

# How to Effectively Manage Projects & Keep Your Creative Mojo



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## Confident that you can fly by the seat of your pants?

Are you - like me - the sort of person that jumps into a new project with both feet and not a lot of planning?

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but this approach doesn't always serve us well.

We can spend a lot of time doing great stuff only to find a few weeks down the line that it's *irrelevant* great stuff.

So - while at all costs I want to avoid turning into *that person* who makes such detailed plans, they become too paralysed to take action - I've discovered there IS a happy medium.

In this post I'll show you how to quickly set clear objectives for any creative project - even your artwork - so that you'll:

- have a coherent overall vision for your project
- stop wasting time on unnecessary actions
- know exactly what to prioritise at every stage

## How I got hip to Objectives

Following the advice of some top design sites, before starting the COMPLETE redesign of my branding and website, I wrote a list of objectives for the project.

(I'll be sharing these a little later in the post.)

I hope you'll agree that the result is a really coherent, effective and resonant design.

But that isn't the only benefit. I also found my process was a lot more organised and straightforward than it usually is for big projects. Having a clear reference point meant that at every stage, I was able to check my actions against the goals I'd set for myself.

I'm now such a convert to project objectives that I want to create them for every project I do!

So how do you create objectives without going down a planning rat-hole?

It's a lot more straightforward than you think. Grab a pen and paper - or your favourite digital notebook - and let's go!

## Define Your Project

## 1. What IS your project?

Surely this is obvious? Maybe not.

Complete the sentence:

### **My project is...**

This was mine:

| “My project is to redesign my branding and my website.”

Whoah! Doesn't sound grammatically correct does it?

Although these were part of the same ultimate goal, I actually had not one, but TWO projects!

1. Branding
2. Website

Naturally, I had to do the rebranding first, in order to then apply it to the website.

It's similar when I'm making a new Artist's Book. The processes for making the cover and the pages are so different that they're essentially two projects.

By clearly defining our projects like this, we immediately understand the scope of the work involved.

| “My project is to make a 7 page hexagonal artist's book with a textured cover, which unfolds to hang on a wall.”

So go on, write that deceptively simple little sentence down:

### **My project is...**

If you have multiple projects - or multiple aspects requiring very different processes - list them separately (and in order if that's relevant).

## 2. Brainstorm Your Objectives

Now you have your 'What', you need your 'Why'.

What do you want to achieve with your project?

Here's what I came up with for my website:

- Grow my following through an stimulating and insightful blog
- Establish myself as an artist in my new genre of Artist's Books
- Increase my coaching clients
- Introduce my artwork to a new audience
- Sell my artwork in an online shop
- Strengthen and build relationships with my existing readership
- Showcase my art in an stylish and attractive way
- Attract commissions

And this is what my list looks look like for my second hexagonal Artist's Book:

- Create a piece of art the audience can touch and interact with- Practice my book-making skills- Continue to explore the integration of art deco themes in my work- Make a piece of art with a small footprint, that's lightweight and can be easily transported, but unfolds to wall size- Continue to explore the use of texture- Continue to work with watered-down acrylics in an 'ink' style- Create a companion piece to my first hexagonal book using the same theme of death and resurrection- Build my body of work in my new chosen genre of Artist's Books

If you've never thought about the why's of your creative projects before, you might find this exercise quite exciting!

Your turn. Write quickly and don't censor:

**What I want to achieve with this project is:**

...  
...  
...

### **3. Limit and Prioritise Your Objectives**

So now you've probably got a really long list of objectives and you're thinking, "How the hell am I going to achieve all that?"

The answer is you're not. Or not right now.

You're going to pick your most important objectives and focus on those. To do this answer the question:

**Achieving which of these objectives would have the biggest impact on me as an artist and/or creative entrepreneur?**

Limit this list to 3 or 4 objectives.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

For my website mine were:

- Increase the number of my coaching clients- Grow my following through an engaging and insightful blog- Showcase my art in an attractive and stylish way
- Establish myself as an artist in my new genre of Artist's Books

Prioritising doesn't mean you have to abandon your other objectives. Some goals might still be important, but not urgent for you right now.

For example, marketing my art through my website isn't a top priority for me right now because I don't have a big enough body of work in my new genre. I can add new pages or sections to my website once I've made more work.

Finally, now you have your priority objectives, list them in order of importance:

**List your top 3 or 4 objectives in order of importance:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now you have a clear idea of what your project consists of, a coherent set of objectives you want to achieve through doing it and a clear idea of which objectives to focus on first.

This is going to help you, not only to stay on track during the project but to recognise when you're finished.

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