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Project Management for Everyday Work

A field guide for your first useful project

Start with a clear promise. Finish with work somebody can use.

VCMP by StartMadeSimple Ltd

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Original fictional case and reusable teaching templates. Independent VCMP training; no APM, PMI or other professional accreditation is claimed.



1. Agree the promise

Before starting: write why the project matters, what you will deliver, the finish date, spending limit and the person who can accept the result.

Brief field	Willow worked example
Purpose	Run one community workshop for 24 attendees on 30 October 2026.
Scope	One workshop, arrival information, session pack and closeout record.
Outside scope	Livestreaming and a second session.
Limits	£600 spending cap. Rehearse by 28 October.
Approver	Alex approves the brief and spending changes.
Evidence	Booking confirmation, reviewed pack, attendance total and reconciled spending.

Your turn

Write three observable acceptance checks for a project of your own. Give each an evidence source and approver. Record unverified assumptions separately from confirmed facts.

Checkpoint: somebody else can explain what Done means from your brief.



2. Make the work visible

ID / task	Owner / due	Depends on	Done evidence
T01 approve brief	Alex / 13 Oct	None	Dated approval
T02 confirm venue	Lee / 15 Oct	T01	Date, price, room and access confirmed
T03 book materials	Sam / 16 Oct	T02	24 packs confirmed
T04 issue invitations	Mia / 19 Oct	T02	Correct details sent and checked
T05 rehearse	Team / 28 Oct	T03, T04	Facilitator-ready pack checked

Use four statuses

To do: ready but not started. In progress: owner actively working. Blocked: a needed input or decision is missing. Done: the agreed evidence is recorded.

Check capacity as well as dates. Effort is working time; duration also includes waiting and review. Moving a blocked card does not remove its dependency.

Checkpoint: every task has one owner, a useful next action and a clear finish.



3. Check cost and uncertainty

Baseline cost	Calculation	Amount GBP
Venue	1×240	240
Materials	24×5	120
Refreshments	24×4	96
Printing	1×24	24
Total forecast		480
Cap less forecast	$600 - 480$	120 allowance

Worked change

Accessible alternative room adds £80. Supplier alternative adds £50. $£480 + £80 + £50 = £610$: £10 over cap. Reducing refreshments by £16 produces £594 and leaves £6. Check that the reduced offer remains usable and ask Alex to authorise the decision.

Risk may happen; issue has happened

Risk: stock may be unavailable. Trigger: no confirmation by 20 October. Owner: Sam. Action: obtain an alternative quote for Alex's decision. A confirmed late delivery becomes an issue requiring action.

Checkpoint: you can trace every amount and name the owner of each response.



4. Finish with evidence and a handover

A useful update states the reporting date, approved brief version, evidence completed, forecast date and cost, main issue and the decision requested by a deadline.

Handover checklist

1. Final accepted output and version.
2. Evidence for the acceptance checks.
3. Ongoing owner and intended recipients.
4. File locations and access checked.
5. Open actions with owners and dates.
6. Instructions another person has actually followed.

Use your pack safely

Keep an untouched starter and work on a copy. Use fictional or anonymised information for learning submissions. Never place passwords or a real attendee list in a public exercise.

Take it to work

Adapt the brief and task plan to a website refresh, team onboarding pack or small operational change. Paid VCMP products are optional. If you coordinate NGO or field work, you can explore Waypoint at <https://www.startsimple-vcmp.app/waypoint>; check its current features and prices separately.

Further study

APM project management, planning and risk resources: <https://www.apm.org.uk/resources/what-is-project-management/>

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