



Practical Project Management for Busy Professionals

Needs Analysis & Course Outline

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SECTION 1: NEEDS ANALYSIS

Business Need

While no formal business need was provided with this assignment, AHF's operational environment; managing programs, grants, client services, and compliance simultaneously; reasonably supports the assumption that professional staff juggling multiple priorities lack a shared framework for intentional workload management. Without a common approach, staff are likely to rely on informal, individually developed habits that can lead to reactive behavior, missed handoffs, and reduced operational effectiveness.

Measure of Success

No success metrics were defined in the assignment. For this course, success is assumed to mean learners can apply prioritization strategies to realistic workplace scenarios, demonstrated through scenario-based assessment performance and a closing reflection in which learners commit a specific tip to a current project.

Vision

Staff leave this course with practical tools they can use immediately: moving from reactive to intentional priority management. The goal is not awareness of project management concepts, but confident application of a personal, repeatable system.

The Gap

No performance gap was explicitly identified in the assignment. However, it is reasonable to assume that AHF professional staff are hired for subject matter expertise in areas such as case management, clinical coordination, advocacy, or program administration. Prioritization skills are absorbed informally, if at all. The gap is tactical: domain competence exists; a repeatable framework for managing competing demands does not.

Learner Profile

While no audience was defined in the assignment, AHF's organizational structure suggests the likely learner is a professional staff member in a program, administrative, or client-facing role. Based on this assumption, we can reasonably characterize the learner as follows:

- Mixed experience levels, ranging from early-career to mid-career professionals
- Accustomed to role-specific and compliance training; less likely to have received formal productivity or project management training
- Completing training on a work device, likely during scheduled time, with potential for interruption
- Motivated to engage if content feels immediately applicable to their real workload; likely to disengage if the course feels generic or theoretical

SECTION 2: COURSE OUTLINE

Course Title

Sizzling Priorities: Practical Project Management for Busy Professionals

Narrative Framework

The course follows Jordan Ellis, a social media manager in her late 20s responsible for launching the Sizzling Summers campaign for a rooftop bar and grill in Nashville. Jordan is competent, creative, and under the same pressures the learner recognizes from their own work. She is not a cautionary tale, she is a model. Each course section uses a real task from Jordan's campaign to anchor one practical prioritization tip. This approach bridges adult learning theory to course design by grounding abstract concepts in a relatable, story-driven professional context.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Apply a capture method to externalize competing priorities and reduce cognitive overload
- Distinguish between urgent and important tasks using a prioritization framework
- Select an organizational system appropriate to their working style and team context
- Use time blocking, task batching, and backward planning with buffer to protect focus and manage realistic project deadlines

Course Flow and Estimated Timing

Component	Description	Est. Time
Introduction	Vyond video (first person). Jordan on the rooftop, Sizzling Summers mood board visible. She introduces herself, the campaign, and the challenge of competing priorities. Tone: warm, confident, relatable. Ends with direct address to the learner.	1.5 min
Tip 1	From Mental to Manageable	2.5 min
Tip 2	Not Everything Is Urgent	2.5 min
Tip 3	Choose Your System	2.5 min
Mid-Course Pivot	Vyond video (first person). Jordan's photography vendor cancels two weeks out. She names the competing priorities without resolving them leading directly into Tip 4.	1 min
Tip 4	Protect Your Focus and Your Timeline	2.5 min
Closing	Jordan callback via pull quote or stylized text card (no additional video). Learner reflection block: commit one tip to a current project.	1 min
Total		~13.5 min

Section Detail and Design Rationale manageable

TIP 1: FROM MENTAL TO MANAGEABLE

Campaign Anchor: Jordan maps out everything the Sizzling Summers launch requires before she can begin prioritizing.

Concept: Capture all competing demands externally before attempting to organize them. No system works if key tasks live only in memory.

Rise / Mighty Block: Rise reflective prompt; learner lists their own current top competing priorities before advancing. Low-stakes, personally relevant, immediate.

Adult Learning Theory Link: *Cognitive Load Theory: externalizing tasks frees working memory for higher-order prioritization decisions.*

TIP 2: NOT EVERYTHING IS URGENT

Campaign Anchor: Jordan's vendor, her manager, and a last-minute influencer partnership all need responses on the same afternoon.

Concept: Eisenhower Matrix; sorting tasks by urgency and importance to make deliberate, defensible prioritization decisions.

Rise / Mighty Block: Mighty branching scenario; learner chooses Jordan's response order and sees a realistic consequence for each choice. Immediate feedback tied to real-world impact.

Adult Learning Theory Link: *Situated Learning and Experiential Relevance: learners recognize the scenario from their own work, increasing transfer.*

TIP 3: CHOOSE YOUR SYSTEM

Campaign Anchor: Jordan evaluates how she will track 12 moving pieces across a six-week campaign timeline.

Concept: Organizational method spectrum: formal tools (Asana, Monday.com), semi-formal (Excel, Sheets), freeform (whiteboard, sticky notes). No single right answer; match the system to your working style and team context.

Rise / Mighty Block: Rise tabs block; learner explores each option at their own pace, with pros, cons, and best-fit profile for each.

Adult Learning Theory Link: *Andragogy and Learner Autonomy: adults bring existing preferences and habits; presenting a spectrum respects that rather than prescribing a single tool.*

TIP 4: PROTECT YOUR FOCUS AND YOUR TIMELINE

Campaign Anchor: Jordan plans her shoot week using time blocking, then recovers from a vendor cancellation two weeks out using backward planning.

Concept: Time blocking and task batching protect deep work time. Backward planning with intentional buffer prevents reactive replanning when disruptions occur. These two concepts are presented together because buffer is the natural extension of intentional scheduling.

Rise / Mighty Block: Rise labeled graphic where Jordan's weekly schedule visualized; learner identifies protected blocks and buffer windows. Followed by a brief comparison layout showing a timeline with and without buffer.

Adult Learning Theory Link: *Self-Regulation Theory: intentional structure reduces decision fatigue. Kolb's Reflective Observation: learners compare two outcomes to surface insight before applying the concept.*