CONCEPTUALIZING A PROJECT

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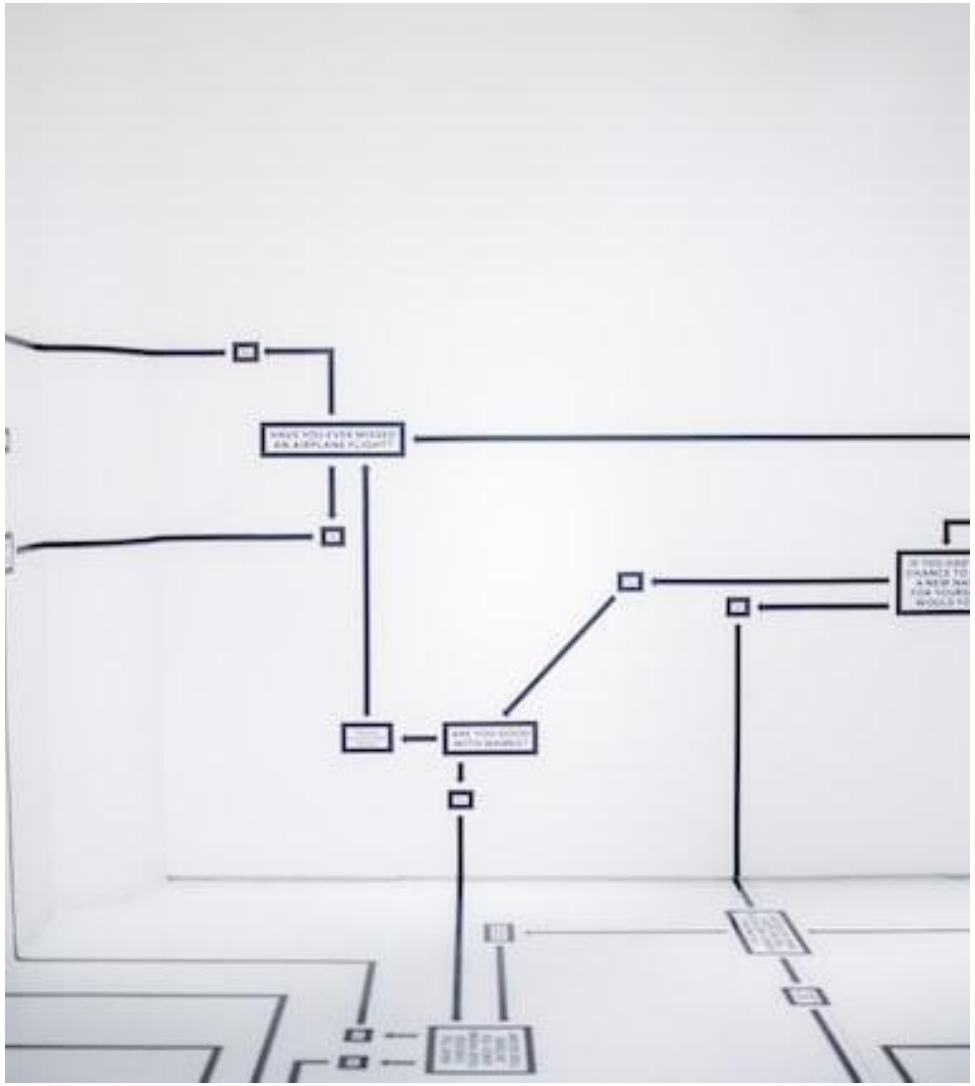

PROJECT:

an individual or collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim

Projects can be any size

- A class paper
- A dissertation
    - A camping trip
    - A job search
        - A museum exhibit
        - A book
            - A grant proposal
            - A handmade gift

What are the COMPONENTS of a PROJECT?

In pairs, make a list – what are the general components necessary to plan any projects?

Goals vs. Objectives

Goal: what is the purpose of this project, what will change because it is successful?

Objectives: what are the deliverables of this project, what tangibles will it produce, are there deliverables that need to produced along the way?

Example: your objective in graduate school is to complete a dissertation and get a PhD.

What is YOUR goal? What is your purpose for getting a PhD? What will change once you have a PhD?

Resources

- People – team members, advisors
- Money – cash, in-kind, institutional, grants
- Time – your time, other people's availability
- Materials & Supplies
- Training – for you and team members
- Space
- Equipment

Other Project Components

- Timeline and Due Dates
- Constraints (personal and organizational)
- What is not included in the project
- Reporting lines and requirements

Put it all together into a

PROJECT SCOPE

WHY?

If you haven't thought through…

- The main goal and what isn't included… it's easy to get distracted by tasks that are peripheral to your project (*scope creep*).
- All the possible costs… you won't know how much money you actually need.
- Any specialized components… you might not have the necessary skills or the right people at the right time.
- Personal constraints, such as ability to travel due to family commitments… you might not be able to meet the initial timeline.

Example: they built a museum but didn't make sure there was money to open it

HOW TO PLAN A PROJECT

So many resources!

- Books, of course.
- Examples of grant applications (but remember, a grant application may not include all components of the full project).
- Templates online – projects vs. "project management" vs Project Management
- Digital tools (free versions) – Asana, ClickUp, Trello, Wrike
- Your system that already works for you