

# SECTION 19

## DEVELOPING THE PROJECT STRATEGY

The marketing of clinical trial results is a major endeavour. A project with a beginning and an end, with objectives and stakeholders. Use the ideas in this section to help you steer the project successfully through the various phases of its life.

### Manage the project phases

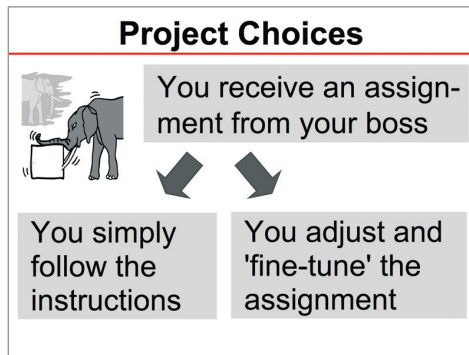
#### The Five Project Phases

1 Start	Assignment
2 Shape	Reframing phase
3 Plan	Submarine phase
4 Implement	Flagship phase
5 Close	Finishing phase

You need to manage the five project phases carefully:

- start: you receive an assignment from your boss
- shape: you reframe the assignment so that it suits both market and your needs
- plan: you and the core team lay the groundwork in the 'submarine' phase
- implement: your organization rolls out the project in the marketplace
- close: you finish the project successfully and move on.

## Define your own project parameters



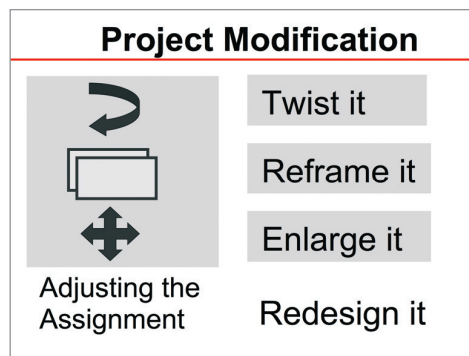
Every assignment has a starting point, an opportunity that offers several options. Unfortunately, many people do not realize that they do have a choice.

You receive an assignment from your boss.

You can choose the option of following instructions exactly as they have been given and 'do as you are told, no questions asked'. Or you can dare to modify the original assignment. Most of the time, you do have a choice. Make it.

Remember what the German poet Goethe said about starting: 'Whatever you can do or dream, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.'

## Modify the project to suit the needs



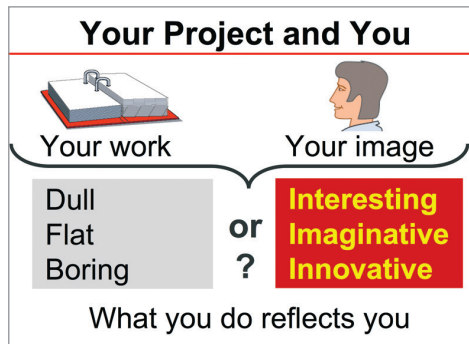
Modify the project to meet both the needs of the market as well as your own needs. Obviously you cannot redraw the map. But you can adjust the original assignment to meet market needs as you perceive them. You can fine-tune the assignment and put a different spin on the project so you learn new things.

Reshape the project, so it contains a personal development dimension where you can justifiably test out fresh ideas. Consider how you might change the scope of your initial project so that it will broaden your spectrum

of skills. Shape the project to enable you to work in a way that is rewarding both to the company and to you.

Sometimes you can convert what looks initially like a mundane assignment into a fascinating project and great opportunity to grow.

## Think about your personal image

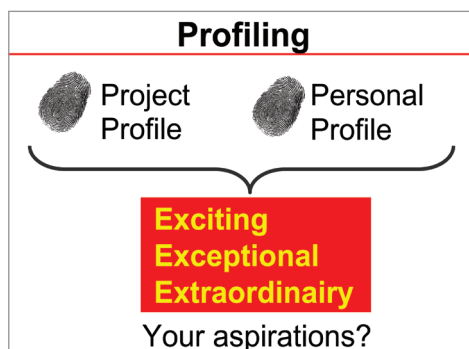


Your projects reflect your professional identity. The kind of work you do labels you in the eyes of the people with whom you work.

If your projects appear dull, flat and boring, people will tend to associate these attributes with you as well. If your projects appear interesting, imaginative and innovative, this is how you will be seen.

What do you want as your image?

## Shape your project profile



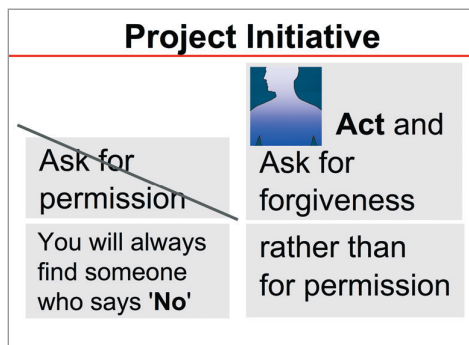
See to what extent your project can help fund your dreams and aspirations.

You have a strong influence on your own work environment.

Have the courage to exert that influence!

Ask yourself how you can shape the project profile so that it becomes exciting, even exceptional or extraordinary. How can you transform the project into something worth bearing your signature and demonstrative of your professional performance?

## Take the initiative

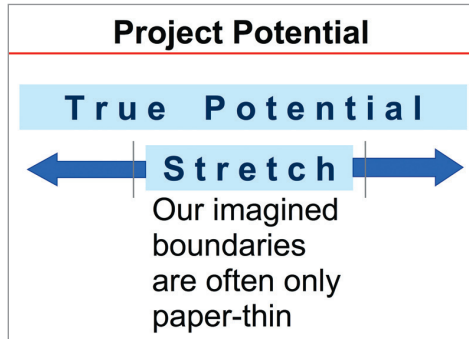


Use the opportunity every new project brings with it. Do not feel you need always to ask for permission. That's a recipe for failure. If you ask enough people you will always find someone who thinks it is his or her responsibility to say 'No.'

You usually have more leeway than you think. Be courageous and make full use of it. Your path is created in the moment of action.

When I started doing this, I was afraid of the question 'Who authorized you?' Nobody ever asked me that question.

## Stretch your comfort zones



Many of our limitations are self-imposed. Think outside the box. Stretch your comfort zones. You do have some freedom of choice. Unfold the possibilities. Exploit the space. It's usually there.

Accept assignments that force you to stretch yourself.

Assume new responsibilities and take calculated risks.

Take charge!

## Try new things

### Trying Things



**Get used to being uncomfortable**

Barbra Streisand

Getting up

**Get comfortable being uncomfortable**

Tom Peters  
Re-imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age

If you stay at the same cosy place for long, it might feel comfortable for everyone.

You will however stagnate.

Put yourself at ease doing exciting new things you have never done before.

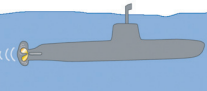
Take the initiative.

Find out if you should change the direction of your current journey with the project.

Be willing to choose situations that challenge you.

## Plan the submarine phase

### The Submarine Phase



**Quiet**

**Discreet**

**Secretive**

Remaining below the surface


Only the core team has access to concepts and drafts

In the early stages of a project, your team's conceptual activities are pretty much invisible. Remain discreet and do not distribute detailed minutes to people outside your core team.

Before you go public, only the core team has access to the wealth of raw results and the various drafts you discuss and test. You need time to figure out the communication concept, story, script and planned activities without interference.

Keep your bosses informed but only of major developments.

## Identify the crew


The Submarine Crew	
	
Marketing	Optional:
Marketing Research	Project Coordinator
Advertising	External Consultant
Medical Team	

The team on board during the submarine phase of the project usually includes people from the following functions:


- marketing (one or two persons)
- market research
- internal marketing services, advertising department or communication agency
- medical team or clinical development team
- optional: project coordinator or project management person
- optional: consultant.

The total number of people in this core team will be between four to seven.

## Manage confidentiality

Clandestine Operations	
 Classified Information	Organize confidential brainstorming
	Figure out the concept
	Develop the story
	Maintain confidentiality

Make use of confidential brainstorming sessions where creative ideas for developing the story or script can flourish. Preliminary versions and concepts are just that, and only the core team members should have access to them. Add a strong dose of curiosity. Unleash a team debate by asking questions such as 'what if' and 'why not'. At this stage, accept controversy, fluidity and fuzziness. Be sure to explain personally to everyone in your core team that absolute confidentiality is essential.

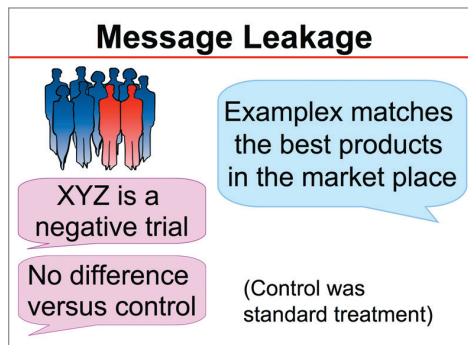
Early Caution	
 It is easy to crush a seedling	Protect your drafts during the confidential stage
	Do not release draft versions

Beware other people in the organization who show too much interest in your work. Be tight-lipped and resist the temptation to release raw concepts and draft versions. Bite your tongue instead of satisfying their curiosity.

It is easy for someone in the company to stamp on your seedling at this early stage of its growth. You do not yet know what your message will be and which words and images you will choose to convey that message.

Protect your budding project well.

## Prevent leaks of information

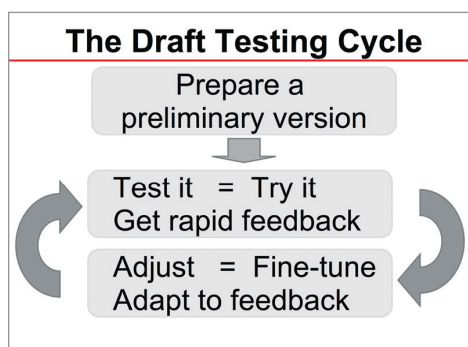


A partly formed idea or marketing concept that leaks out may well undermine your whole project. Imagine the following situation. Your trial results showed no statistically significant difference between Exampless and the active control which was standard treatment.

The message that leaked out was 'The XYZ study is a negative trial' when you would have preferred to communicate 'Exampless matches the best products in the market place.'

Obviously, these two messages create very different perceptions. Do everything to prevent the leakage of draft messages.

## Keep the process going forward

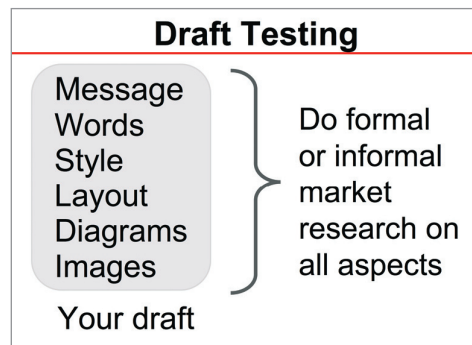


Prepare a preliminary version of your marketing concept. During your confidential brainstorming sessions you can discuss unconventional options and play with various drafts. In this protected space, you can encourage and tolerate a transient phase of creative chaos. You can improvise.

Once you have a draft, work on improving it through a quick process of testing, receiving feedback and adjusting the draft. Restart the cycle until you get it right. Learn by trial and

error, continually improving the current version. Get comfortable with this iterative process of creating, destroying and re-creating.

## Test your drafts

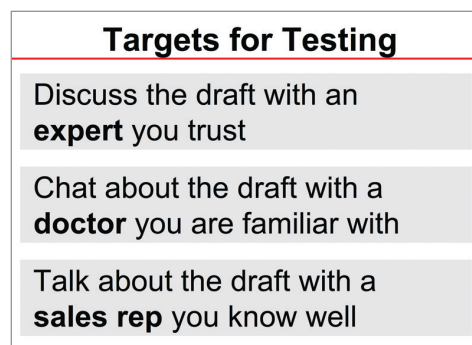


You need to initiate informal or formal market research to make sure your drafts are on target. You should test and probe every element of your package: the content (message) and the expression (vocabulary, style, layout, diagrams, images).

The only way to find out if your draft really works with the customers is to ask for frank feedback from your customers. Invite constructive critique from selected customers and build their recommendations into your draft. Understand that achieving your objective

of changing habits takes time. Therefore market research will not always give you the answers you expect.

## Seek confidential feedback



During the pre-launch phase you can use a number of 'quick and dirty' tests of your draft. Discreetly ask trusted people for their confidential feedback:

- discuss the draft with an expert you trust
- ask several doctors who participated in the trial programme for their comments
- send the draft to several sales representatives you know well.


Their critical evaluations will help you to revise and upgrade your draft versions.



## Be a silent witness to focus groups

**Focus Groups**

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Experienced interviewer

What do your customers really think about your draft?

Hidden insights

Often there is no need for commissioning expensive detailed market research studies. However you may consider one or two focus groups. The composition of doctors in your groups should reflect your target groups. Ask your market research department or an agency to prepare and set up these events. You need an experienced interviewer to detect what doctors really think as they are unlikely to admit all their thoughts and wishes openly. They may also be tempted to tell you what they think you


want to hear. You can take part in these groups as a silent witness.

My own experience was enlightening: the focus group tore some of the favourite elements of my communication concept to pieces. I was grateful because the group helped reveal latent competitive advantages and gave me specific suggestions on how to improve my drafts.

## Beware the three reasons for not testing

**Three Traps**

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Common reasons that marketers cite why they did **not** test their pieces

Un-tested stuff

- Didn't think of it
- Didn't have the time
- Didn't have the money

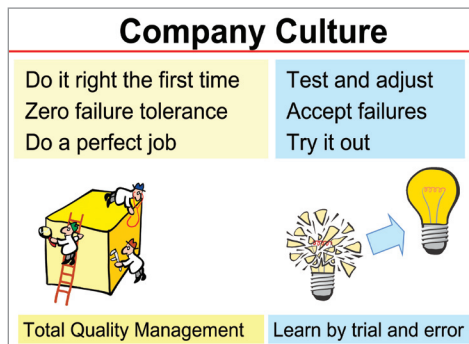
Do not use untested material. You will not know if you are on target. Testing is a routine procedure in the fast moving consumer goods industry. They take the time to ask and take the time to listen. Make it your routine, too. During my consultancy work, I came across three common reasons why marketers did not test their drafts:

- I didn't think of it
- I didn't have the time
- I didn't have the money.

Avoid these three traps and please:

- think of it
- take the time
- spend the money.

## Look at your company culture

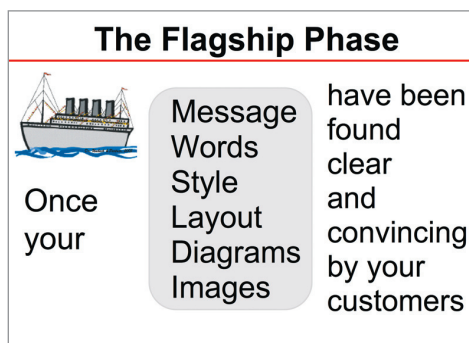


Some company cultures do not encourage testing.

Indicative of such a risk-averse culture are admonishments such as 'Do it right the first time', 'Do a perfect job', 'No mistakes allowed'. These statements do have their justification in production and quality control, but stifle new approaches to marketing.

Only a 'Test and adjust' or 'Try and learn' attitude in a blame-free company culture will encourage people to find innovative solutions to problems.

## Move to the flagship phase

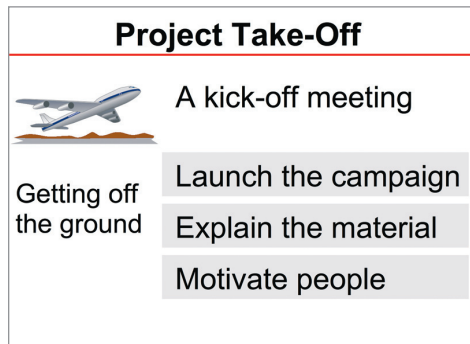


You can move from the 'submarine' (pre-launch) phase to the flagship phase once you have developed a persuasive package with a compelling story.

How will you know that you have achieved this objective?

Once the test results show that your clients feel that your words, style, layout, diagrams and images are clear and convincing.

## Kick-start the roll-out



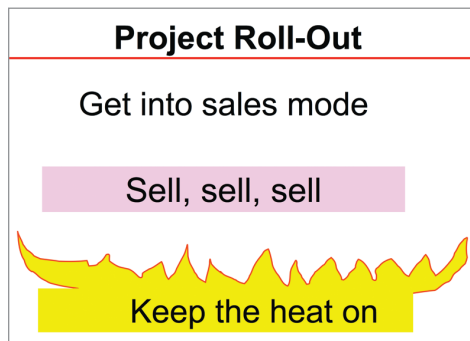
Organize a 'kick-off meeting'. Make this a highly visible official event and use the opportunity to:

- launch the campaign and highlight the objectives
- explain the promotional material
- show people what is in it for them.

In addition, you can collect information; for example the contact details of all team members.

Why not suggest some rules? For example: Let's use the expression 'Exampless ABC' to open the subject line of all emails. This will help us recognize and sort emails by project. Thus this procedure will facilitate finding key information.

## Move into selling mode



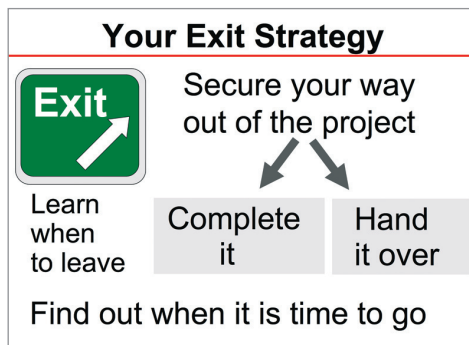
During the implementation phase you should be in sales mode.

Hit high gear. Your motto is 'sell'.

Don't bear grudges. Sceptics who have been doubting and questioning the value of your project suddenly show interest. What do you do? Forgive them. Forget the past. Get over their previous resistance and welcome them to the team.

Remember: 'On board is on board'.

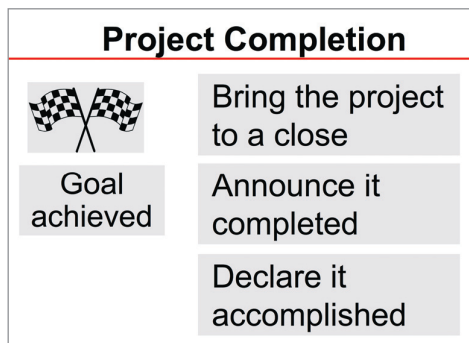
## Plan your exit strategy



Notice when the time has come to move on. Know when to quit. If you are staying for too long on the same project, you run the risk of getting stuck in your career path and of being taken for granted. Remember: the sun is appreciated because it is not shining all the time.

Last impressions do count. Make sure that your exit leaves a pleasant and favourable impression. Learn the art of closing.

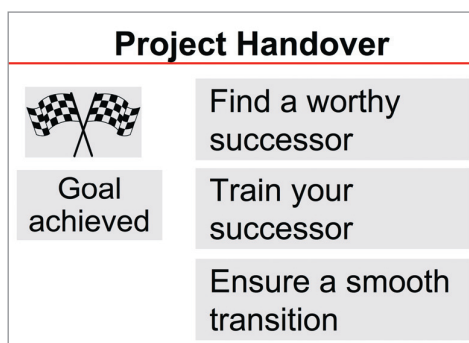
Remember: there is a time for each and every thing.



The first option is for you to bring the project to a seemingly natural close.

In which case it's up to you to declare when you have accomplished your mission.

You have successfully reached your goals.



The second option is to find and train a good successor. Hand over the project. Your responsibility ends only once you have ensured a smooth project transition.

Again, you have successfully reached your goals.

## Celebrate your team's achievements

Celebration	
 <p>Party time: Celebrate the team's achievements</p>	Relax and enjoy
	Relish success
	Take pleasure in your accomplishments
	<p>Winning is fun</p> <p>Jack Welch</p>

Once your time on the project is successfully concluded, it is time to celebrate.

Loosen up and relax. It's leisure time.



Organize a party and have a good time.

Relish your team's success.

Learn to derive pleasure from your accomplishments.

Enjoy the fruits of your work.

## Depart with style

Your Departure	
 <p>Thank everybody</p>	Finishing power
 <p>Leave quickly</p>	Move on to the next project

Thank everyone involved.

Depart from the project team with style - quickly and graciously.

Then move on to your next project.

Resist the temptation to hang around the project. This may be a painful and difficult decision, but it is important to make the break. Be firm.

