

Steps to Completing Major Projects

Written by Steve Marr
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Tackling large projects intimidates most people. Maryann is a good example. She owned one store and wanted to open a second store, but the required clean up, modifications, and improvements stymied her for the first month. Every time she was ready to start, the enormity of the space and amount of work intimidated her, and she would simply go back to her other store.

Someone suggested that she break down the entire project into smaller bites, and then get started. She brought in a dumpster and cleared out most of the junk. The progress alone was enough to motivate Maryann to then stay on track to complete the rest of the project. Most of us need to see measurable results in our work or we tend to get discouraged and demoralized. Jeremiah wrote, "Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Mark well the path by which you came" (Jeremiah 31:21 NLT). To stay motivated, set small measurable steps you can accomplish that allow you to see your progress.

When I was writing a book, I struggled with getting started, which is a common problem. So I prepared an outline for each chapter and then began to fill in the outline, chapter by chapter. I was able to see the progress through the outline every time I wrote. This helped motivate me to get the job done. Likewise, Maryann was able to get her second store open by breaking her large 250-hour project into smaller 2 to 5-hour time increments. Each completed step encouraged and motivated her to keep going.

#1 — Write it out

When tackling a large project, write out the steps of what you will do and by when. Each step should include a benchmark. For Maryann, several of her benchmarks were: 1) get rid of the debris 2) broom sweep the place 3) update the electrical panel 4) install lighting 5) paint the walls 6) install new floor covering 7) install shelves 8) clean up the outside 9) order merchandise and 10) stock the shelves. Other steps were necessary, but as Maryann completed each step, progress was evident and she kept going.

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#2 — Make it orderly

Create an orderly process as you write out the steps. It is best to organize each step in the correct order rather than just doing any step in any order. Maryann could have started the electric work before cleaning up the place, but then the new fixtures would have gotten dirty. When God created the world, He used an orderly process, and in the correct order. The water was created before the fish, the plants before the animals, and so on.

#3 — Set benchmarks

Establishing benchmarks also helps in determining if you need a mid-term correction or if the overall project needs to be reevaluated. Maryann originally planned on opening the second store in 60 days, but with the initial month-long delay, and several additional delays, she calculated the store would open 45 days late. This helped her in ordering the needed inventory a few weeks later, which saved on paying for that inventory until she really needed it.

When Israel was taking possession of the Promised Land, the Lord said, "I will drive them out a little at a time until your population has increased enough to fill the land" (Exodus 23:30 NLT). When Moses led the people to the promised land, and Joshua led them in to take the land, the task was so big no one could imagine driving out the inhabitants and taking possession. However, with the Lord's direction, Joshua led the nation into the land step by step. By breaking down the enormous task, the people were able to see progress with each victory. Likewise, as you set your benchmarks and make progress toward big goals step by step, you will be encouraged and motivated to complete your key projects.

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