

Projects that Matter

Forward

1. What is a Christian project's purpose?
2. What is at stake?
3. What are the costs and benefits of knowing whether we are making a difference?
4. What are the six steps?

Preface

1. Why are religious organizations unique, according to Cahalan? Why else, according to you?
2. What does she say about accountability? What are possible implications of lack of accountability?
3. Who are possible end users? What is the significance of this group for you?
4. What does she say about questions?

Conclusion

1. What is the significance of the Cistercians for Cahalan? What opportunities do you see if we imitate them?
2. Stewardship: In three sentences, write the three most important ideas for you in this section.
3. Discernment: What does Cahalan identify as the components of discernment? Why is it important to project management, according to her?
4. Prudence: How does Cahalan identify prudence with action? How could prudent action benefit your current work or study behaviors?

Part One: Project Planning (pages 1-29)

Information questions

1. What is Cahalan's one line summary of the nature of project planning?
2. What are the six "elements" of a project?
3. Please identify the five key elements of project design and using a sentence for each tell me why you think they are important.

Element 1

4. How would you use Cahalan's steps to develop an assessment of your organization's mission and capacity? Be specific

Element 2

5. What is the meaning of the term "conditions," as used by Cahalan? What are the conditions of your group?
6. What concrete responses might your conditions require, using Cahalan's criteria?
7. What is the problem with unanswered questions?
8. What is the difference between a goal and objective?

Element 3

9. What are activities? What activities could you do?
10. What is a "project workplan"? How would you organize and schedule your activities?
11. What are resources? What are your resources?
12. What are "gaps"? What gaps do you have?

Element 4

13. What are results? What might your results goal be?
14. What are impacts? What might your impact goal be?
15. What is the difference between outputs and outcomes?
16. What does Cahalan say about how change and time relate?
17. Can impact goals vary in time? How?
18. Explain the relationship between impacts in various time frames.
19. What is initial impact? What might your desired initial impact be?

20. What is intermediate impact? What might your desired intermediate impact be?
21. What is long-term impact? Why might your desired long term impact be?
22. What are the benefits of defining your desired impacts for your projects? How important are they? How much time and energy do you have to spend to develop good impacts? Are the benefits worth the costs?

Element 5

23. What does Cahalan mean when she uses the term “rationale”?
24. What are the characteristics of a good rationale? What might your project rationale be?

Part Two: Evaluation as Collaborative Inquiry (pages 31- 83)

1. What are common attitudes toward evaluation?
2. What are three important dimensions of strong organizations?
3. What is Cahalan’s definition of evaluation?
4. What does an organization seek to learn from an evaluation?
5. What are formative and summative evaluations? How could you implement formative and summative evaluation in your project?
6. List six steps of project evaluation.

Step 1

7. What are four basic evaluation issues to define?
8. What might your subject, purpose and audience be for your evaluation?
9. What are key questions?
10. What are impact evaluations? Why are they challenging? How can you do an impact evaluation?

Step 2

11. What are the three major parts of an evaluation design?
12. Why is an evaluation schedule important? What are the different time frames? What simple evaluation schedule might you use for your project?

Step 3

13. What are five methods for gathering information?
14. What is the difference between quantitative and qualitative information?
15. List written materials that are helpful. Which of these might you collect for your project?
16. What is direct observation? How can you use it?
17. Why does Cahalan differentiate between inside and outside observers? Why are both valuable?
18. What types of interviews can be used? How can you use structured interviews?
19. What types of surveys can be used? Which would you use, if you used a survey?

Step 4

20. What are the two main tasks of analysis and interpretation?
21. What are the first steps of interpretation? What evaluators looking for?
22. What is quantitative analysis? What is qualitative analysis? What are the costs and benefits of each?
23. How is interpretation done?
24. Why are surprises, contradictions and missing pieces important?
25. What do you suggest when you are done your evaluation and interpretation?

Step 5

26. How can you report findings?
27. What are the elements of a formal report? How could you use a formal report to request funding for your project? Who would your audience be?

Step 6

28. What can you do to reframe your rationale, according to Cahalan?