt chart until the thinking is complete.
- Plan, plan and plan again. Then follow it.
- Always re-plan when plans become unrealistic. Never be afraid to re-think the work
- State all assumptions and risks associated with the yacht. Be explicit.
- Specify what the yacht build will not be delivering (particularly for areas where there is doubt).
- Develop contingency plans for a number of possible outcomes.
- Do not commit to, or communicate, delivery dates until the plans have been completed and agreed by the owner or project board.
- Always identify the contingency time and a contingency budget.

Controlling Yacht Projects

“I’m all in favour of free expression provided it’s kept rigidly under control”

Alan Bennett – ‘Forty Years On’ (1969)

- Rigorously apply project control techniques. Only through tight controls will the yacht build be kept on track.
- Always be aware of what is happening on the yacht - get a ‘feel for things’.
- Only ever accept written instructions, not verbal. Owners only ‘remember’ the original cost and time for the yacht and ‘forget’ how many times they changed the specification.
- Keep a keen eye on critical dates and dependencies.
- Ensure all resources are ordered and arrive on at the yacht at the planned time.
- Stand your ground on key issues. Don't compromise your position.
- Never hide problems. Always be honest.
- Inform yacht owners and project board of events and progress. Don't do this just when you need their support!
- Keep focused by limiting non-project related activities. Team celebrations can wait until the project has been successfully completed.

Team Motivation

“A leader..... has the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do, and like it”

Harry Truman

- Motivate and lead the team by example. Demonstrate your ability for hard work.
- Talk to as many of your team members as possible every day. Create the `feel good' factor.
- Be outwardly positive while always assuming the worst.
- Spend time and build relationships with suppliers and other third parties. They are as much a part of the team as anyone else.
- Maximise the effectiveness of scarce resources and expertise.
- Get the team chemistry right. Find out what makes people tick.
- Actively publicise and promote the project. `Walk the talk'.
- Create the right environment for the team to succeed.

Problem Solving

“Many assume that half the effort can be effective. A small jump is easier than a large one. But no one wishing to cross a ditch would cross half of it first”

Karl von Clausewitz – ‘On War’ (1832)

- Do not allow problems to fester - tackle them immediately. Don't let yacht owners or the project board be surprised!
- Know when to escalate problems and to seek specialist help. Expertise applied in the right circumstances will save time and money.
- Always ensure that the team has at least one problem solver in it.
- Recognise the value of problem solvers and use them wisely.
- Establish the facts carefully - get to the truth. Understand the issues in detail.
- Never panic.
- Take quick and decisive action once a problem has been identified.