



Beyond Boundaries: A Project Manager's 70-Day Journey in Agile Project Entrepreneurship

Creating a Business from Ground Zero to First Sale

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the dynamic and complicated path of starting a business, narrated through the eyes of a project manager who is responsible for overseeing and guiding their team towards their shared objective. The thesis aims to showcase teams' efforts to launch a lava lamp business from ground zero all the way to its first sale within a time frame of 70 days. This story provides valuable insights to the field and demonstrates the connection between theoretical and practical aspects of entrepreneurship and project management. It achieves this by applying project management frameworks, such as the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and employing autonomous Laissez-Faire leadership strategies on a daily basis in the projects. The thesis is broken up into two independent but related parts: an in-depth investigation of theoretical principles and a series of diary entries that document the day-to-day implementation of these concepts from the project manager's (PM) perspective. Both parts are interconnected. This dual approach offers an in-depth understanding of the crucial role played by project management frameworks and autonomous leadership strategies in navigating the complicated processes of starting a new business venture and leading a project team. It aims to act as a handbook that can be used as a manual for aspiring business owners and project managers, providing a substantial academic contribution to the fields of project management and entrepreneurship.

Keywords: project success, entrepreneurship, project management, process management, business diary, project management methodologies, PMBOK

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GLOSSARY or ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS (choose one or other)

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
cr	credit
PMI	Project Management Institute
PMBOK	Project Management Body of Knowledge
PM	Project Manager
PMS	Project Management Software
Stakeholder	An individual, organization, or group who may be involved by, or perceive itself to be involved in a decision, activity, or outcome of the project.
Project lifecycle	The stages that a process or management system goes through as it proceeds from birth to death.
Deliverable	A thing can be provided, specifically as a product of a development process.
Scope creep	Stage where the project's scope changes uncontrollably due to unexpected obstacles, causing the project to become unmanageable and unpredictable and potentially putting the achievement of the project's objectives at risk.
Diary	A book in which one documents the events and experiences in a summarizing matter by overviewing the large scale and narrating the timeline.
Journal	A book in which one keeps documenting events and experiences as they unfold in the moment.

1 Introduction

Welcome to a thesis that explores the dynamic journey of an entrepreneurial endeavor undertaken by a project manager. This thesis takes readers on a captivating journey, tracking the birth of a business from its inception to the moment of its first sale, all within 70 days. It does so to discover the connections between theoretical principles in project management and how they can be implemented in real-life practice to entrepreneurship.

This diary-based thesis utilizes diary entries in addition to a comprehensive theoretical introduction to different frameworks and methodologies to break down every aspect of the journey. The methodologies include for example the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) and the autonomic Laissez-Faire leadership strategy, which are both critical in guiding the project to success. The diary entries allow the reader to follow the narrator's actions in chronological order. The diaries, which are the heart of the thesis, do not only reflect the practical developments and landmarks that were reached during the project, but they also provide an insightful lens into the challenges encountered, the decisions taken, and the strategies that developed to react to the constantly shifting environment of a business that's been launched. Furthermore, this thesis functions not only as a practical manual but also as an academic contribution, offering a deeper understanding of the fields of project management and entrepreneurship.

1.1 Diary-Based Thesis

At Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), bachelor's degree students are provided with the opportunity to pursue a diary-based thesis as part of their bachelor's degree program. This particular thesis format is intended to facilitate students' active involvement in the advancement of their professional practice, either within their own businesses or their current employment setting. The temporal structure of the diary is clearly defined, typically covering a period of 10 weeks or slightly more, ideally equivalent to the duration of a single academic

semester. This framework ensures that the student can conduct an in-depth investigation while also adhering to a defined scope for their thesis. (Tampere University, 2023)

The thesis, which draws upon diary entries, offers a comprehensive examination of professional practice. It does not only demonstrate the practical implementation of knowledge but also presents a systematic investigation that provides valuable insights of both personal and academic value.

1.2 Thesis Topic and Structure

In order to serve the purpose of the thesis, it is best to present the thesis's topic and structure in the same chapter.

The study, "Beyond Boundaries: A Project Manager's 70-Day Journey in Agile Project Entrepreneurship" provides an in-depth examination of the development of a lava lamp business, tracking its inception to the successful completion of its first sale within a short timeframe of 70 days. The study explores the relationship between entrepreneurship and organized project management, going beyond theoretical discussions to demonstrate their practical application.

The thesis is broken up into two independent but related parts: First, an in-depth investigation of the theoretical principles of the project, which aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the methodology and framework utilized. The literature review thoroughly examines the various theories, methodologies, and tools that were utilized effectively when delivering the project undertaken in the thesis. The second part consists of a series of diary entries that document the day-to-day implementation of these previously mentioned concepts practice and how they benefit the daily progress of starting a business from ground zero.

These two parts are interconnected. This dual approach offers an in-depth understanding of the vital role played by the utilization of project management

frameworks and autonomous leadership strategies when navigating the complicated processes of starting a new business venture and/or leading a project team.

The core of this thesis revolves around the application of a project management framework, Project Management Body Knowledge (PMBOK), which serves as the primary guiding framework, offering an organized, systematic, and adaptable approach to project management. The implementation of the framework plays an important role in ensuring that every stage of the business development process, starting from the beginning to the execution, is systematically planned, executed, and monitored. In addition to the primary framework, the thesis investigates the vital roles that the project infrastructure tools, application of entrepreneurial competencies, and leadership methodologies play in facilitating the successful delivery and completion of a project.

This thesis provides a thorough examination of how a disciplined and strategic project management approach can result in the successful completion of an ambitious project. Achieving this objective involves presenting an examination of combining well-established theories and showcasing their practical implementation through a project diary.

1.3 Thesis Objective

The primary objective of the thesis is to create a comprehensive handbook to demonstrate the complex correlation between theoretical principles and their practical implementation in the fields of project management and entrepreneurship. This narrative provides a unique perspective that explores both the theoretical and practical elements of project management and entrepreneurship. This is discovered in the thesis by employing a dual narrative structure, where the first part of the thesis explores the theoretical principles behind project management and the specific project in hand, while the other part provides an up-close look at the practical implementation of these previously introduced theoretical concepts in the context of launching a business within a short timeframe of 70 days. This approach not only emphasizes the importance of academic

principles in a practical project setting but also serves as a significant academic contribution to its respective fields by demonstrating the integration of theoretical frameworks with real-world experiences in a project-oriented setting.

1.4 Ethics and Reliability

Specifically, within fields that actively combine theory and practice, such as project management, the reliability, and ethics of supplied materials are critical. This thesis predominantly utilizes materials produced by major organizations and experts in the area of study. These fundamental resources provide a solid basis of credibility due to their significant study, peer review, and practical application. Their origin from established organizations or parties that created primary frameworks and methodologies used in the project, assures that they comply with high academic scrutiny and professional ethical standards.

However, as the domains of project management and leadership are creative fields, they necessitate a degree of flexibility and the ability to adapt to specific contexts. To customize these resources for the specific needs of this project, it was essential to refer to a wider range of sources. This included resources such as essays based on first-hand knowledge, blogs written by experts in the field, and other types of non-traditional literature. Although these sources may lack the same degree of formal peer review which are found in traditional academic journals or official publications, they provide essential practical insights and current viewpoints that are vital for the need of the project and its nature with real-world implementation. The utilization of these alternative sources has been examined with a critical standpoint, guaranteeing their relevance, and upholding a standard of trustworthiness and ethical integrity. The utilization of the extensively examined primary academic resources as well as thoughtfully chosen alternate sources establishes a complete and ethical foundation for the thesis.

2 Literature Review: Project Management

Project Management in definition means “the planning and organizing of a company’s or team’s resources to move a specific task, event or duty toward completion and commonly set goals.” (Investopedia 2023) A project is described by the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) as a short-term endeavor undertaken to produce a particular product, service, or result. (PMBOK 2008, 5) A project is temporary by nature due to it always including a clear beginning and conclusion. A project is considered to be finished once its objectives have been successfully achieved. Alternatively, if the goals of the project cannot be accomplished, it may be terminated. Additionally, a project may be discontinued if it is deemed to have lost its significance.

2.1 Project Management and Entrepreneurship Correlation

In this section, we explore the correlation that underpins the relationship between project management and entrepreneurship, and why the importance of great project management is essential in entrepreneurship.

This diary hybrid-based thesis emphasizes the importance of the correlation between these two concepts.

When one is in the position of a Project manager in any kind of project, one must not only strive to meet the specific scope, time, cost, and quality goals of the project in hand but also facilitate the entire process to meet the needs and expectations of the people involved in or affected by project activities (Schwalbe 2009, 7-11) (Artto et al. 2011, 24 - 27). Nevertheless, it is rare to find projects that unravel exactly according to the initial plan, regardless of the level of preparation for potential obstacles. This is especially true in the context of this thesis project which is that emphasizes establishing a business from scratch and achieving its first sale within a 70-day timeframe. In a typical "start-up," where you may plan and prepare the business's launch for months, if not years, the risk management is considerably easier compared to the nature of this thesis project, where the preparation time is significantly shorter and the stakes in the

project are much higher in terms of achieving the results. Given the nature of the present project, it is highly probable that unforeseen complications may arise during the implementation phase. Starting a business from scratch within a period of 70 days creates a scenario where everything is about going "beyond the state of the art", and therefore the risk of objectives and original goals becoming 'non-achievable' is highly present. However, a competent and responsive project manager can assert that such a situation is entirely typical and acceptable in certain a scope. One of the frequently overlooked qualities of a project manager is the capacity to consistently respond to provided information and adjust the project's scope when necessary. To ensure the effective application and successful implementation of the project, it is imperative to constantly engage in risk identification and take appropriate actions to guide the ship. (PMI 2023)

2.1.1 EntreComp

Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, commonly known as EntreComp, plays a pivotal role in cultivating entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. A framework, developed by the European Commission in 2016, to offer a thorough framework to define and showcase what entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial mindset means. Entrecomp showcases the competencies required for success as an entrepreneur, or any individual in a working environment. In today's dynamic work environments, individuals need to have the ability to capitalize on opportunities, generate innovative ideas, and collaborate effectively with colleagues. In order to accomplish these objectives, it is important to cultivate individuals, teams, and organizations that possess an entrepreneurial mindset across all domains of existence. This can be achieved by utilizing the Entrecomp framework. (Entrecomp 2016)

The framework consists of three primary domains, including "Ideas and Opportunities," "Resources," and "Into Action," each comprising a collection of 15 competencies. These skills encompass a wide range of abilities, ranging from

strategic planning and effective process management to the identification of opportunities and the mobilization of resources. (Bacigalupo, M. & Kampylis, P. & Punie, Y. & Van den Brande, G. 2016)

EntreComp is notable due to its comprehensive approach, which emphasizes the significance of social and personal development alongside the economic dimensions of entrepreneurship. The framework provided by EntreComp demonstrates its significance as a valuable resource for project management, particularly within the context of entrepreneurship. Key competencies that are essential for carrying a project through from start to completion are also applicable to entrepreneurship. The previously referenced 2016 paper "EntreComp", provides in-depth research of this framework and its uses for additional understanding of the framework. The EntreComp framework serves as more than just a theoretical concept; rather, it functions as a dynamic tool for cultivating and enhancing entrepreneurial competencies. The document functions as a roadmap for individuals and organizations pursuing to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. (Bacigalupo, M. & Kampylis, P. & Punie, Y. & Van den Brande, G. 2016)

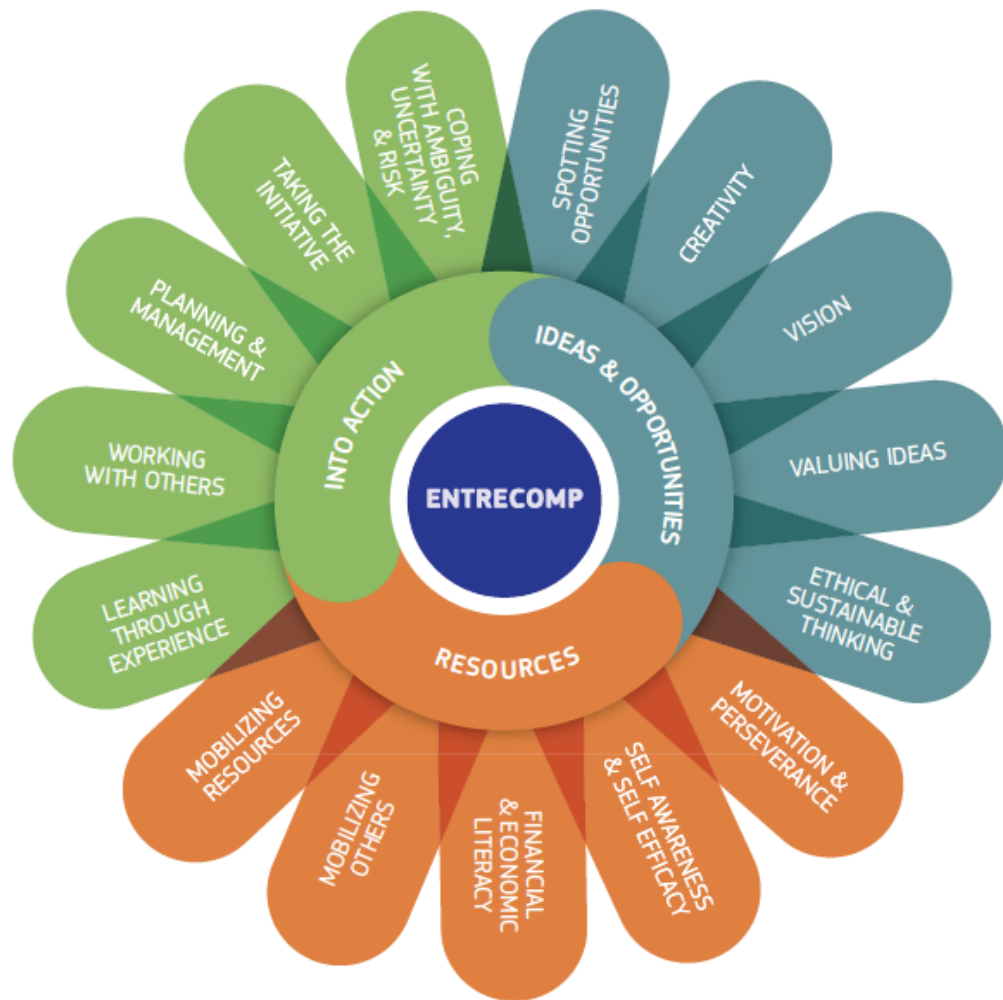


Figure 1. EntreComp Framework (Adapted from Entrepreneurship Competence Framework)

One of the primary advantages of EntreComp framework, which is illustrated in Figure 1, lies in its extensive scope, including a diverse range of competencies. The “Ideas and Opportunities” section, for example, aims to promote individuals’ ability to identify and capitalize on their core skills and opportunities around them, thereby fostering innovation and proactive approaches to problem-solving. The ‘Resources’ component emphasizes the effective utilization and administration of both tangible and intangible assets, which are crucial for maintaining the expansion of a business. Finally, the ‘Into Action’ element emphasizes the cultivation of resilience, the development of strategic planning skills, and the capacity to make decisive actions. From a practical standpoint, EntreComp can serve as a standard for the design of educational curricula in academic institutions, a framework for evaluating skills within organizational settings, and a guiding principle for individuals to evaluate and enhance their entrepreneurial

competencies. (Bacigalupo, M. & Kamylyis, P. & Punie, Y. & Van den Brande, G. 2016)

Within the context of the thesis, EntreComp serves as a guiding framework to ensure that all crucial entrepreneurial skills are acknowledged and effectively employed in the project. This applies not only to the project manager but also to the team members who are being directed by the project manager. The ability to think quickly and be flexible is crucial for success in the rapidly changing dynamic of the project. The most effective use of EntreComp can be demonstrated in the initial stages of a project, particularly when assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the team. EntreComp can also help as a tool to establish team roles and allocate tasks. (Bacigalupo, M. & Kamylyis, P. & Punie, Y. & Van den Brande, G. 2016)

2.2 A Successful Project

Generally, a project can be considered successful when it effectively and efficiently accomplishes its intended objectives. (Bannerman 2008) The accomplishment in question is characterized by its multifaceted nature, covering a range of dimensions that extend beyond simply the fulfillment of tasks. Traditionally, a project is considered successful if it complies with the Project Management Institute's (PMI) "Iron Triangle"—a set of requirements that include scope, time, budget, and quality (Aminzadeh, M. & Mojaveri, H. S. & Shafeiha, S. 2013). The latest viewpoints broaden the scope of this definition by including customer satisfaction, organizational impact, and long-term sustainability. Methodologies such as PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge), provide a systematic framework for project management, which puts a focus on project management's key elements such as risk management, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement.

In the context of launching a business within a 70-day timeframe, a successful project transcends traditional metrics. It involves a balance between predefined objectives and maximizing value creation through efficient resource utilization

and strategic planning, mirroring PMBOK's principles. The success of this project hinges on achieving a balance between the project management constraints while delivering a valuable product within the stipulated timeframe.

It is imperative to distinguish between the success of a project and the success of its outputs. While a project may meet its internal objectives, its true measure of success is the value it delivers (Bannerman, 2008). This distinction is exemplified by the Sydney Opera House, where the project's value significantly exceeded its deviations from the initial scope, time, and cost constraints.

(UKEssays 2018)

In the context of this thesis, evaluating the success of the project involves multiple facets. Success is not solely determined by the timely completion, but also by the creation of substantial value during the project's lifecycle and its documentation. Documenting each step of building a business from inception to the first sale offers invaluable insights into the methodologies, frameworks, strategies, and coping mechanisms employed. This documentation enriches the reader's understanding of the practical application of these theoretical constructs.

To achieve this value, a balance must be struck between adhering to the project management triangle—encompassing scope, time, and cost, and maximizing the overall usefulness of the final output. In the context of the project, cost can also represent time due to it being one of the main resources since there is a 70-day deadline set to achieve the goals set. This strategy underscores the thesis statement, "Beyond Boundaries" and "Creating a Business from Ground Zero to First Sale." It encapsulates the journey toward success, characterized by strategic project management and entrepreneurial competencies. Importantly, the chronological narrative of the thesis allows readers to follow the growth and success, providing a real-time view of how theories are applied and evaluated throughout the project's progression.

2.3 PMBOK as the Project Management Framework

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), developed by the Project Management Institute (PMI) originally 1996, is widely regarded as

the model and framework of excellence in the field of project management. PMBOK serves as the primary framework of the Project Management Institute (PMI), as well as for the project of the project undertaken in this thesis. The framework includes a comprehensive collection of widely proven practices, terminologies, and recommendations that have been gathered from the collective knowledge and expertise of project management experts worldwide. The application of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) functions as a fundamental framework for achieving success in the field of project management. It establishes a shared vocabulary that fosters effectiveness and minimizes misunderstandings among members of the project team. This framework plays a crucial role in facilitating the successful launch, organization, implementation, oversight, regulation, and conclusion of projects across various industries. (PMI 2017)

To completely comprehend PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge), it is necessary to shift away from the idea of inflexible methodologies and move toward the ideology of living by a flexible framework and set of tools. Rather than enforcing a set-in-stone, globally applicable approach, the chapter's extensive collection of tools, techniques, and best practices attempts to provide guidance and an introduction to where and how these variables can be customized to suit the particular requirements of each project. Considering the inherent differences among projects, project managers should possess the ability and resources to select and adapt different methodologies, resources, and tools that are most suitable for the specific project at hand. (Kerzner, H. 2013) PMBOK provides project managers with an in-depth manual to effectively navigate the complex parts of project activities, covering the entire project lifecycle from initiation, all the way to its successful completion. (PMI 2017)

The significance of a framework such as PMBOK is extremely evident in the context of the project undergone in the thesis, where the objective is to start a business only in a matter of 70 days. In such a context, the utilization of PMBOK and its clear strategic structure provides an established approach to project management. The framework assures that the project initiatives are executed with an in-depth understanding of the interplay between scope, time, cost, and quality.

2.4 Project Infrastructure

In the context of project management and entrepreneurship, the term "infrastructure" refers to the integration of different tools and platforms that establish a conducive environment for efficient work processes and communication. This chapter introduces and examines the project management software (PMS), visual collaboration tools, and communication platforms utilized in the case project discussed in the thesis. The establishment of this infrastructure is crucial for the initiation and organization of projects in line with the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) framework.

2.4.1 Project Management Software

The utilization of Project Management Software (PMS) has become an essential component in contemporary project management, playing a crucial role in augmenting the productivity and efficacy of project implementation. Monday, by Monday.com, is a prominent project management software, that plays a pivotal role in transforming how project teams process their scope, schedule, and processes in real-time. (Henderson, L. 2023)

The approach to project planning and execution phases has been redefined by Monday, demonstrating a seamless alignment with the principles outlined in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) guide developed by the Project Management Institute. (PMI 2017)

Monday as a platform, offers a centralized and user-friendly interface that enables the real-time monitoring and coordination of project tasks, ensuring consistent alignment among team members with regards to the project's scope and schedule. The user-friendly and agile interface makes Monday an easy software to integrate for less experienced team members. These are all reasons that helped to lead up to the decision to choose Monday as the project's PMS. (Project Management Software) Monday possesses a fundamental advantage in its

ability to facilitate immediate collaboration and communication among team members. This characteristic offers notable advantages in ensuring that the project follows to the predetermined scope and schedule, as included in the process groups of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). Monday supports efficient workflow and decision-making by offering a visual and interactive platform that ensures team members' accessibility and easier understanding of their responsibilities, project timelines, and the overall current stage of the project. When Monday is utilized in combination with visual collaboration tools such as Miro, the integration of Monday facilitates a smooth transition from generating ideas to turning them into organized project plans within the platform. The process of integration guarantees that new concepts conceived during collaborative brainstorming sessions can efficiently be transformed into practical assignments and assigned tasks that are in line with the goals of the project. (Monday.com 2023)

In addition to previously mentioned, Monday offers comprehensive reporting and analytics features that empower project managers to effectively track the advancement of team individuals' tasks and project phases within the team. This goes hand in hand with the autonomic leadership methodology introduced later in chapter 2.6, where individuals are granted autonomy within their respective responsibilities as well as with Project Management Body of Knowledge's (PMBOK) framework which emphasizes the consistent monitoring and controlling of project activities to ensure compliance with the project plan. (PMI 2017)

In summary, the significance of project management software, particularly Monday, in modern project management is of utmost importance. The capacity of this tool to maintain real-time alignment among team members regarding the project's scope, schedule, and stage is of immense value. (Henderson, L. 2023) As a tool, Monday serves to enhance the efficiency of project execution while also adhering to the guidelines outlined in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), thereby facilitating a structured and strategic project management process.

2.4.2 Visual Collaboration Tools

Visual collaboration tools have fundamentally transformed the landscape of project management, particularly in the realms of ideation, planning, and execution. Miro as a platform offers a collaborative environment wherein team members can engage in brainstorming sessions and idea sharing. (Miro 2023) A visual collaboration tool can be beneficial in the beginning stages of any kind of project. Miro, the chosen visual collaboration tool for the project, is a great option to serve this matter. Miro acts as a digital whiteboard functioning not only as a practical instrument but also as a catalyst for cultivating a collaborative culture that is indispensable for achieving success in any given project. In modern work environments, the ability to engage in real-time collaboration, despite geographical constraints, holds tremendous value. Miro as a platform offers a collaborative environment, totally online, wherein team members can engage in brainstorming sessions and idea sharing. Just like using a whiteboard in an office. This is facilitated through various features such as the utilization of sticky notes, freeform drawings, and pre-designed templates provided by the platform's community. (Miro 2023)

Miro has an amazing capacity to facilitate iterative design processes. Miro can effectively document the evolution of a project and specifically the logic behind decisions by visually capturing the changes and ideas with different resources provided by the platform. As an example of this, Miro provides resources for a variety of diagramming techniques, including flowcharts and SWOT analyses, which are all essential to strategic planning. (Miro 2023)

The presence of a Miro has a positive impact on team dynamics. It establishes a fair and inclusive environment wherein every member of the team is encouraged to actively participate, thereby cultivating a feeling of personal investment and accountability. The mentioned is a large reason why such a tool is used in the project since modern and autonomic leadership methodologies are also present in the execution of the project. The inherent visual characteristics of Miro facilitate the integration of various learning and communication modalities, thereby promoting inclusivity and equitable representation of ideas. (Miro 2023) Within the context of the thesis case project, the utilization of Miro occurs

weekly, serving not only as a resource to the project manager but also for team members in various tasks. An exemplary illustration of Miro's significance to the team lies in its facilitation of designing the foundational documents in different phases of the project. These documents can include for example the Risk Document, Project Plan, and Project Life Cycle, which all are created during the Planning phase of the project undertaken in the thesis.

The decision to choose Miro for the project as its visual collaboration tool can be credited to its versatility, user-friendly interface, and seamless integration with various project management tools, including Monday.com, which is the chosen PMS (Project Management System) for the project. The tool functions as a crucial component of the project's infrastructure, providing recognizable advantages in terms of promoting innovation, enabling the pursuit of autonomic leadership methodologies, and streamlining project planning procedures. (Miro 2023)

2.4.3 Communication Tools

The importance of efficient internal communication cannot be overstated, especially in a dynamic and unpredictable environment, as evidenced by this particular thesis case project. Microsoft Teams has been identified as a highly effective tool within this particular context of project management, offering a versatile platform that not only enhances the efficiency of communication but also plays a substantial role in differentiating communication between professional and personal settings. The process of separating individual and work environmental communication is crucial for the psychological well-being of team members as well as the overall effectiveness of the organization. (Park, Y. & Fritz, C. & Jex, S. M. 2011).

Extensive research has been done to investigate the importance of maintaining a distinct separation between professional and personal communication. The implementation of a clear delineation between professional and personal domains may successfully reduce work-related stress while improving overall job satisfaction. (Park, Y. & Fritz, C. & Jex, S. M. 2011) The differentiation between

these factors becomes progressively significant in the context of entrepreneurship, due to the fundamentally unpredictable and vague nature of boundaries in the field. The importance of defining a clear line between professional and personal communication is emphasized in a recent publication. (Hertz, K. 2021)

This article stresses the significance of maintaining a clear separation between work and personal domains for entrepreneurs, who often experience an overlap between the two. The article recommends adopting specialized tools and strategies to maintain this differentiation, which helps with stress management and the maintenance of a healthy work-life balance. (Hertz, K. 2021)

Microsoft Teams, which is an integral component of the Microsoft Office suite, offers a comprehensive solution for diverse communication requirements. The integration of the software with other Microsoft applications enhances its functionality, thereby facilitating a smooth and uninterrupted exchange of information and supporting collaborative efforts which is crucial in a hectic project. Microsoft Teams facilitates this separation by offering a specialized workspace that exclusively caters to professional interactions. The structured nature of its environment, featuring distinct channels designated for various projects or topics, facilitates systematic and intentional communication. The feature of setting status messages and availability is beneficial for effectively managing expectations regarding response times, a critical aspect in distinguishing between work hours and personal time. This feature is especially advantageous for entrepreneurs who require the establishment of distinct boundaries to mitigate the risk of exhaustion and sustain a viable work rhythm. (Microsoft 2023)

Additionally, the video conferencing and screen sharing functionalities of Teams render it a highly suitable platform for remote and hybrid work settings, which have become progressively prevalent in the contemporary entrepreneurial environment. The ability to adapt and be flexible is crucial for a project manager who is responsible for overseeing a diverse team, which may be spread out at times.

In summary, Microsoft Teams is a significant communication tool specifically for the establishment of the thesis project and its project manager. The comprehensive features of the system not only enable effective internal communication but

also serve as a vital factor in upholding a necessary distinction between professional and personal domains. As project managers encounter the intricacies of initiating a business from inception within a limited timeframe, the judicious employment of communication tools such as Teams serves as evidence of their managerial expertise and dedication to the welfare of their team.

2.5 Project Management Lifecycle

The project management process consists of five stages necessary for any project which are framed according to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, as illustrated in Figure 2. These phases are Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and Controlling, and Closing. (PMBOK, 2008, 6.) The phases and the corresponding project management methods are presented individually in the following section.

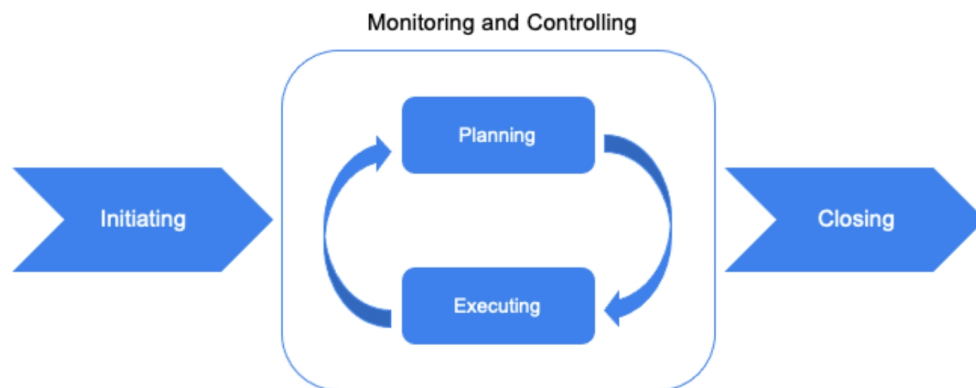


Figure 2. Project Management Life Cycle (Adapted from PMBOK, 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

Figure 2 illustrates the Project Management Life cycle. The implementation of a structured framework greatly increases the probability of achieving success for the project. The application of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) serves as evidence of the project manager's proficiency and dedication to achieving high standards. The principles and practices outlined in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) provide a comprehensive framework that guides project execution from its start to its successful comple-

tion, while also providing a thorough and adaptable manual that aims to guarantee successful project outcomes in a dynamic and rapidly evolving global business environment. By adhering to these principles and practices, project managers may make educated decisions, effectively manage risks, and continuously be guided on how to document project stages. (PMBOK, 2008, 6.)

PMBOK is well known to act as a toolkit that can be customized to suit the unique requirements of each project. In the context of the thesis's case project, PMBOK is utilized and adapted correspondingly with leadership methodologies introduced in chapter 2.6.

2.5.1 Initiating

The process of initiating a project includes everything involved in identifying and starting a new project. The initiating process is responsible for establishing the initial scope as well as introducing the stakeholders (project team) and their roles. In addition to the identification of stakeholders and their roles, the project manager will also be designated. The data collected during this phase is documented utilizing Project Management Body of Knowledge's (PMBOK) resources. (PMBOK, 2008, 45).

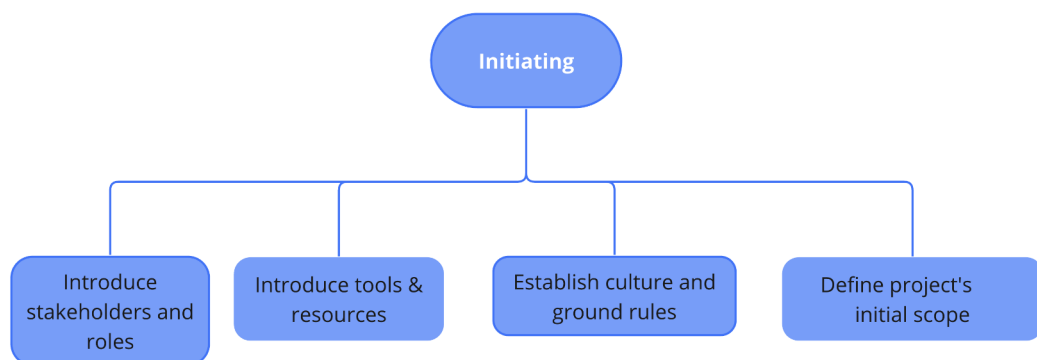


Figure 3. Initiating phase actions (Adapted from PMBOK, 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

Figure 3 illustrates the actions included in the initiating phase. As previously declared, the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) serves as a set of tools that can be customized to suit the specific requirements of any individ-

ual project. Within the framework of the thesis's case project, the process of initiation serves as a "start-up meeting" to kick off the project. In addition to the previously mentioned objectives, this meeting seeks to kick off the formation of team unity, introduce stakeholders to the project's tools and resources, and establish the project's leadership and team culture. This implies that the team will establish a set of guidelines and collaboratively define the project's scope. However, it is important to mention that no tasks or specific responsibilities will be defined in this meeting.

The active participation of stakeholders during the initiation phase is essential for the successful implementation of the project. Based on the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK, 2008), active involvement from the stakeholders in this phase in this phase is widely recognized as a way to improve a sense of ownership for stakeholders of the project, gain validation for an individual's contributions, and ultimately improve the stakeholder satisfaction. The specific way to kick off a project aligns with the principles of the project's leadership psychology defined as Laissez-faire. This approach requires a high level of team unity, trust, and stakeholder cohesiveness for its effective implementation.

2.5.2 Planning

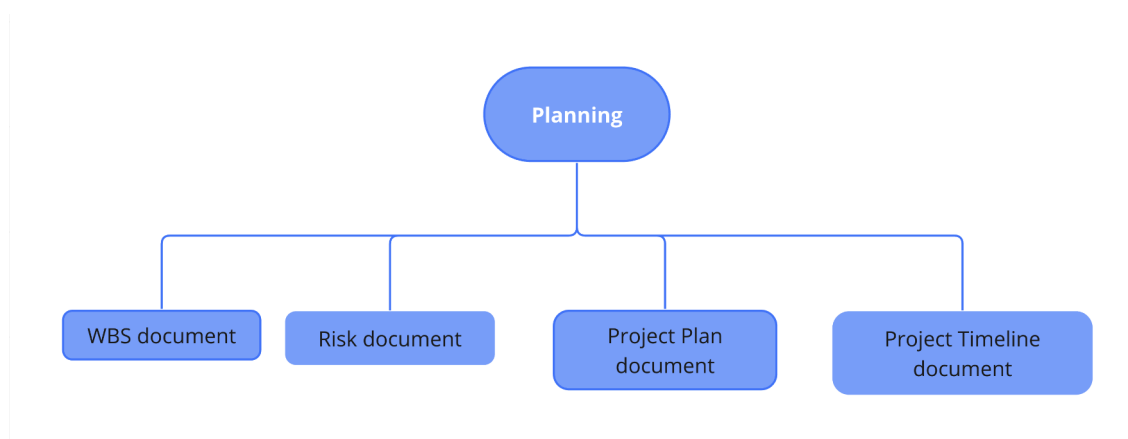


Figure 4. Planning phase activities (Adapted from PMBOK, 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

Figure 4 illustrates the planning activities involved in the Planning phase. The Planning phase serves as the fundamental basis for the establishment of the

project. The result of the planning process generates the foundational documents for the project including, the Project Plan, Project Timeline, and the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) documents. They are all employed during the execution phase of the project and monitored throughout the whole project life cycle. The continual process of project management requires continuous evaluation of the project's needs, which may necessitate changes to the established plan. Therefore, the activities of planning and documentation are regarded as continuous processes. (PMBOK 2008, 116-120.)

Characteristics	WBS	Project Plan	Project Timeline	Risk Documentation
Focus	WBS primarily focuses on the project deliverables and tasks needed to produce them.	The project plan takes a more holistic approach, encompassing all aspects of the project.	The Project Timeline focuses on providing a clear overview and timeline for the project.	The Project Timeline focuses on providing a clear overview and timeline for the project.
Use	To define and divide the tasks of the project among stakeholders.	To finalize the project's scope and relevant data.	To map a detailed plan for the project's execution phase.	To document potential risks and obstacles of the project.
Creation	typically created after the creation of the project plan, when dismantling the project into smaller deliverables is relevant.	created during the planning phase of the project with input from the project team, stakeholders, and subject matter experts.	After the tasks and deliverables have been divided and project plan has been defined.	After a comprehensive project plan, WBS and timeline has been defined.
Format	Tree structure	Document with sections and subsections	Gantt-Chart	A sheet listing the risks and precautions.
Level Of Detail	A detailed breakdown of work and tasks	A brief overview of the projects primary cornerstones	A detailed breakdown of the division of the tasks and their timeline	A brief list to document the risks in timeline.
Content	Includes work packages, dependencies, and resource allocation.	Includes project scope, schedule, budget, risks, and stakeholder communication.	Includes all the tasks, their dependencies and timeline.	Includes all the risks, their precautions and potential plan B's.

Table 1. The use cases of the Planning Phase deliverables (Adapted from PMBOK 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023) to fit the project's scope.

Table 1 demonstrates the difference between the Planning phases' deliverables. A project plan is a written document that lists the general goals, scope, major deadlines, and resources that are needed to complete a project. Regarding the thesis project, the Project Plan solely provides a general overview of the project's fundamental aspects. The other materials provide a more comprehensive presentation of the project's specific details. (Wrike.com n.d) The process of determining and dividing the essential tasks required for the advancement of the project is accomplished through the creation of a Work Breakdown Structure

(WBS). The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is a method used to divide the deliverables of a project into smaller and more manageable components. This allows the project team to effectively work towards the attainment of the project's specified objectives. The Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) organizes the project deliverables in an ordered way. It is essential to acknowledge that the work breakdown structure (WBS) should exclusively include work deliverables, which represent the outcomes of work efforts, rather than the work efforts themselves. (Wrike.com n.d) Once the work has been divided into deliverables, the subsequent step involves identifying the activities and their corresponding relationships. The target of this action is to create a document specifying the initial Project Timeline for the execution of the deliverables. The document can also be called the Project Lifecycle. The utilization of a Gantt chart for this purpose provides several advantages in terms of efficiently visualizing the work deliverables, their interrelationships, and dependencies, as well as the associated timeline. A Gantt chart is a graphical representation that visualizes the various work deliverables in a horizontal bar chart format. The utilization of this chart facilitates the enhancement of the project manager's ability to accurately assess and strategize the project through the identification of work durations, potential gaps, and the overall capacity of the team. A Gantt chart is created once tasks have already been appointed and scheduled. (Sharon, A. and Dori, D. 2017) The process's last steps involve the creation of a risk document addressing the potential risks or obstacles that may arise during the project. Paying a comprehensive effort to this stage of the project improves the possibilities of the project's success tremendously.

The planning phase involves comprehensive management of resources and mapping of the project's activities, to create a plan for where and how to utilize the project team's competencies and resources to their maximum potential. By incorporating the project team during the planning phase and by enhancing their active engagement in the process, there is a higher probability that the team will develop a collective sense of ownership towards the project and collaborate more effectively when they are all involved in the process from the beginning executing all steps of the process together. (PMBOK 2008, 215) Involving the team in the planning process also enhances the accuracy of estimating

and calculating the team's resources. This ideology aligns with Laissez-Faire's leadership strategy supporting the project's leadership methodology.

2.5.3 Executing

The execution phase of a project involves putting the planning phase into action. This is achieved by the effective management of resources as well as the completion of activities that are outlined in the project management plan, with the ultimate goal of achieving the project's objectives. The execution includes managing the project team, its communication, and quality of input as well as monitoring the project plan. (PMBOK 2008, 55.)

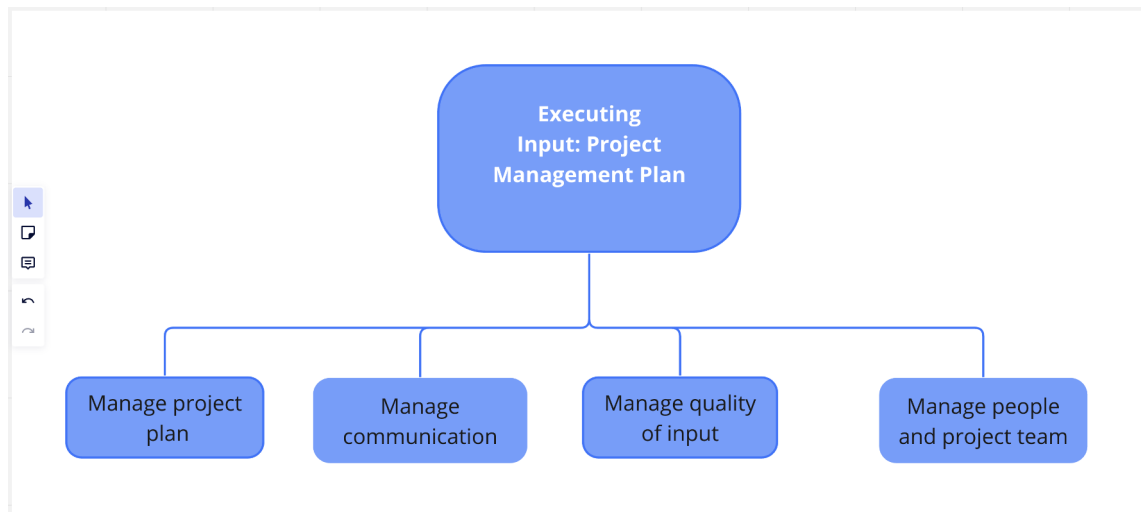


Figure 5. Executing phase actions. (Adapted from PMBOK, 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

Figure 5 illustrates the activities performed by the executing process, as adapted from the Project Management Body of Knowledge. (PMBOK 2008, 56) The management of the quality of input facilitates the execution of project activities in a manner that effectively accomplishes the project objectives. To attain acceptable standards, it is necessary to establish metrics that assess the level of quality. (PMBOK 2008, 200) This can be done for example by setting up and documenting short-term goals and scopes within the project, which can be then later analyzed whether the scope was reasonable and attainable by the stakeholders and then later utilized to scope the remaining of the project.

Human resource management includes the processes involved in the development and strategic management of the project team done by the project manager. The goal of these activities is to improve team cohesion, competencies, and collaboration. Even though these activities cannot be directly measured to advance the project, they are expected to improve the performance of the project team when effectively implemented. (Belout, A. & Gauvreau, C. 2004)

These actions can vary depending on the PM (Project Manager). Actions could include playing games or doing fun activities outside of "work" enabling the team to create real chemistry also outside of the work environment. Collaborative efforts play a pivotal role especially in the context such as the case project, thereby requiring the project manager to prioritize the establishment and cultivation of proficient teams. Working as a team is an important part of project management, so one of the project manager's main jobs is to build and develop a team that can do their jobs well. (Stulgienė, A. and Čiutienė, R. 2012)

Effective stakeholder management is a critical component of communication management. Effective communication ensures the timely distribution of essential information to the right people. Effective communication fosters cohesion among stakeholders, reduces communication obstacles, and facilitates the resolution of potential conflicts. Effective communication among all stakeholders is crucial for anticipating and ultimately approving project expectations. Moreover, it is much easier to direct attention toward potential concerns before their potential impact on the project's achievement. (PMBOK 2008, 251-261.)

2.5.4 Monitoring and Controlling

Monitoring and controlling include the essential activities required to track the progress of a project. Instead of addressing the topic as its own phase in the framework, it rather applies tools and rules that will be adopted during the other phases of the Project Management process. This process group encompasses the activities of measuring and disseminating information regarding the project's progress, as well as making estimations about its future outcomes (PMBOK 2008, 61).

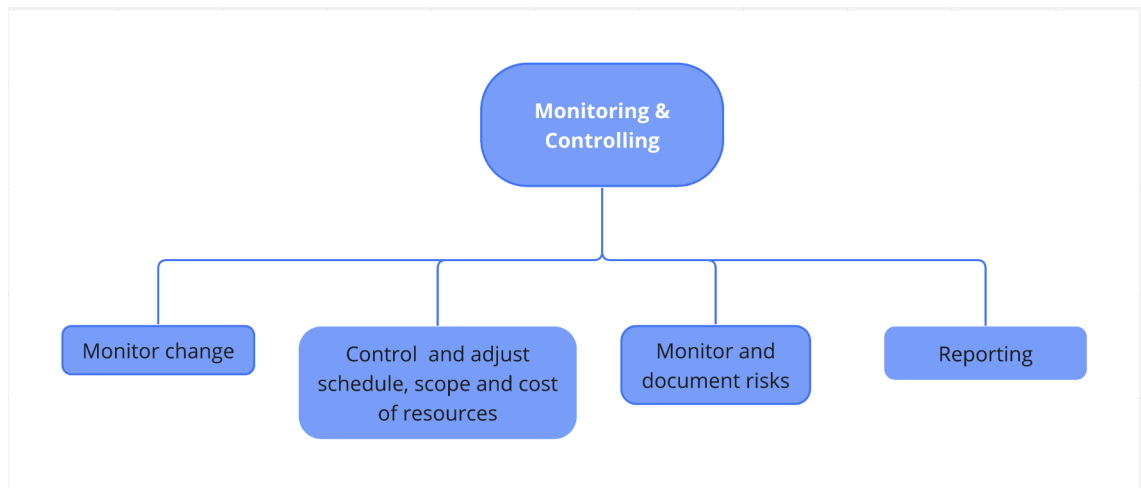


Figure 6. Monitoring & Controlling actions. (Adapted from PMBOK 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

Figure 6 illustrates an overview of the activities involved in the monitoring and controlling process. (Adapted from PMBOK 2008, 60). During the Execution phase in the Chapter 2.5.3, it is crucial to assess whether the project is deviating from the project management plan established during the Planning phase. Based on the outcome, appropriate adjustments should be made to the scope, resources, or other components as considered necessary. (PMBOK 2008, 39.) Regular monitoring and control activities are consistently implemented throughout the project. Instances of these activities include the project manager's supervision of the Project Management Software (PMS), allowing tracking of task and process performance. (Obondi, K. C. 2022) Monitoring the project state based on the held meetings or other ways of communication on a daily basis is vital. (PMBOK 2008, 59).

Change management encompasses the systematic oversight and execution of change utilizing the information and progress made in the project. To ensure that the project moves forward in line with the established project management plan, modifications for the process need to be documented and monitored. (PMBOK, 2008, 59.) The objective of reporting is to communicate information to shareholders and forecast the projected outcomes of the project whether it is by utilizing performance report templates or simply holding check-up meetings on a weekly basis for each stakeholder process. (PMBOK 2008, 266). The implementation of scope control is essential to prevent the occurrence of “scope

creep”, which refers to the occurrence of unmanageable alterations in the project's scope, which have the potential to disrupt the project management plan by either extending the project's execution, its duration or escalation of its costs. (PMBOK 2008, 125.)

It is essential to monitor and continuously document risks according to the state of the project and newly gained information. The objective is to identify instances of inefficient procedures, or variables affecting the scope of the project, to enhance or eliminate them. It's also important to monitor the track of the project and whether proceeding to a previously risk-documented "plan B" in any department of the project is necessary. These alternative plans were defined in the risk document created during the planning phase of the project. (PMBOK 2008, 39-45.)

2.5.5 Closing

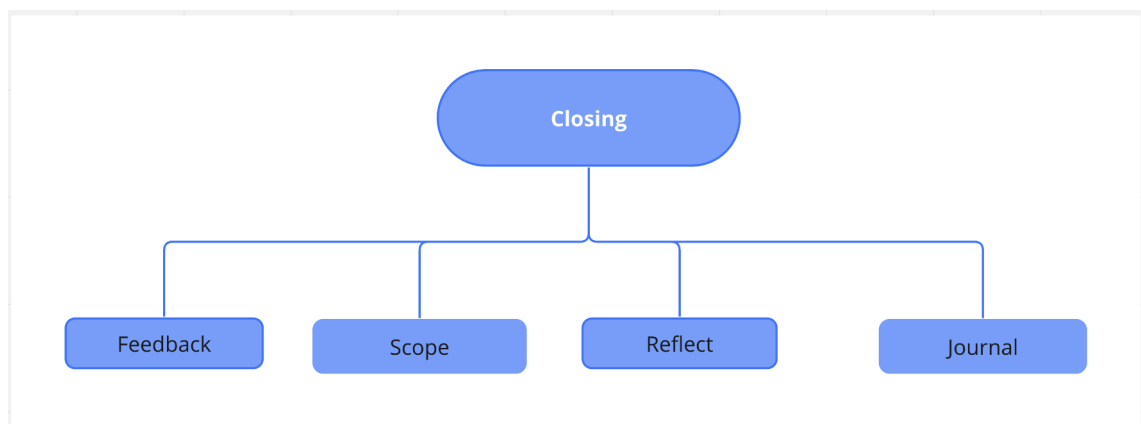


Figure 7. Activities involved in the Closing phase of the project. (Adapted from PMBOK 2008, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

Figure 7 illustrates the final activities when finalizing a project. Closing refers to the process of completing the remaining tasks and officially completing the project. The closing phase ensures that all processes and activities are completed before formally ending the project. The project phase includes activities such as gaining feedback from potential customers or other stakeholders, reflecting on the journey, and documenting and journaling the project. The documentation holds significant importance as it serves the purpose of capturing the insights

gained throughout the project, thereby enabling the utilization of the acquired knowledge for future learning. Data from all the process stages should be saved to ensure that it can be used and analyzed in the future and presented to a potential customer if needed. (PMBOK 2008, 64.)

2.6 Leadership Methodology

The key to effective project management is strategic leadership and the establishment of a structured environment. The development of a leadership environment that is both motivating and directive is required to effectively navigate the complicated dynamics of a team and project's evolution. This chapter highlights the fundamental importance of establishing a leadership methodology that balances encouraging team autonomy and maintaining a cohesive structure which is essential for reaching project milestones.

2.6.1 Laissez-Faire Approach

This chapter examines the implementation of Laissez-Faire leadership methodology within the context of the thesis's project. The philosophy of Laissez-Faire leadership should not be perceived simply as a "lack of managerial involvement", but rather as a strategically planned decision to use a certain type of managerial style, aimed at empowering individuals within a team. The foundation of this approach is based on the principles of the autonomic leadership style which creates an environment that supports independent decision-making and proactive engagement to processes. (Skogstad et al. 2007) However, for the strategy to flourish, it requires a strict balance between autonomy and direction, especially when dealing with a project that requires creativity and an intensive level of effectiveness, such as the project undertaken in this thesis. (Trépanier, S., Boudrias, V., & Peterson, C. 2019)

The Laissez-Faire leadership style, characterized by its managerial "hands-off" approach, is defined as more than just simply withdrawing from involvement; ra-

ther it establishes a setting in which specific team members are given the authority to make decisions and adopt responsibility for their specific duties. Rather than being automatically passive, the fundamental principle of Laissez-Faire resides in its intentional creation of an environment that supports team members' personal development and helps them become more capable decision-makers who take active initiative in their roles. (Skogstad et al. 2007) One of the primary impacts of Laissez-Faire leadership is the promotion of a common understanding of ownership and responsibility among members of a team, therefore transforming them into active participants who are deeply committed to the success of the project's objectives. (Skogstad et al., 2007) When each member of the team assumes a significant level of responsibility for their duties, it is expected that the overall quality of team production and the ongoing personal growth of each team member will reach its highest level. In the context of a project manager overseeing a lava lamp business such as in the context of the thesis case project, this specific leadership approach displays unique features, of a balance between autonomy and a structured framework, especially when combining the leadership methodology with the project management framework such as PMBOK (The Project Management Body of Knowledge).

As previously mentioned, this specific leadership approach brings out numerous advantages. Primarily, this approach cultivates a significant amount of creativity and innovation, as it permits team members the autonomy to explore and implement their ideas. In addition to the benefits above, if managed well, this methodology is also known to enhance job satisfaction and motivation among team members, as it develops a sense of value and responsibility. (Trépanier, S., Boudrias, V., & Peterson, C. 2019) Since team members are driven to improve their skills and knowledge, it creates an environment that supports continuous learning and personal development. Ultimately, this can lead to more effective decision-making and problem-solving processes. The implementation of such a workplace setting has the potential to give companies a notable competitive advantage within the industry, as it develops all operational procedures and business growth procedures resistant to replication or duplication. This is attributed to the primary emphasis on talent and individual autonomy, which consistently yields unique approaches across every aspect of the business and its processes.

Nevertheless, the implementation of Laissez-Faire leadership does not come without its own challenges and requires a strict balance. The significance of structure within this particular leadership model is of utmost importance.

(Rajbanshi, B., 2020) To mitigate the limitations of the Laissez-Faire approach, it is essential to prioritize consistent communication and the utilization of appropriate tools. The challenges of lack of direction, potential for unclear roles, and decreased accountability are noteworthy. In order to address these challenges, the project manager must possess the necessary expertise in discreetly monitoring progress and intervening when necessary to offer guidance and refocus the team member's efforts. Regular monitoring, effective communication channels, and a comprehensive feedback systems are essential elements to maintain project progress while maintaining the team's autonomy. (Trépanier, S., Boudrias, V., & Peterson, C. 2019) In the absence of a well-defined framework and continuous communication, several potential risks may arise, including the possibility of goals becoming misaligned, coordination being insufficient, and potential underperformance developing. (Norris et al., 2021) The integration of project management methodologies such as PMBOK, as mentioned earlier in the thesis, has significant importance in this context.

3 Introduction to the Diary

The diary phase of the thesis aims to present and showcase the previously presented theoretical frameworks and tools in practical real-life use. The project follows a clear structural strategy outlined by the Project Management Body of Knowledges' life cycle which is introduced thoroughly in the chapter 2.5. The project also adheres carefully to its autonomic leadership philosophy following Laissez-Faire's influences which was examined in the previous chapter 2.6.

The diary employs a clear visual strategy to improve readability and differentiation between various sorts of content and its unique presentation styles. Journal-style entries, providing an in-depth look at the key events as they unfold, will be formatted in italics text style. This formatting choice is aimed to provide a visual clue to the reader, signaling a shift from the more straightforward, summary approach of the overall narrative to the more detailed, moment-by-moment description from the perspective of the project manager offered by the journal entries. The systematic use of the italics text style not only helps to differentiate the two styles of content but also improves the overall reading experience by providing a well-structured and effortlessly navigable text.

All the theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and tools that were extensively addressed in the first half of the thesis may be identified and located in the diary, regardless of whether they are directly mentioned or not. The project diligently follows the concepts established in the theoretical section of the thesis. The reader needs to carefully analyze the entire field and actively compare the storyline, decisions, and team actions to the theoretical concepts previously provided and recognized. By doing so, the reader can understand the approach and strategy behind the activities of the narrator and the team. In order to help this process, it is also recommended to re-familiarize with the terms used in the diary before starting the journey of reading the diary.

Every business or business idea always starts in its very own and unique way. To start the diary from chapter 4, I felt important to explain how everything started. Because the diary takes its place in the past and before a decision

about the documentation process has yet taken place, it is also a reason why it is written fully in the past tense.

4 Diary - Background

It was a chilly night in Salerno, Italy in November 2022. I was in the city center, looking for a Christmas present for my mom, probably for the third time already. Again, with no success. In my family, Christmas is the most anticipated event of the whole year. Exchanging meaningful gifts is usually the core part of the day besides spending quality time with each other. I usually tend to give out gifts that either fill out a need of my family member, or one that will be memorable in some other way. I rarely give out any kinds of things or accessories, but rather experiences where we can create long-lasting memories together. As an example, last year I took my mom on a weekend trip to Sweden. However, this year I'm not able to do that since I'm away from my family studying abroad on an exchange from my university in Finland. This naturally has made the process of coming up with a good gift idea very hard.

Days passed. Suddenly, one night after a long day of school, when I was watching a TV series on Netflix, something caught my eye in one of the episodes. In the background of an apartment scene, I saw a lava lamp. In the scene, a couple was spending a relaxed night, watching TV, and eating popcorn together on their living room sofa. The lava lamp was in the corner of the room acting as the only source of lighting in the room along with the moonlight coming through the window. The lava lamp lit up the whole room giving the whole scene this magical vibe.

I couldn't shake the image of the lava lamp from my mind for a couple of days. I decided to do some research on lava lamps and their popularity. I found out that lava lamps actually used to be this "super-hit" item in the 90s, right when my mom was a teenager. The idea of gifting a lava lamp to my mom as a Christmas present began to take shape stronger in my mind. It felt nostalgic, perhaps reminiscent of her teenage years. I could see a lava lamp lighting up our family's living room, especially in the dark and long winters in Finland. The more I delved into researching about lava lamps, I discovered that the market for reliable lava lamp suppliers in Europe, especially in a small country like Finland was extremely small. It was very difficult to find a reliable supplier for the product since lava lamps were not a "thing" anymore.

However, I ended up ordering a lava lamp from one of the sites about a month before Christmas, expecting it would be delivered easily on time since the delivery schedule was marked down to be 7-14 days. The site was a fairly reliable website, which I had used previously to order some kind of technology.

Well, to cut to the cheese, the lava lamp never made the delivery home for Christmas. In fact, it finally arrived in spring, 3 months late once I had already settled back to Finland from the study exchange. Seems like the product was shipped as a sea freight all the way from China since no supply was held in Europe. Even the product didn't exactly match the original description on the website and looked completely different. All of the discoveries prove that I was probably one of the only customers ordering a lava lamp and that it was a dead product since it didn't even have stock in Europe regardless of the webstore being a major competitor in the market.

Luckily, Mom loved it still and it's been lighting up our family's living room ever since the arrival of the product. The lamp wasn't perfect, but it served its purpose, I guess.

4.1 Developing the Idea of a Business

This unsuccessful experience sparked a realization in me about potentially having discovered a gap in the market. Along with myself, everyone I talk to, says that they would want to get a lava lamp. Usually, the reaction to the topic is something along the lines of "A lava lamp? I haven't seen those things in ages! Where can you get them?".

My growing interest in the topic made me anxious to obtain more knowledge on the subject.

4.1.1 Quantitative Product Research

To support all the positive feedback, I decided to obtain some quantitative data on the subject. I ran a wide quantitative survey on my social media to find out more about the interest in the product.

The group of people who participated in the survey were versatile in terms of age, gender, social group, etc. Approximately 250 replicants participated in my questionnaires. It's important to note, though, that the data collected is only directional, since some of the replicants may have just skimmed over it without giving it much thought due to the nature of a social media platform. The data also supports this fact, since only 73% of the replicants answered all the questions.

The findings from the research ended up being very insightful and will be presented below.

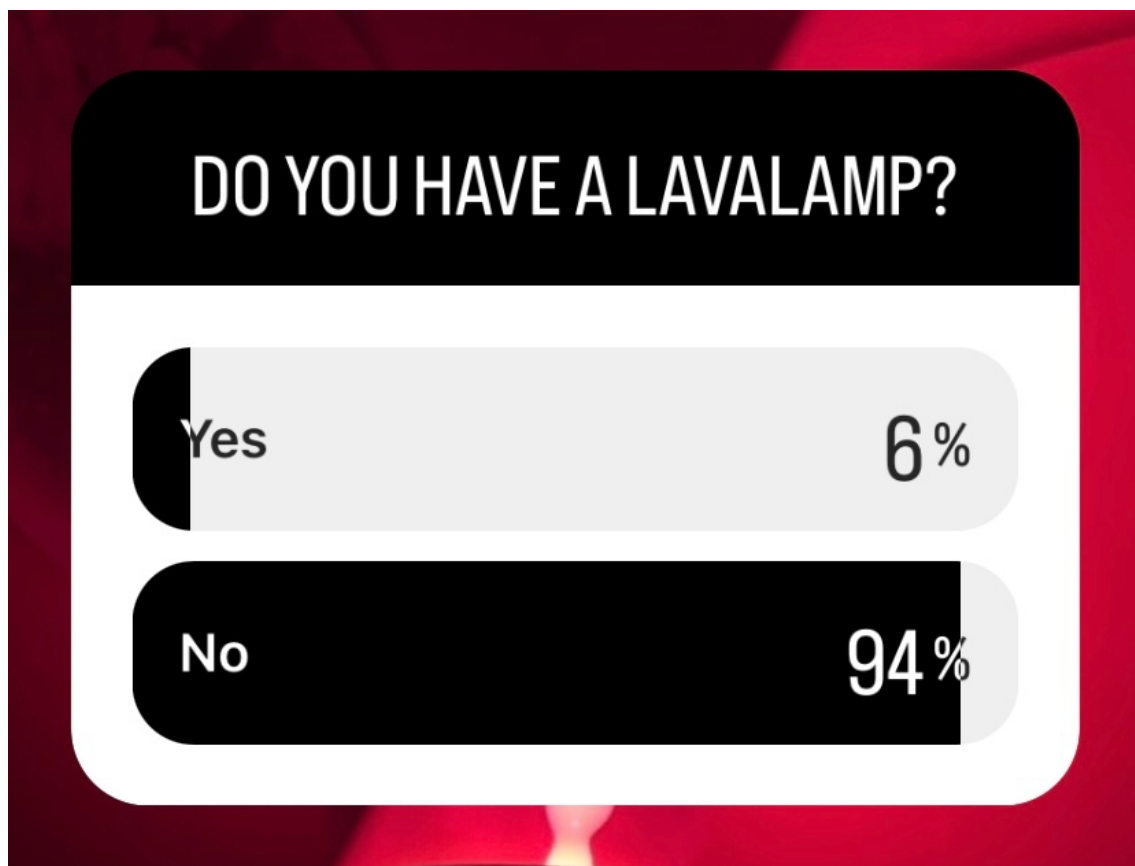


Figure 8. Data from the quantitative survey. (Jamie Acosta 2023)

The data in Figure 8, supports that the Lava lamps in fact are a “forgotten” product, and close to nobody possesses a lava lamp.

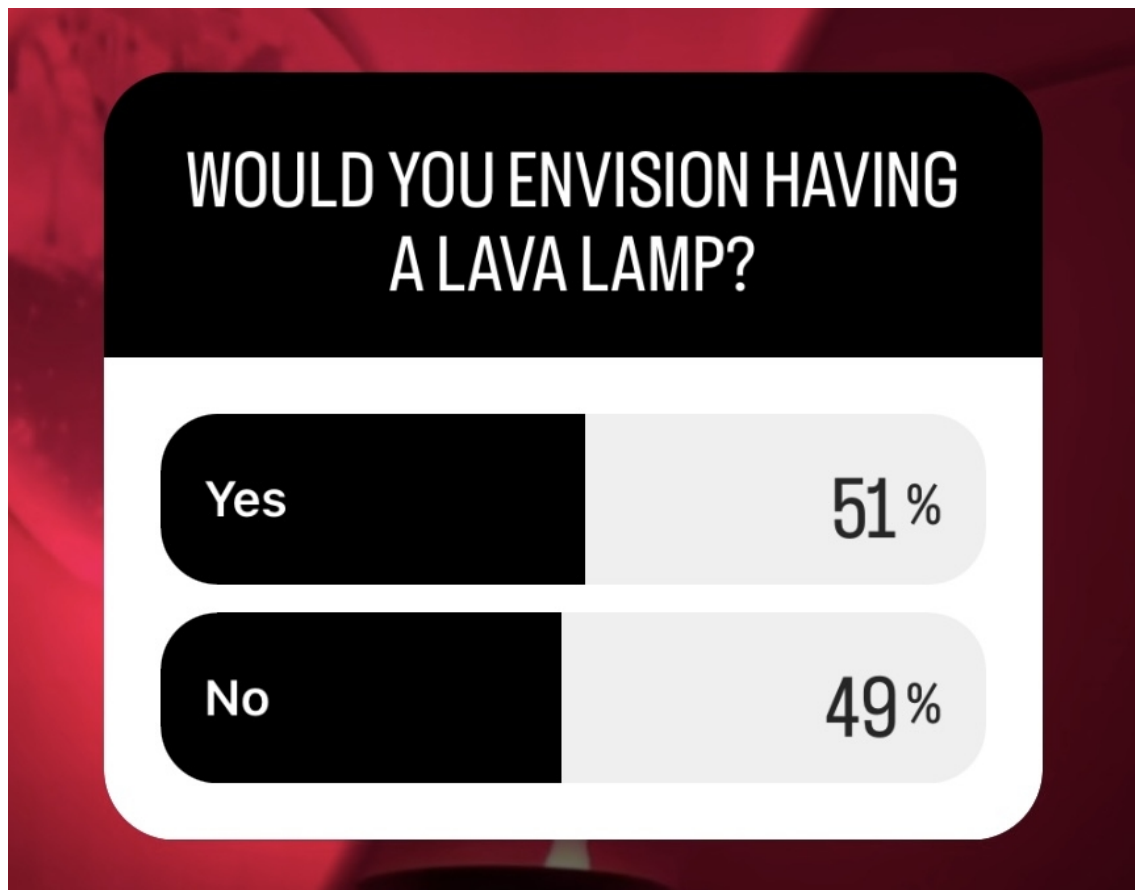


Figure 9. Data from the quantitative survey. (Jamie Acosta 2023)

Figure 9 highlights that about half of the replicants envision themselves having a lava lamp. In the context of the business, this result is extremely positive since no product has yet been introduced nor has a problem that the product would solve. This result showcases that there is a serious interest in basically just an “idea” which has not been yet introduced properly for the replicant.



Figure 10. Data from the quantitative survey. (Jamie Acosta 2023)

The data from Figure 10, proves that the majority of the replicants would not know where to buy a lava lamp, whether they envision having one or not. The data showcases the need for a platform for the potential market to get their hands on the product.

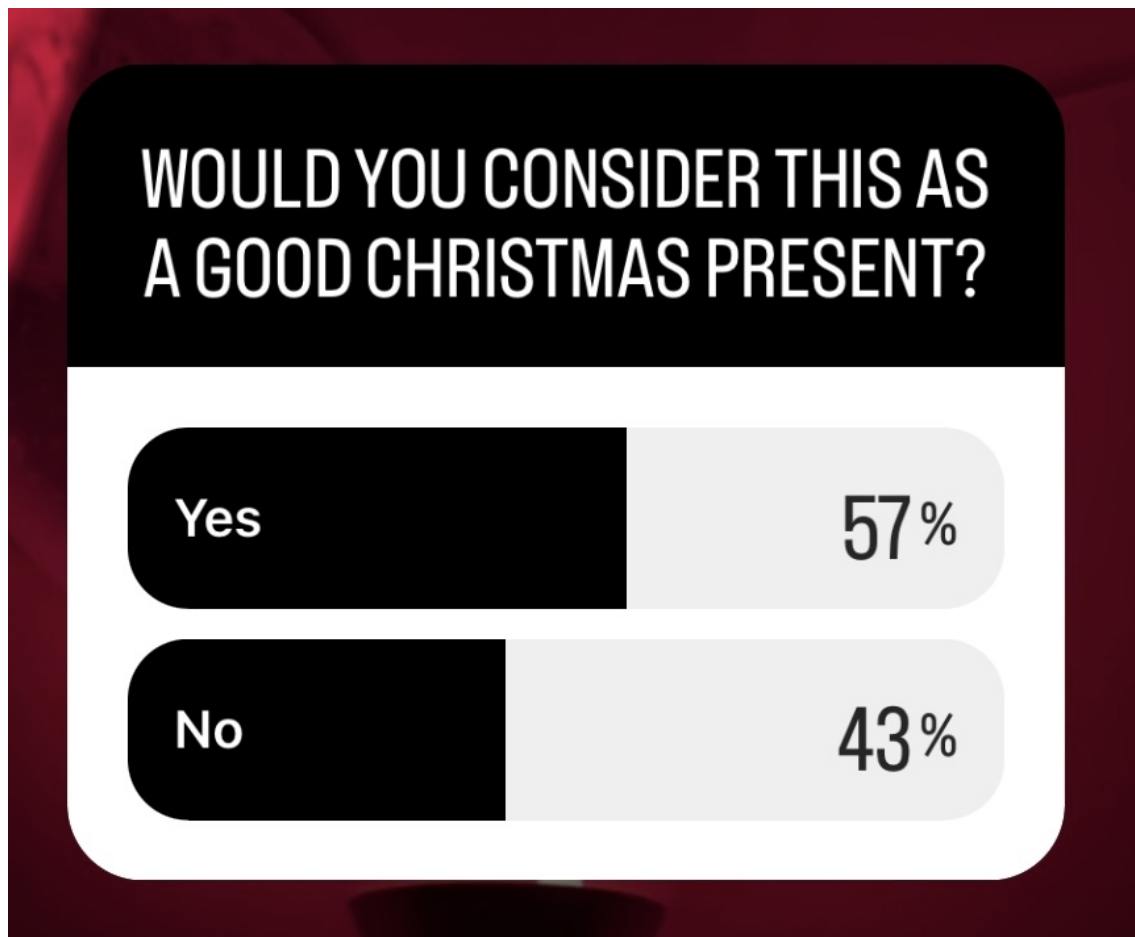


Figure 11. Data from the quantitative survey. (Jamie Acosta 2023)

As illustrated in Figure 11, the Lava lamp is seen to be a valid Christmas present. This supports the ideology of the product sales being focused on the dark winter season.



Figure 12. Data from the quantitative survey. (Jamie Acosta 2023)

The idea of a lava lamp making it to the shelves of supermarkets intrigued me. In my personal opinion, the product's sales would likely be driven by nostalgia among those who experienced the product's prime in the 1990s, when it was trendy among teenagers. It could also be an impulse buy for anyone who wants to take their home decoration to the next level. Data from the Figure 11 suggests that the product is also seen to be a good Christmas present by the replicants. The shelves of supermarkets are a great place to reach all kinds of buyers. There is no denying that the majority of the replicants agree with this statement. Figure 12 illustrates that 58% of the replicants might consider buying a lava lamp off a store shelf. Again, it is important to remember, that the data is directive as mentioned in the sections above. After introducing the specific product and introducing its value, this result would likely differ in another questionnaire.

4.2 Bringing the idea to life

It is important to define that to this point, all the progress done with the business idea, I had done by myself. At this point, I had of course talked to a lot of people to gain feedback on whether my thoughts were valid about the product and its state in the market. I felt that the feedback and the research were all positive enough for me to start considering advancing with the idea. At this point, I decided to bring up the idea to the ears of my business partner. We own a company together and run a restaurant chain together. The restaurants are open only during the summertime. When I introduced the idea to my partner, he had the same reaction as everyone else I had ever talked to about the idea. However, since he is my business partner, this reaction gave me a lot more confidence since to his nature, he also thinks about ideas from a business perspective. He thought that the idea had a lot of potential and could be “a hit” especially during the “dark” winter season, as we like to call the timeline between autumn and spring. We started analyzing the data more thoroughly together, which I had obtained from my quantitative research earlier in the spring.

We agreed to let the idea sit for the summer and come back to it in July. If at this point, the idea still felt good and there were realistic resources in terms of budget, time, and opportunity for the business to be successful, we would choose to go for it. We should establish our very own online store to sell lava lamps.

Disclaimer: We absolutely thought it was a great idea and chose to go for it.

5 Diary – Initiation Phase

5.1 Week 1

It was Tuesday, and I had just come off from a meeting with my business partner, where we had finally decided to advance with the project. There, I chose to start the documentation process for not only the project but also for the thesis.

As I sit in the cozy pub, somewhere in the center of the city in September, writing this diary, I can't help but think about the potential of this experience. We will bring the lava lamps back to the Finnish market. It's so cool to have found a product that has such a clear niche and potential customer base. The thought of bringing back a trend from the 90s and reintroducing it to a whole new generation seems like something that could take off. I mean there are plenty of examples where a trend has been brought back from the 1990s and has become wildly popular. This is shown very well from fashion trends, like the return of bell-bottom pants and flannels. This is also something that can be noticed directly in decoration trends, where vintage items and styles have become very popular. A lot of people love to decorate their houses with repaired vintage furniture and use old retro lights with yellow bulbs. The ideology of bringing back something such as the lava lamp fits right in this trend, and I have no doubt it would not take off. The best part about this whole situation is that I get to write my thesis about the project. This will not only commit me to the project but allow me to allocate all my time to this process since I'll be also graduating in the process.

In the meeting, we discussed about the product, and the possibilities of the project and thought about what we needed for the project to succeed. It is almost the end of September already. Since according to the data gained and my personal opinion, the product would sell the best during the winter season and specifically around Christmas, I knew that we would need to advance with the project quite fast. This nature also gave the project a clear scope: Going beyond the traditional boundaries and starting up a business from ground zero to its first sale in only 70 days. I understood that since the project scope was very ambitious, I would strategically need to build a team around me that compliments

one another and possesses a balanced variety of different attributes. Help was needed to fill different needs in the project complimenting me and my business partner. An addition of 2-3 people to the team would be optimal. It is also extremely crucial that the people involved are devoted to the scope and believe not only in the product but also in me as the project manager.

5.1.1 Building the Team

To start the process, I decided to execute a very simple EntreComp exercise with my business partner who was going to be a part of the team. Utilizing the EntreComp framework is beneficial in identifying and cultivating the competencies necessary for the success of the project. I chose to utilize Entre Comp in the process of building the team in order to understand the team individuals better and where their focus could be allocated most effectively. EntreComp played a large part in helping the process of brainstorming where my and my business partners' strengths and weaknesses lie. I discovered that I was specifically strong in the Ideas & opportunities in the EntreComp framework. I'm also very strong at spotting opportunities and something that my business partner brought up, is that he sees me as a great motivator which makes me a great project manager to work under. I like to think that through my background in project management, I have developed a great skill of mobilizing people & resources as well as an ability to cope with risk and uncertainty. I am also great at taking initiative, however, some of my weaknesses lie in financial literacy and creativity to some extent. In comparison to my business partner, his strengths lie in financial and economic literacy which comes from his background in accounting. He is also very strong in management, working with others, and taking initiative. We reflected that some of his weaknesses lie in the "Ideas and opportunities" section for example having a lack of vision. The results from the practice concluded that it makes a lot of sense why we work so well together. Our competencies complement each other very well making us great business partners.

The utilization of the EntreComp framework supported my initial thoughts about the need for a creative person in our team. I definitely wanted to have a party involved who takes responsibility for the team's creative processes and brings

fresh and innovative ideas to the table. I also concluded that it was important for me to have another person with similar attributes to mine. This would give the team more power in innovation and another person who continuously is able to take initiative, helping the project to go forward.

The process of finding suitable team members took the remainder of the week. At the end of the week, the team was formed and consisted of the following members:

- **Project Manager** - Myself
- **Marketing team** – Consisting of a pair of energetic and creative people.
- **Sales Person** – Possessing very similar attributes to mine being able to take initiative and having a lot of vision.
- **CFO** – My business partner from the previous business, possesses great qualities in management and financial and economic literacy.

I'm sitting at a pub by myself. It is the same bar where the journey began at the beginning of the week with our CFO. To avoid confusion, from now on, I will refer to the business partner with whom I began this journey with as "CFO" as that is his position in the project. I'm feeling really excited. We were lucky to find the people for the project through our university network. I think it's great because it gives the project this additional purpose which is to gain valuable experience and university credits. This means that I can be sure that the commitment and benefit for each team member is genuine, and their intentions align with the project no matter how the outcome turns out. Looking back, I can't help but feel like we struck gold with the project team we assembled. Everyone involved really cares about the product and believes in the process.

Now that the team is formed, we booked a kick-off meeting right away.

5.1.2 Kick-Off

I found the Kick-Off meeting to be one of the most important elements of any project. A Kick-Off meeting sets the stage for the project, and it has a vital impact on the team's atmosphere and culture. It is during this meeting that the

team members could have the opportunity to interact face-to-face, fostering collaboration, a sense of unity and purpose as well as allowing for personal connections to form. In my opinion, a project should always start in a relaxed manner. Since the project team was able to meet in person, I chose the location to be a cafeteria where you can hang out and play board games. I think it's important to set the stage in this way while building chemistry and having fun, instead of directly jumping into the work stuff. The topics I want to go through in the Kick-Off are informal enough to be discussed while playing board games and having fun.

Today for a change, I'm not at the local pub (haha). I'm at a café spot where our team just had the project's Kick-Off meeting. Everyone else just left and I decided to stay for a while longer to document and prepare for the next meeting. The Kick-Off meeting ended up being extremely successful. I was surprised by how much natural chemistry the team had regardless of most of the people not knowing each other beforehand. I had planned multiple icebreakers just in case the atmosphere got tense. Well, none of that was needed. We started playing a card game Alias which I thought would be a fun game to play together, but quickly after a few rounds of playing, we realized that we had so much fun by just talking that the game was simply just on the way. So, we went to give it back to the cashier. After an hour or so the conversation started to naturally shift towards the project, and I thoroughly explained the recruitment process of the team in terms of what roles everyone is filling in the team. Of course, these things were discussed in the recruitment process with everyone, so nothing new was necessarily discovered. I thought this was also a great opportunity to introduce everyone to our communication channel and other primary tools that will be used on a daily basis. I had previously created a Microsoft Teams team to act as the primary communication channel of the project. I explained the methodology behind separating work-life communication from personal communication, especially in a hectic project like ours. I also only briefly introduced the team to the project management software Monday and explained to them how this tool will be used to track and document the process and tasks during the project. Both tools are vital to use on a daily basis since the project was going to be highly autonomic, meaning most of the time people would be working separately on their respective tasks and responsibilities. In this kind of environment,

it is important to take responsibility for your personal process documentation so everyone will be able to track the overall process and dependencies as they progress. I was supposed to show everyone our brainstorming and innovation tool Miro, which acts as a digital whiteboard when working on deliverables. However, I will introduce the tool thoroughly anyway in the planning phase when we have our first meeting.

I have to say, it was fun to see everyone's reaction when they realized that the project actually had solid groundwork and management strategy. I guess this is something that not many university students have yet been able to be a part of since this level of project management is usually only seen in bigger organizations that are making substantial amounts of revenue and delivering high-level services or products. I could tell that people started getting very excited from all of this and the conversation started very quickly to shift towards brainstorming about the project on a deeper level and such, which is where I had to slow everyone down a little bit. I knew that the Kick-Off was meant to be only a very light introduction to the project, where we wouldn't go too deeply into the planning stages of the project. However, it was great to see this kind of commitment in the team right away from the get-go. The refereeing seemed to work, and I was able to shift the team's energy towards brainstorming the team's ground rules and scheduling the upcoming start-up meeting for the planning phase of the project, which were the only deliverable objectives I had set for the meeting. I had plenty of ideas of what these deliverables could look like, but I knew that by incorporating the project team all the way from the beginning of the process and forming the way of work together, there was a higher chance that the team would also develop a collective sense of ownership towards the project and collaborate more effectively. It's a lot more fun to play a videogame you picked, rather than let your mom pick one for you without understanding what you like.

Kick-Off delivered results:

- Agreed Weekly Catch-Up Meeting to start off every week. Every Monday 9:00-10:15. The first Catch-Up meeting in a few days will act as the Start-Up meeting for the Planning phase of the project.
- Agreed informal "Play Night" every second Wednesday night, either online or face to face to enhance team building.

- Agreed schedule for the following week, when the project enters its Planning phase.
- Successful introduction to the project management software and communication tool.

6 Diary – Planning phase

The Planning phase, as the name stands, represents the planning of all the aspects during the project's entire lifecycle. This phase is the heart of the action, playing the most important part in defining whether the project will be a success or not. For this reason, it is important to set the working standards and expectations right from day one.

6.1 Week 2

During the Kick-Off, we as a team decided to have a catch-up meeting every Monday morning. I thought that from here on, this would also be a perfect opportunity for me, to sit down after every weekly meeting to journal my view about the current state of the project. This allows me to keep you, the reader, but also myself on track about how I'm feeling from the Project Manager's point of view.

Today, I'm writing this journal right after our first weekly meeting. My role as the project manager plays a big part in structuring the team in a way that its set for success. This is why, I have today set direct deliverables for this phase of the project and the upcoming weeks.

The objective is to establish the project's foundational documents within the next 3 weeks:

- Work breakdown structure (WBS)
- Project Plan
- Project Timeline
- Risk Document

These documents are to be created incorporating the whole team, utilizing templates from our primary brainstorming platform Miro.

Today's weekly meeting was used to introduce the document deliverables to the team and explain their purpose and value to the project. In addition, I thoroughly

introduced the brainstorming platform Miro and how it can be used in the process.

The next project workshop was on the following day when the process of executing the phase deliverables began.

6.1.1 Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

A work breakdown structure is a resource planning tool that enables to division of the deliverables and phases of a project. It is a visualization tool to help all the stakeholders understand their roles in this project and the tasks they're responsible for. In the case of the undergoing project, WBS is not used to schedule the tasks. In the context of the project, the tool was used to brainstorm, define, and specify the team's roles and responsibilities.

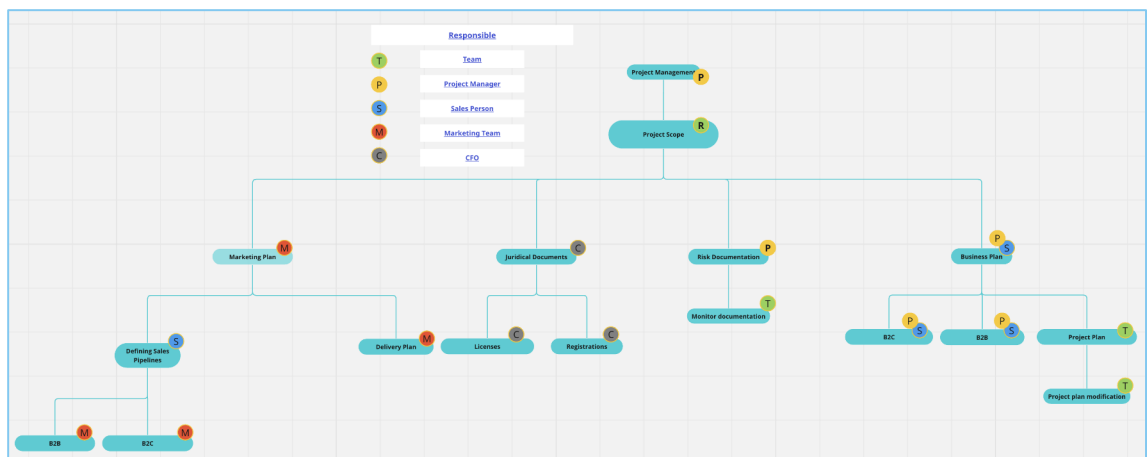


Figure 13. WBS created for the Projects' needs. (Adopted from Miro.com, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

To begin the next weeks' execution phase, a division to “small teams” will be done to pursue direct deliverables depending on their responsibilities defined in the WBS. Figure 13 illustrates the view of the projects' work breakdown structure where the projects responsibilities and deliverables were divided between the team members. It is also important to highlight that there were deliverables in the project where the responsibility was divided within the whole team. Typically this would mean that the deliverable will be delivered in a workshop or a

team meeting or that the team is responsible as a unit of monitoring a certain responsibility area.

6.1.2 Project Plan

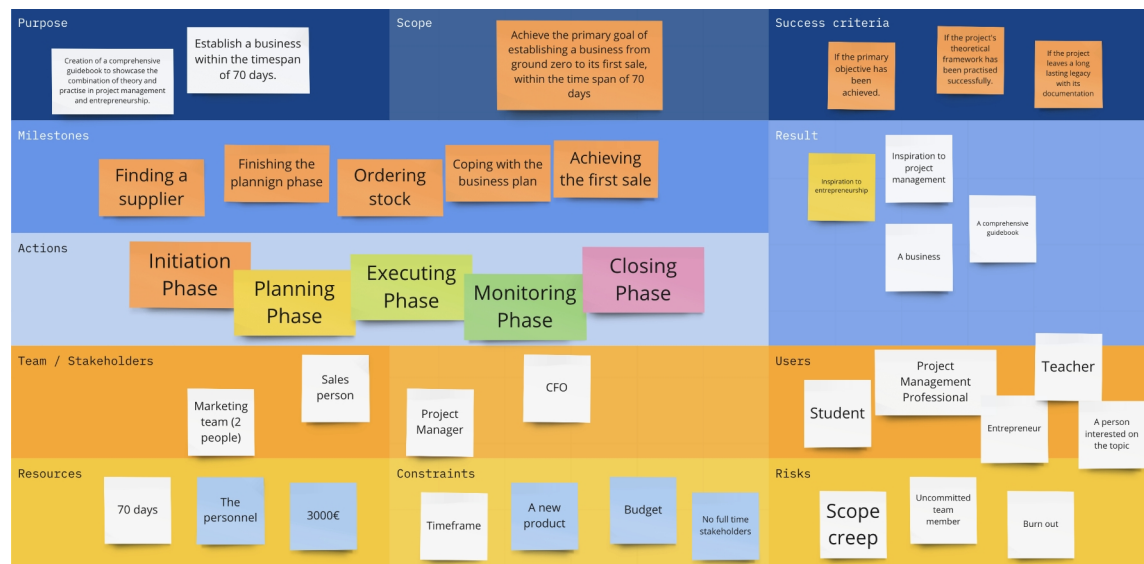


Figure 14. Illustrating the Project Plan. (Adopted from Miro.com, created by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

The Project Plan illustrated in Figure 14, establishes a general framework guiding and directing all further planning. It is a formal approved document that defines how the project will be executed, monitored, and controlled. The document's primary use is to help visualize all the foundational data from the project and support to facilitate communication within the planning and monitoring phases of the project. Traditionally, the plan is created as a text document with some illustrations to visualize the key aspects. The Project Plan for the project was generated with a combination of each team members ideas and thoughts that were written down during team's weekly meetings and other settings. It is important that the whole team buys into the common vision in order to the project plan to apply to the teams' and projects' scope.

6.2 Weeks 3-4

I'm writing this journal after the first week of the active work phase of the project. Unfortunately, I'm currently a little bit sick which is actively affecting my mood; however, I will not let this impact the team. I feel guilty for not being as productive as I was during last week. The team continued to work on the Project Timeline document after the weekly meeting, where however I had opted out since I am not feeling so well. Luckily, I am now able to "Let go" a little bit, since it kind of aligns with the leadership methodology of the project. "Laissez-Faire" meaning "a policy of leaving things to take their own course, without intervening". The team proved a great level of collaboration last week where we were able to establish the Project Plan and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) documents quite effectively. Forming those documents definitely took a lot more time than I had originally planned. In my plans, I had calculated a slight chance of potentially delivering the documents early on the schedule, which would have allowed us to begin the execution phase already at the end of next week. However, I find this unlikely now, but that's ok since this was only a thing in my own notebook. According to the team's plan, we are still well on schedule.

Last week was our first "Fun Night". Since we couldn't meet up face-to-face this time, we decided to play a video game Minecraft together. It was so much fun that after 4 hours of playing, we agreed that we would play again this week to continue where we left off. For the next week, we have already booked a table to enjoy dinner together. To be honest, I have been arranging "Fun nights" in other projects as well, but rarely they are online, Nor as much fun. Usually, I would just take my team to grab a few beers or play mini-golf or something similar. During the upcoming week, my goals are to be a part of the process closely of creating the foundation documents for the Project. However, I will let the team take responsibility for the process. I will monitor this process and ensure that the team is ready for next week's Execution phase, where the team will split up to deliver their responsible tasks. I will be keeping an eye on the communication and scheduling between the team members since this week hasn't been scheduled yet besides the mandatory weekly meeting and fun night. I let the team know that this is the first week and I let them schedule the process to practice for the important upcoming weeks. I'm also planning on having a few one-on-ones with the team members to see how they are feeling and if they are struggling with anything regarding the process or other things.

6.2.1 Project Timeline

The project schedule was important to visualize for the team since it not only communicates the necessary tasks for project completion but also specifies their respective deadlines. It provided a comprehensive understanding of the tasks that need to be completed, the individuals responsible for carrying out the tasks, the resources required, and the specific timeframe for completing the task at hand. In this way, the project schedule generates a timeline and indicates when the entirety of the project will be completed. The PMBOK (the Project Management Body of Knowledge) emphasizes the importance of project life cycle management which is why there has been an extensive and almost “obsessive” focus on this part by me as the project manager. Being on top of the project is all about understanding the timeline, resources, and schedule. Monday was used as the primary tool for monitor all of these details. The tool was adopted extremely well by the team. Utilization of the Project Management Software for this purpose also supported the autonomic leadership approach the project took and enabled thorough trust to build within the team since everyone was continuously on the same page.

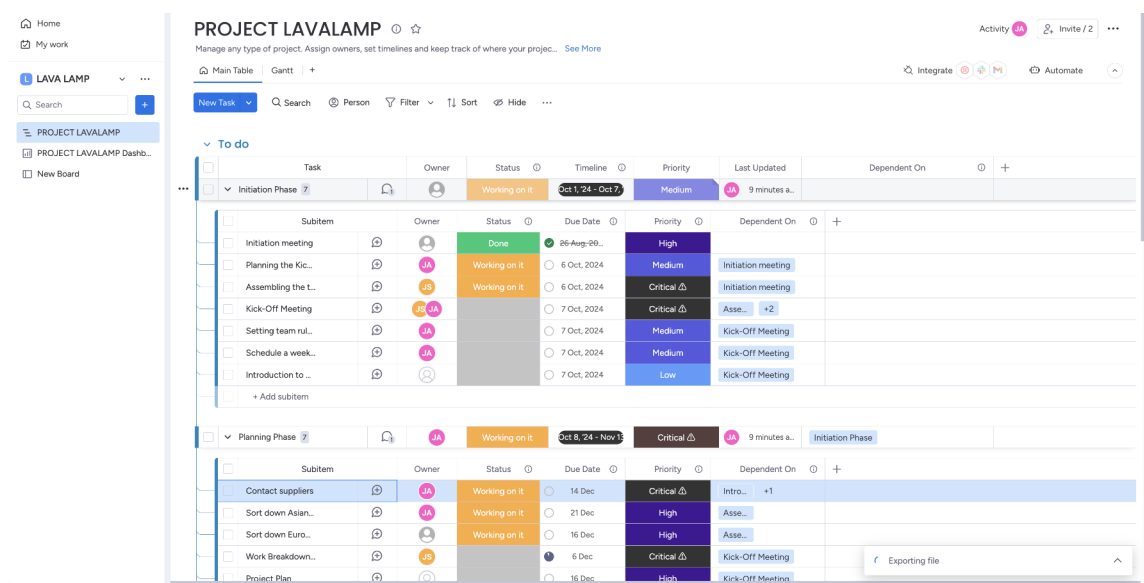


Figure 15. Illustrating view of the PMS and its tasks. (Adopted from Monday.com, created by Jamie Acosta 2023)

The illustration in Figure 15 highlights the main view of the teams' Project Management Software. This view, however, was not an effective way to monitor the project timeline. To examine the project's timeline, should the shown view be changed to a Gantt-chart view.

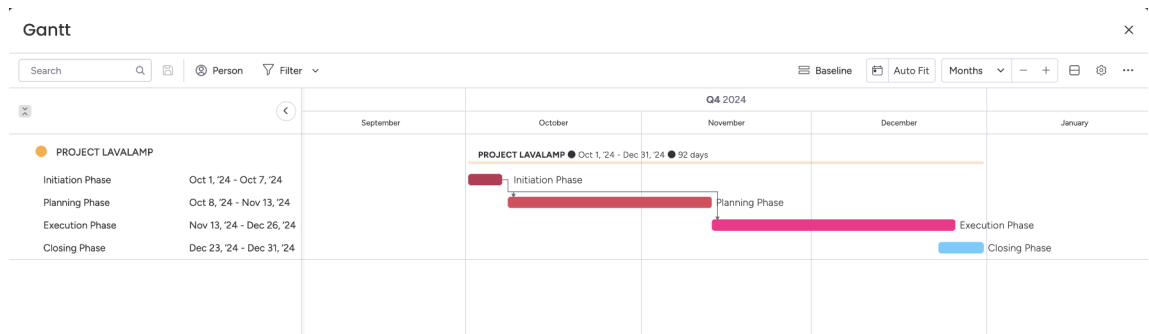


Figure 16. Showcasing a Gantt chart overview of the project timeline. (Adopted from Monday.com, created by Jamie Acosta 2023)

Figure 16 showcases a brief overview of what the projects' timeline looks like in a Gantt-chart. Project scheduling was a challenging aspect of project management, yet it had significant importance. The Project Timeline was a vital instrument for project management to ensure the project stayed on course. The whole project team has had access to assigning their tasks and monitoring the overall schedule within the Project Management Software (PMS) Monday. Comprehensive and real-time reporting is utilized in the project in order to stay on track with the project's scope and timeline. The project breaths through the Project Management Software (PMS) Monday which offers the tools for timelining projects in a Gantt chart for example.

6.2.2 Risk Document

Risk Documentation Template										
ISSUE DETAILS		ISSUE TO REPORT			POSSIBLE ROOT CAUSE			SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS		
Date issue reported or estimated	ID / Title / Name	Occurred during the project YES/NO	Describe issue	Rate how critical 1-10	Describe cause	Rate probability Low, Medium or High	Details if need	Describe solution	List any risks	Additional info
Week 7	Airfreight delivery denied	YES	Airfreight delivery denied	8	Budget or supplier error	Medium		Advance with sea freight 30+ day delivery. Consider advancing with only B2B business plan	Brand building, schedule	x
Week 4	Uncommitted team member	NO	A case where a teammember becomes uncommitted to the agreed process.	8	Motivation or conflict	Low		Allocate responsibilities to other team members.		If risk of a scope creep, adjust the scope and define a potential new team member
Week 4	A teammember being unable to work or deliver a responsibility	NO	A case where a teammember becomes unable to work.	6	Sickness or lack of ability	Low		Allocate responsibilities to other team members.		If risk of a scope creep, adjust the scope and define a potential new team member
Week 4	Overspend of resources	NO	A case of overspending resources	8	Too many responsibilities for the individuals	Medium		Prioritize and refine scope to fit the teams capacity		

Figure 17. Illustrating the projects' Risk Document. (Jamie Acosta 2023)

The project team took the initiative to report and plan possible risks to the Risk Document. This document is an essential part of the project since this is where the potential risks during the project lifecycle will be carefully planned and documented, as illustrated document in Figure 17. Creation of the Risk Document is vital to be done before the execution phase, for the potential precautions to be set in place before any potential major obstacles occur during the project.

The importance of preparing for obstacles during the project is at most importance, as it was also demonstrated in the theoretical examination. (PMBOK 2008) It does not matter how well a project is organized in terms of tools, leadership methodology or else, if it is not prepared well for possible obstacles. The risk planning played a big role in my own personal project management plan as a project manager.

During the risk planning, the team had a comprehensive conversation about the possible risks. Even though it was very unlikely to happen, the team still provided a precaution for cases where a team member would drop off from the team. This perhaps was also a good discussion to have because it solidified the feeling among the team that everyone was equally committed. It was agreed that whether a team member left the team within a crucial phase of the project, it would lead to a high risk of facing a scope creep if the tasks couldn't be divided to other people in the team. After all, the team was assembled by recognizing needs in a team and then filling those needs. If a person left, a major

need would open in the team. The team also considered a possibility of over usage of resources occurring. In the case of the project, we discussed that this would most likely mean the over usage of time since it is the biggest resource considering the projects' scope. If the project manager notices a situation as such occurring, its then his and the teams' job to prioritize and make compromises to secure the project's scope and progression towards the projects' primary objective. If there was to be issues with the airfreight, should a sea freight option be considered. However, this would also be considered as a major obstacle which could force the team to enter Monitoring and Controlling phase in the project and make adjustments in the project's scope to avoid a scope creep.

7 Diary – Execution phase

7.1 Week 5

At the start of the Execution phase, I was feeling extremely confident. I felt that the project was planned excellently, and the state of the project team was very positive. Everyone involved seemed to be in a flow state, ready to push forward at full speed.

It's the start of Week 5 and feels like the project is moving forward effortlessly. It really doesn't seem like it has now officially been 5 weeks since the initiation meeting between me and the CFO. I'm not sick anymore which is nice, and I have felt like an electric bunny for the last few days. It's Monday, and once again, time for the weekly catch-up meeting. Today, I chose to bring the whole crew for brunch at the center to kick off our day. Unfortunately, I don't have the bank to pay for everyone but luckily everyone agreed it was still a great way to start the week. It's 7:30, and I arrived about an hour early to document how I'm feeling. Well, how am I feeling? Last week was a success and I can't wait to get on the next phase of the project: Execution. We scheduled to work the whole day on the deliverables that we introduced in the foundational documents created during the planning phase. I have a feeling that everyone is well prepared and simply can't wait to get to work.

I have an exciting disclaimer for you, the reader: As the team disclosed in the WBS, the main duties of our CFOs were to contact and compare the different Lava lamp suppliers. We have become extremely lucky that he has found 2 extremely good options already, which both possess pre-existing stock in the products we were inquiring about. I guess he just simply could not sit around last week, and he would do a ton of research about the suppliers between the meetings. If we can define our product supplier already at this stage of the project, it would be well ahead of the schedule, massively relieving pressure from the execution phase. He has reported this to the PMS and given everyone a heads up which is why we have set an additional team meeting this week to address this matter and see if we can come to a decision already at this stage.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the next few weeks will be very important for the project, as we need to not only continue laying the groundwork for the project through developing further project deliverables such as the Business and Marketing plans, but we also must continue to move the project forward to ensure that we meet the project's primary objectives. To remind you, the main objective of the project is to generate the first sale. Whether it's only a single lava lamp or a thousand of them.

Throughout the process, we've already disclosed within the project team, that it's very likely, we won't be able to build a complete business to its perfection within the given timeframe. This is why we need to keep our attention on the fact that we must continue to move forward with the project. If we are unable to move forward with certain aspects of the process, we need to adjust the project scope and ensure that the primary objectives can still be attained within the 70-day deadline. However, every individual still agrees, that if everything goes well, we will continue to work on the project after the 70-day deadline in order to possibly build a sustainable foundation for the business and give it a realistic chance to achieve success.

As disclosed in the WBS, the Salesperson and I, will be responsible for delivering the final Business Plan document. The CFO is responsible for comparing and contacting suppliers and logistical partners, listing out necessary licenses, and making sure that administratively everything is arranged in order to sell the product. The marketing team is responsible for delivering and developing the marketing plan as well as scheduling and potentially executing the delivery of the Webstore if the project team decides to advance a B2C sales plan.

7.1.1 Product Business Plan

The Product Business Plan document was created in collaboration with me and the Salesperson. The document was not defined by us, but rather developed based on all the information gained in our meetings and hangouts so far. The whole team had a common vision of the product and of its scope, so it was clear

that everyone was aware of what was coming. I took the job of building the final deliverable together with the Sales person, for us to have someone on one time which we haven't had so far.

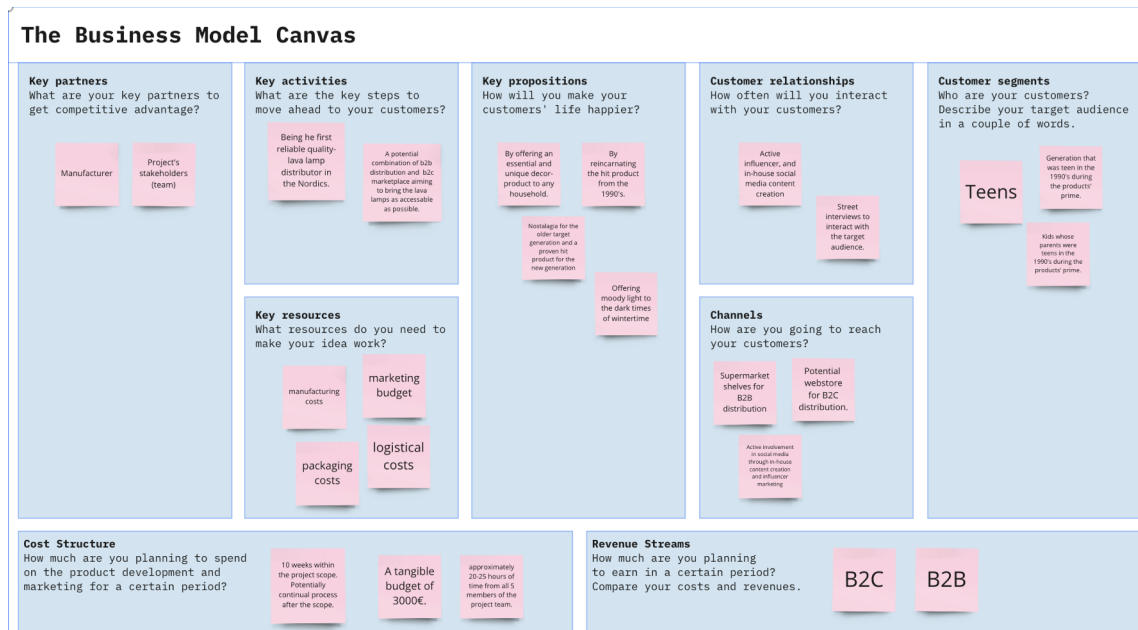


Figure 18. Project Business Plan. (Adopted from Miro.com, created by Jamie Acosta 2023)

Figure 18 introduces the projects' Business Plan demonstrated utilizing a Business Model Canvas template adopted from Miro. (Miro 2023) The Business Plan acts as the specific "Business Idea" document including the whole vision of the product and the business, formed by the team. The team has had a clear vision from the start to bring a product to the Finnish and potentially Nordic markets which has been forgotten or lost since the 1990's. The way how the product was to be brought to the market was not set in stone. However, the team and especially the Sales person felt that the easiest way to bring the product to the market would be through B2B. The Figures 11 and 12 from the quantitative research support the ideology of bringing the product to the shelves of the supermarket as the majority would consider buying the product off of the shelf. The product was also seen to be a great Christmas present and as a product is owned by only 5-10% of the responders which implies that the product would move well in a supermarket shelf. B2B market would also help to finance bigger stock orders from the supplier since the product wouldn't have to be delivered right away. If an B2C webstore was to be created, both sales pipelines however

would support each other in terms of marketing. From the perspective of the business, it would not make a large difference whether the consumer chose to buy the product directly from the webstore or from the B2B supermarket. B2C route would have a bigger margin, but B2B sales would boost the possibility of a large re-stock order from the supermarket, again enabling re-financing the money to other purposes (Stock, marketing, other operations). Overall, the team was extremely confident on the business plan and was excited to find out about the Marketing Strategy set for the product by the marketing team.

It's Wednesday, Week 5, I'm home just after we ended our additional weekly meeting, where we presented the business model canvas to the team and where we were addressing the potential suppliers that our CFO has found and contacted. No adjustments needed to be made to the business plan.

We have now officially decided to advance with one of the 2 suppliers introduced on Monday! Both suppliers come from Asia. The CFO disclosed, that he has been doing careful research and contacting multiple different parties for the past few weeks. He concluded that there were practically no lava lamp suppliers in Europe. This could originate from a variety of reasons, but it definitely explains why lava lamps have no popularity in the EU. There is no direct supply such as Amazon or other big consumer chains. The one competitor that there is, produces the product in-house and sells it with a high margin. The other lava lamps found on the internet, originate from unreliable distributors in Asia. This was also a major concern for the team. How could we ensure that the supplier was reliable and that we could rely on the party especially in a hectic nature as the project in hand? At this point, our CFO replied with a confident smile on his face: He had a clear favorite from the 2 options. One of the suppliers he had found from the depths of the internet, is confirmed to be the official LED and light-product distributor of 2 major consumer chains in the Nordics. This means that the product has already been licensed to be acceptable in Finland and is practically ready to be sold. In addition, this specific suppliers' contact person has just moved back to Asia from studying for their master's degree in Finland. What an incredible coincidence, right? The contact person disclosed that he is very familiar with the market in the Nordics and their jurisdictions regarding importing products from Asia. He is also managing a few other clients in Finland

specifically and assured us that juridically there would be no problem with importing lava lamps for us.

Hearing all of this, the team thought this was a no-brainer. We have found our supplier. The CFO had gone all the way to even confirm this information from a source within the consumer chains mentioned. The company in fact does deliver goods for them. He had also received and confirmed the suppliers' juridical documents valid from the government party here in Finland.

I'm just absolutely stunned at this point. Before even finalizing the foundations of the project, I'm already able to witness the benefits of the Laissez-Faire leadership strategy I have set, where I allow the team to have autonomy and take responsibility for their specific areas. I would have never been able to find a supplier for us, at least not as effectively as we have done now. This just goes to show how the power lies in the people and how enabling autonomy within the team enhances the teams' capacity to solve problems and innovate solutions. It will be tough to extract the team from the project tonight on the "Fun night" but perhaps I'll allow it. It's so important not to separate myself from the team. I can't be refereeing and directing the conversations too much, because this could result in creating a gap between me and the rest of the team members. We chose to go to a pub for a beer or two tonight. If we are about to talk about the project all night, at least it will happen in a relaxed matter. That's ok. This is definitely an aspect that I have learned the most about during these first 4 weeks. Define structure, but do not micromanage. Laissez-Faire – "Let it be".

During today's meeting, we concluded a few things. Before advancing to ordering a stock of products from the supplier, we still had to physically see and evaluate the product. The supplier had previously disclosed that they are willing to deliver free product samples for us. The samples would be delivered with priority airfreight, which would mean approximately a delivery time of 2–4 days. This is great news since we would be able to evaluate the product extremely soon and perhaps even begin the marketing process since we would already have a product in hand. This of course depends on the Marketing Strategy deliverables, which are still yet to be produced.

As the meeting outcome, the team decided to order the samples. In theory, the samples should arrive between Monday and Wednesday next week. Without obstacles, at this point, we would have all our project deliverables ready, and the project would be able to start progressing slightly ahead of the schedule.

7.2 Week 6

During the weekly meeting on Monday, the Marketing team informed us that they were not yet ready with the Marketing strategy. This was all right since the schedule was to get these done within the ongoing 2-week period. It was expected for the marketing strategy to take slightly longer to form since it had dependencies on the Project Timeline which we only introduced in the middle of last week. The marketing team disclosed that they believed the strategy to be ready to be presented in a few days.

Acting on the recently found information, the team decided to book a scope monitor meeting on Thursday to monitor the scope of the project and to introduce the marketing strategy. To utilize the days between the meetings, the team shared thoughts on what things could be taken forward in this timeframe. We agreed that the CFO should progress with the juridical deliverables, by preparing the applications for the needed licenses. However, no applications shall be sent before we have monitored the scope with the team on Thursday. The Salesperson will utilize the time between the meetings to list out B2B supermarkets in a spreadsheet and create a lead list which would be ready for contacting if the team chooses to activate the B2B sales strategy in the upcoming week. In addition to these actions, I will be assisting the processes with one-on-one meetings with everyone. The product sample is also set to be delivered on Wednesday, meaning the team will have plenty of new information and progress to reflect on Thursday.

Pleading to the information gained, I decided that I would exceptionally not journal at all on Monday. Instead, I would let the project progress naturally and continue sharing my thoughts later, either on Thursday or next Monday after major developments in the project, which the team will undoubtedly have.

7.2.1 Product Sample Arrival

The product samples arrived on Wednesday morning, which allowed the team to examine the product already on the same night during the weekly “Fun Night”. This week’s Fun Night was held face-to-face at the Project Manager’s apartment by playing Monopoly. It was a great place to introduce the physical product to the whole team for the first time, as everyone had to wait for the lava lamp to warm up and start working. For clarification, the way that the lava lamps work is that it has a lamp underneath the liquid which will heat the liquid activating a chemical reaction making the lava bulbs dance in the bottle. This process usually takes about an hour, so seeing the reaction of the team once the liquid started reacting, was well worth the wait.



Picture 1. Lava lamp sample (Photo by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

As seen in the Picture 1, the product liquid was in lilac color, and the liquid was more blueish. The team had a common vision that the lamp should look stunning with this color combination.



Picture 2. Actively functioning Lava lamp sample (Photo by Jamie Acosta, 2023)

The lamps were absolutely stunning. It was a dark night during the game of Monopoly, and everyone was just waiting anxiously for the lamp to start reacting. Once it did, no one could stop looking at it. It was just as captivating as the lava lamp I had seen in the movie about a year ago. How often do you find things to be just as they are in the movies? Not very often. This was one of those moments. The product was definitely something to be proud of and after seeing the sample live in front of our eyes, we were confident that there was nothing like in the market. There were maybe one or two competing products we had found with thorough research, but they were just sad. Not even comparable to our product. I mean just look at the pictures. You can't tell me you wouldn't want one during the wintertime.

7.2.2 Scope Monitor Meeting

The past weeks have definitely been the most productive up to this point in the whole project life cycle. The project has gotten a rapid start, but what is most important is the fact that it has been successfully done in a controlled manner. This implies that the groundwork done for the execution phase has been successful and the leadership methodology applied has been effective.

The team had reserved multiple hours for Thursday's scope monitor meeting, the morning following the Fun Night. The goal of the meeting was to make thorough considerations of the project's scope and shape the direction of the project if necessary. The meeting was originally planned to start with the marketing team's presentation of their deliverables. However, the CFO raised a major obstacle from his discoveries requiring the team to tackle the topic of monitoring the project scope as the first thing.

The supplier has come back with a new offer for the delivery of the goods. The supplier was aware of the tight timeline the project had, as the goal was to receive the goods at the end of November, which is why so far, we have only been considering airfreight as a delivery option since its delivery time estimate

is approximately 5-8 business days. The original offer's cost of delivery was acceptable, where our B2B sales margin came to approximately 73%, after landing and calculating all the project's fixed costs. The same margin for B2C sales was calculated to be around 92%. However, the supplier has now informed the team that they have made an error on the original airfreight delivery offer. The supplier has forgotten to mention the inclusion of liquids in the delivery for their delivery partners when bidding for prices. According to the supplier, their airfreight delivery partners charge substantially higher prices for fragile liquid deliveries since they cannot be delivered through traditional channels. The supplier now offered an alternative delivery solution with sea freight, which is noticeably cheaper, even compared to the original airfreight offer, but it is extremely slow. This newly given information, however, has substantially raised the project's chance of facing scope creep, which refers to the occurrence of unmanageable alterations in the project's scope.

Well, it's Thursday, I'm home, exhausted after the scoping meeting and I definitely need to journal. Oh dear. I remember sitting in the chair at the beginning of the meeting. Five minutes before finding out what we did, the atmosphere was relaxed and bubbly. I was also relaxed and confident about everything in general. All of that was gone now. I should have knocked the wood at that point, because yesterday, I thought about the fact of how the project may be going so well and according to the plan. Well, the fact is that rarely ever any project goes exactly according to the plan. This is why project management frameworks such as the PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge) exist to support and provide the projects with a solid foundation to be prepared for the occurring obstacles. After our CFO introduced the news, the mood shifted in the room. You could almost feel the disappointment in the air. We always knew that there was an opportunity for sea freight delivery as well and brainstormed around with the idea. Our team's Salesperson brought up a great point stating that the cons of sea freight is that it is very slow. This means that with the situation in hand, we would either have to take a high financial risk by ordering an extremely large amount of stock at once in order to fill the needs of both of the sales pipelines (b2c & b2b) or alternatively we would need to low ball a small order and be forced sell out and make the customers of both pipelines have to wait for over a

month for the new stock to arrive again. With airfreight, we would have been enabled to have a lot of flexibility and a great ability to react to the given situation. We would have been able to first order a small amount of stock with a small risk and quickly order more within a week after we had concluded a proof of sales. Now that option is off the table. You could almost hear the teammates' thoughts asking if this was it and whether the project was over. For a second after sitting in the feeling of disappointment, my instincts and comprehensive project management knowledge kicked in. I realized that we are prepared for this. This is the exact scenario we had prepared for when planning risks and defining the project scope. I noticed that the room had not yet realized this, so I knew that this was the moment for me to step in as the Project Manager and lead the process. I took the floor and stepped in front of the whiteboard and wrote "Scope creep". I asked the team to explain to me what this means as a reminder for themselves. One of the team members explained the definition and I could see the moment when the spark lit back in the room. Everyone realized that we in fact were prepared for a scenario such as this one. We had defined a scenario in our risk document for the obstacles that may occur in the logistics.

As mentioned, the supplier offered an alternative delivery solution, which was the previously mentioned sea freight. The delivery estimate for this way of shipment from the supplier is 27 to 33 days. The supplier has also offered a DDP service as a form of delivery, meaning a way of delivery where the seller is responsible for everything except the unloading at the destination. This includes the payment of customs & duties, import customs clearance, Insurance, and arranging the whole delivery until it's in Helsinki harbor. The supplier also concluded that whether we were still ready to order, they would be able to process the order within 12 hours from the email and send it to delivery. The team brainstormed around the possibilities of the situation and how this newly gained information affects the project scope. I stated, that if my calculations were correct, by ordering the products via sea freight today or tomorrow, would mean that the products arrive in Helsinki somewhere between the end of week 9 and week 10 of the project. The supplier confirmed in the email that the days in the delivery estimate, were in fact weekdays and not business days. At this point of the meeting, the team had been talking and brainstorming for around 3 hours straight. Everyone seemed tense so it was decided to go out for lunch. After

lunch, the team would come back and start delivering conclusions and modifying the scope of the project.

The remaining of the meeting was extremely effective, and the mood was brought back up within the team. It was decided that the team would send an order by sea freight within today or tomorrow. The CFO was responsible for sending an order to the supplier. The team selected to order only a small amount of stock, equivalent to meeting the needs of approximately one B2B supermarket sale. This ensures that the team has at least something to work with and guarantees the fulfillment of the project's main goal, which is to accomplish a sale within 70 days. This is done of course assuming that the team is capable of executing a sale once the items are delivered. Advancing with a plan B is always better than not advancing at all and allowing scope creep to occur. At this point, the team knew that it needed to report the modifications made to the project. The decision has been made to remove B2C as a component of the business plan for the time being. According to the Salesperson, it is easier to manage and meet the demand of the B2B pipeline. The B2B sales will always include a large number of products per delivery for a singular customer. However, when dealing with B2C, typically we are talking about a case of one product per customer, requiring a lot more volume to start gaining revenue. Nevertheless, the objective is to stay the course in the pursuit of developing the B2C platform, as the original project scope states. We have also introduced earlier that the supplier offers a dropshipping service, which will be considered for implementing the B2C route. Dropshipping refers to a service offered by a supplier, in which the provider directly delivers items from the factory to the customer for B2C purchases. However, this approach carries inherent risks since we give up direct control over the distribution process and its quality management. An alternative approach to revive the B2C pipeline is to consider acquiring a greater quantity of inventory by sea freight after gaining conclusive proof of concept once we have introduced the product to the market. If the team successfully fulfills a larger stock order, it would be feasible to internally manage the B2C deliveries due to sufficient stock availability. The marketing team proposed that this may be achieved, for instance, by generating substantial demand for the product before placing the stock order and perhaps collecting pre-sales to partially fund the order.

Direct deliverables of the meeting were as follows:

- To comply with the risk document established in the planning phase, the team decided to go ahead and order a small stock of lava lamps to simply secure the achievement of the project's primary objective – Achieve a sale.
- A decision was made that more stock would be ordered later in the project if the realities of the environment and resources allowed to do so. The supplier can process a new order within a timespan of 12 hours, which means that taking an uncoordinated risk by delivering a large amount of stock as of today was not necessary.
- A decision to initially focus on achieving a B2B sale instead of forcing the delivery of a B2C pipeline with the ongoing uncertainty.

After all the events that unfolded, the team chose to take the rest of the week off and wait for the delivery confirmation from the supplier. A lot of progress and important scope modifications were made. The newly gained progress meant, that the team would also need to redefine the marketing plan later which was previously already made by the marketing team. Since the scope modification was as large as it was, the team chose to execute this step together as a team in the later stages of the project after it had been defined whether the B2C route would be executed or not in addition to bringing the lava lamps to the supermarket shelves.

7.3 Week 7

It's a new week with a fresh and positive mindset for everyone! Having worked all the way from Monday to Thursday almost full time, in addition to going to school during the week really seemed to affect the team. Last week was by far the busiest week there has been. I could tell that by the end of Thursday's meeting the team's energy was lacking and everyone seemed tired. Rightfully so, the week ended up being very heavy. I want to say, that I should have structured the week differently, but at the same time, there was no way I could have

predicted the turning point the project took on Thursday. So, at the end of the day, there are things the project manager can't control. The only thing I can however control is to make sure the project keeps moving forward effectively and I'm able to keep the energy up in the team.

I can already tell, writing this part of the journal after the weekly meeting online on Microsoft Teams, that the individuals seem reignited and fresh. This absolutely highlights the importance of resting and having a great balance between work and free time. Just something to think about for the reader: Imagine if I hadn't been applying all of these leadership and management strategies to the project such as separating project and personal communication with Microsoft Teams. Additionally, if we didn't have our weekly "Fun Meetings." Some people may argue that the "Fun Meetings" are a waste of time, but it's important to remember that even if an activity doesn't contribute directly to the project's deliverables, it can still have a major impact on the team's well-being. This activity enhances the fact that the people are committed to the project and each other. They have also developed a strong bond that will likely last long after the project is over, even though they have only been working together for 6 weeks.

During Monday's catch-up meeting, our CFO introduced the team with great news. Our first shipment of products had just made it to the ship which left on Friday. The supplier shared with the team a tracking number for the delivery. The tracking number did not yet share when it would be delivered but it defined that a specific time will be released in about a week. The website defined that the estimate would be given within the accuracy of 2 days.

Monday's catch-up meeting ended up being extremely effective and the team concluded important deliverables and specifications to the project scope as an outcome of the meeting:

- Within the project timeline of 10 weeks (70 days), the Project team will solely focus on achieving the project's primary objective as a deliverable - Achieving the first sale of the project.
- The sale will be executed as a B2B sale to a supermarket.

- In addition to achieving the projects' objective, the team will aim to build a solid foundation for the project so it will be able to be continued after the initial project timeline. This action point includes for example establishing original the marketing strategy the marketing team had made previously.

The team started to cohesively work towards these objectives and a feeling of excitement could be sensed in the atmosphere. Since the goods were now on the way, the plan was for the CFO to fill out the required license applications. In addition, the marketing team got back to their process of establishing a comprehensive marketing strategy utilizing a template from the team's visual tool Miro. The marketing team would present the deliverable at the end of the week. The Salesperson continues building the B2B lead spreadsheet with the goal of being able to start potentially contacting the supermarkets next week. My role as the project manager is to let go since the stage is set. I thought that having this week's Fun Meeting online would be a good idea. Playing Minecraft together became a hit in week 3 so I decided to continue from that note. The team needed some space and room to develop the ideas and processes individually, so having this week completely online fit the tone.

7.3.1 Marketing Strategy

The Marketing strategy plays a fundamental role in any business. The marketing team has been excited about presenting their outcomes for a while now. Unluckily the project was faced with a major obstacle, which led to a delay in defining the Marketing Strategy.

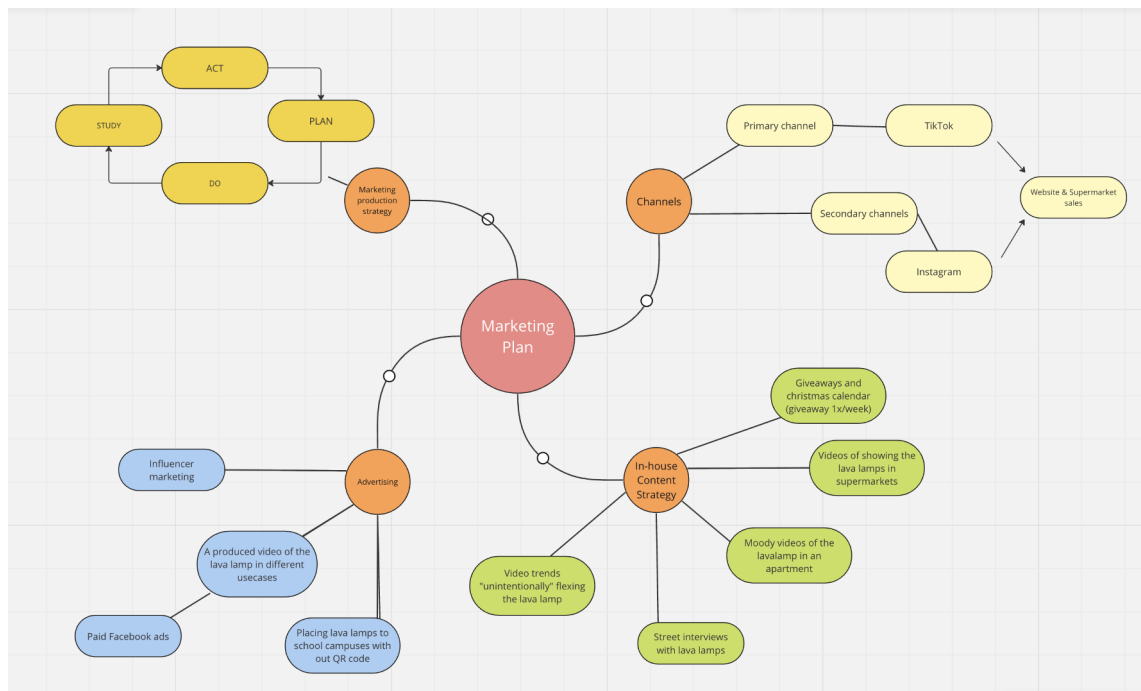


Figure 21 illustrates the project's Marketing plan. (Adapted from Miro.com)

The marketing plan is very multi-dimensional. The team possesses a great amount of in-house content creation resources. The team can produce its own marketing material which is a huge advantage and was taken into a factor when assembling the team during the initiation phase. The Marketing Plan is formed around maximizing the in-house talent to its maximum capacity. This will be done by producing a large variety of content to 2, potentially 3 different channels where the customer can be met. In addition, the marketing team has decided to utilize the power of influencer marketing combined with potential paid Facebook advertising.

One of the most important factors in the Marketing Plan is the utilization of a methodological strategy when executing the marketing procedures. An ideology will be defined, where the process will continuously follow a gradual framework of doing, studying, acting, and planning. This will allow the team to continuously reflect on their results, and study what is needed allowing the development of the process and allowing the procedure to act better week by week.

7.4 Week 8

Woah, it has been another week once again. I'm sitting at the pub where I used to write journals back when everything started exactly 2 months ago. Doesn't seem like it was that long ago. It's funny to remind myself how the project started by reading the journals from the beginning stages. The project has gone a long way from there. Giving the team some space last week was a great idea. We had spent so much time together as a team face to face, leading to a point where I noticed that we weren't really using the project's communication tool almost at all. However, now separating the team again to work on their deliverables, the communication channels were naturally brought back to life. After modifying the project's scope and simplifying the deliverables, the project started to feel like a piece of cake again. The weekly catch-up meeting this morning is evidence of how well these adjustments are working. As I drink my coffee and think about the meeting, I can't help but feel proud of what we have accomplished as a team. The team's energy is so different compared to where we were just a few weeks ago. We have developed routines, inside jokes, natural workflow, and more.

Interestingly, the choice to narrow the project's scope has turned out to have clear advantages that were perhaps slightly unexpected by me. One thing is that the team seems sure of what they're supposed to do, and what everyone's role is within the team dynamic. This could be caused by the clarification of the project's scope and making the project simpler and easier to understand. It's like we've let each person shine in their area of skill by focusing on fewer things. This was especially clear in the way the Salesperson talked about his part of the project. I hadn't seen his ideas on certain topics earlier, but now he was also able to input his knowledge and experience on the topics outside of his responsibility zones defined in the WBS. Another notable development is the improved utilization of our project management tools. Seeing the marketing team put up such a great document of the marketing strategy was amazing. This showcased their understanding of how to use the project's primary visual collaboration tool, which until this point has only been used solely in team settings.

There's also a lot of learning I have done individually about leadership and flexibility. It has been very important to change and adjust my leadership behavior based on what the team needs and how it acts, instead of sticking to a strict

plan and ways of behaving. A good example of this is my continuous effort to try to "read the room" and for example performing the entirety of last week online. It required a bit of a leap of faith to take a step back to give the team more autonomy. However, this approach has paid off. The quality of work seems to have improved, and the team members seem more invested in the project's success as defined in the studies of Laissez-Faire leadership methodology if it's applied successfully. The team members seem to care more about the project's success and the quality of the work has gone up. The next crucial phase of the project is coming up, where we'll need to put all the team's energy into getting the sale for the project. The products are on their way, and a great comprehensive business plan is beginning to be in place. The only thing left to do is to achieve the sale of the products. I am hopeful that we will be able to pull through. The hardest tasks are already behind us, now it's just all about pushing past the finish line.

As I prepare to leave the pub, I'm starting to realize that these journals are way more than just a record of the project's journey. They remind me, and hopefully also the reader of how we develop as people. The development experienced within this project has already been incredible proving the fact that this project has been so much more than just simply building a business from ground zero to its first sale. I'm looking forward to the next week's journal. I'm curious to see how we'll navigate through the last couple of weeks of the project.

The week consisted of planning and preparation for the finishing parts for the execution phase of the project. The team monitored the developing situation of the product delivery. After a week or so the team was informed with slightly negative news. The product delivery was delayed by a week, causing the products to be delivered after the project scope. This scenario, however, was also included in the risk document created during the planning phase of the project. The best part about B2B sales is that you don't necessarily need to have the product in hand to make the sale. According to the team Sales person, who has previous experience in B2B sales stated that It's completely normal for the goods to be delivered to the supermarket within a delivery time of 1 to 3 weeks from the sale. No B2B customer expects you to have the product in hand. This in fact could be viewed as unprofessional if we did. For this reason, the gained

information did not really change anything and the team continued without adjusting the project scope.

The CFO reported to the team's communication channel just before the weekly Fun Meeting, that all the registrations and licenses have now been officially accepted without unexpected obstacles. The team was now officially and legally, ready to proceed to the last stage of the execution phase which is finding the first sale for the products. To celebrate this major milestone, the team decided to spend the weekly Fun Meeting by going out together. This was the first time the team was able to properly relax during the hectic project. This was possible now since it was agreed that the execution of the sales process was to be started on the next week's Wednesday. There was no immediate pressure since the project was on schedule and in such a great state at this point. In this case, I as a project manager highlighted a green light for a night out, in fact, it was my idea. The Salesperson informed the team at the beginning of the ongoing week 8, that pleading to the project schedule and state, it would be smart for the whole team to be involved in the process of finding a sale. It would also act as a nice way to finish the project together and allow the team to together enjoy the moment when it achieves its primary objective of generating the first sale. The team decided together that the Salesperson would spend the remaining of week 8 to plan and prepare a playful "Sales Day" competition which would take its place on week 8's Wednesday. The winner of the Sales Day would be the person who achieves the sale of the products that are being delivered. As stated before, the size of the product order is equivalent to a sales deal of 1 supermarket. The only deliverables left, besides the actual sale, were to produce the contracts for the customer once the sale happened. We agreed together with our CFO and Salesperson to tackle this task during the weekend. After this deliverable, everything should be set for the last day of the execution phase.

7.5 Week 9

Week 9 concludes that the project is entering its very last stages. Unusually, the team opted to not have a weekly meeting this week since there were no additional deliverables to form, besides the previously booked Wednesday Sales Day “event”.

7.5.1 Sales Day

So, the day came. Wednesday week 9, is most likely the last day of the execution phase. The team's Salesperson had prepared a playful speech before the “event” started and set some team rules. Only one person was allowed to call at once and the order of who gets to call first was decided with a tournament of Rock-Paper-Scissors. The Salesperson had also prepared a fun fact about the lava lamp's state in the market. Whichever supermarket "gets" to buy the lava lamps, will be the only grocery supermarket store in the country to sell lava lamps. However, this doesn't include electronic consumer stores. This fact set the stage for the team, and we came into a that the product holds a lot of leverage and that the competition is likely to be quite short. We came to a conclusion together that we could very well have ordered more lamps and would have been probably able to sell them easily, but when the decision was made the risk levels were too high, so the decision was right at the time. According to some Google articles we read, cold calling was all about confidence. We started the day off by practicing pitches to each other and figuring out the best ways to sell the product. Eventually, we started the sales with the defined order from the rock-paper-scissors competition.

As expected, after a round of calls, a person from the marketing team couple hit the jackpot and was able to sell all the lava lamps to a large local supermarket. We disclosed to the customer that the products would be delivered by us within the time span of 2,5 weeks, at the beginning of December. Apparently, the customer was a huge fan of lava lamps and got extremely excited about hearing that we are aiming to bring them back to the market. If we understood correctly, the supermarket would have bought even more stock than what we had to offer at this time, underlining the conclusion that the market was definitely there for lava lamps.

The day was a success. The project's primary objective was achieved, and the team atmosphere was extremely positive. In a way, the common feeling was also relief, as the project had been extremely intensive requiring a lot of input from each of the project team's individuals. The day ended with the process of sending the bill to the customer and having lunch together to celebrate the great achievement of finishing the execution phase of the project. The project would now be only left with the closing phase which would consist of the closing activities of the project.

8 Diary – Closing phase – Week 10

During the last phase and week of the project, the project team individuals were given a task to write their own personal journals where they reflected the entirety of the project from their personal point of view. Everyone on the team will not only have to think about their own personal involvement in the project but also examine the highlights of the other team members' journey during the project. At the last meeting of the project, at the end of week 10, the team members will share these journals with each other. The team will share observations with each other and talk about how the project turned out during the meeting. Afterward, a textual reflective team conclusion will be created.

8.1 Project Conclusion

The project followed a detailed set of rules on the management structure and work culture which were established from the very start of the project. This was a vital part of the success of the project allowing the ball to start rolling in the right direction from the get-go. The Project Manager is entirely responsible for the project's ability to adhere to the set of standards and strategic framework. Following the creation of the team culture, the CFO played a significant role in developing the initiatives in the project's early phases. By consistently delivering exceptional value and project deliverables, the CFO served as the project's "quiet operator" throughout the project life cycle. The marketing team was very involved in planning the project. They were the ones who came up with the most creative ideas and acted as the paragons of starting the project's creative flow. Their personality ensured that the project never became uninteresting. At all times, they maintained the team's energy and inspired everyone else to do their best.

Looking back, the team confronted numerous and diverse problems. Especially in Week 7, a major roadblock occurred as difficulties unfolded with the logistics of the delivery process of the lava lamps. But it was more than a logistical problem; it was an opportunity to see how well our team could adjust and keep its concentration. If the project's planning phase hadn't been as comprehensive

and effective, scope creep may have been a serious possibility at this stage of the project. There was a domino effect of uncertainty that affected the other parts of the project. However, it was at these moments that our team's commitment and ability to collaborate under pressure was truly tested and developed. By working together as a unit and going above and beyond as individuals, we were able to stay focused on our main objective—making that first, critical sale. Despite the setbacks and the sudden change in the project's scope, the team responded brilliantly, adjusting their approach, and figuring out how to keep the project moving forward. The team's development and unity were on display in their ability to adjust under duress. Following the implementation of different solutions and adjustments to the project scope, the Salesperson played an important role in resolving the logistical challenges. In the updated scope, the Salesperson took the lead in making sure that business-to-business sales were the exclusive priority. The Salesperson was also responsible for facilitating the ending stages of the project where the project's primary objective was finally achieved.

8.2 The Last Journal

As the final stages of our lava lamp project approach, I find myself reflecting and reviewing the journey with an enormous smile on my face. Doing this symbolically where it all started, in my local pub. It is clear that my development as a Project Manager has been significant and complex. This project has been an intense place of learning, forcing me to adapt and develop in ways I didn't expect when starting this thesis documentation process and the project itself.

The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) framework and other structured techniques initially affected my approach to project management in this project. I must be honest when I say this, but I have never managed a project that was structured as proficiently as the one documented. In this project. I concentrated on following the strict principles of the frameworks, while still applying my own twists to the daily action and specifically to the team management part of the process. Following the PMBOK's strict principles included working in project phases, defining clear objectives, applying thorough preparation,

and adhering to a strict process structure. I got to witness the benefits of obeying these strict principles in the middle of the project where the team faced its largest obstacles during the whole project's life cycle. The supply chain problems in Week 7 were an important turning point. I have experienced similar obstacles in projects where the effects of these events are sometimes deadly in terms of the continuity of the project. This time, I feel like I barely even felt the heat. We were prepared. I was prepared. It felt like the situation was just a walk in the park and we were able to resolve the issues within a matter of a day. This is a point that I look positively back on.

Adopting a laissez-faire leadership style was a considerable shift from my comfort zone when managing projects. I tend to be a very hands-on leader who loves to be involved in every step of the way during the project. I think the reader could still recognize this trait in me. However, obeying to this leadership methodology forced me to consciously think about my actions and how they affect the team's autonomy. Even very small things can affect the team individuals' trust and belief in the process. To be able to give the team the feeling that I truly trust them, I needed to give them the freedom to make mistakes, take responsibility for scheduling tasks, execute deliverables, and control their own responsibilities. This leadership approach enables the team's unique abilities to blossom, generating a feeling of ownership and accountability towards the project which actually takes effective pressure off the Project managers' shoulders since it can trust the team to execute and purely focus on managing. What I learned was that as odd as it felt sometimes to "Let go" as "Laissez-Faire" is translated to, it ended up showcasing incredibly effective results especially showcasing our ability as a team to solve problems and brainstorm solutions. However, there were also challenges along the way. There were days when I felt the team was tense and timelines where I felt that the effectiveness of the team wasn't at its peak. These moments gave me a peak to the negative side of the leadership approach, highlighting the vital necessity of having a strict structure when allowing this much autonomy to the team members. Navigating these hurdles sharpened my ability to analyze circumstances more accurately. There needs to be strict routines which include weekly meetings, continuous deliverables that need to be executed, and quality standards that need to be met in terms of documentation and communication.

As this project comes to a close, it is also critical to reflect on its impact and lessons learned. The project's or thesis's success was not only measured by achieving its objectives but also by the useful knowledge gathered throughout its implementation. Not only for the benefit of mine but hopefully for anyone reading as well. The project has been a transformative journey for me personally. As the thesis's name stands, the project pushed not only me, but also the team beyond the boundaries, challenging to adapt, learn, and grow while passionately chasing a successful accomplishment of the project's objectives. The passionate commitment to the process of the project and its documentation generated a great academic contribution to the field of project management and entrepreneurship showcasing how the variety of theoretical principles can be used in a real-world application. Not many bachelor graduates can say that they wrote a thesis about starting up a business from scratch within the timespan of 70 days. The skills and insights gained through the experience are invaluable, equipping me not just for future projects but for a broader understanding of project management, leadership, and team dynamics in complex, ever-changing environments.

This project's legacy goes beyond potentially re-establishing lava lamps to the Finnish market. It is in the team that turned a concept and theory into an actual reality, setting the groundwork for future endeavors. This project's completion feels bittersweet. It's an ending to a remarkable chapter, but it's also the start of new. The experience taught me that borders are more than limits that must be respected; they are boundaries that must be pushed and expanded.

Thank you for following along and going beyond the boundaries with me.

9 Conclusion

The thesis explored the complex relationship between theory and its practical application in the fields of project management and entrepreneurship. The primary objective of the thesis has been to establish a comprehensive handbook, demonstrating the integration of the frequently separated realms of theoretical academic principles and practical real-life application. This ambitious endeavor was able to successfully create a dual narrative approach where the first part of the study focuses on the theoretical foundations of project management, providing a strong academic basis for the project, whereas the second part shifts to the practical aspect, showcasing the real-time application of these theories in the demanding process of launching a business within a tight timeframe of 70 days. The primary objective of the thesis of creating a comprehensive guidebook examining the journey of a business's inception to its first sale was achieved. The narrator successfully documented the entirety of the project life cycle, which showcased the application of several academic frameworks and methodologies in real-world practice.

The project diary demonstrates the great difficulty and complexity of creating an entirely sustainable and well-organized business within the limited time period given, particularly while complying with all the quality standards of project management frameworks. Nevertheless, the thesis emphasizes that by following the strict project management structure offered by the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), by utilizing the strategically picked tools to support the daily actions, and by cohesively executing and combining all the introduced domains by following the principles of autonomic Laissez-Faire leadership methodology, achieving a result is not an impossible achievement. This claim is reinforced by the project's successful achievement of its primary goal: the creation of a business and the completion of its initial sale within a tight timeframe of 70 days.

Moreover, the project showcases an endeavor where the provided resources were effectively utilized to their fullest potential within the given setting and objectives. This is the factor that showcases the value of skillful and agile project

management in the domain of entrepreneurship, and it is something that the project manager was able to demonstrate and showcase successfully.

The benefits of the thesis extend well beyond the successful execution and completion of the project. The thorough examination and presentation of the thesis project, covering its whole life cycle as well as its comprehensive documentation, form a body of work that significantly enriches the field of project management. This academic contribution not only guides the reader through a comprehensive analysis of the diverse obstacles faced at different phases of a project but also transforms our perspective of achievement in the realms of project management and entrepreneurship.

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