

TIPS & TECHNIQUES  
The First Quarter's Over!  
Do You Know Where Your Goals Are?

*By Michelle LaBrosse  
(This paper distributed through Cheetah's Know How Network)*

Remember that strategic plan you wrote in December or January? Or even your New Year's Resolutions? Did you write them down and file them somewhere or are they hidden in one of those infamous piles we all have?

If you filed them and there's some dust on them, not to worry. We're going to give you five keys to rejuvenating your goals at any step of the way. Remember, successful people don't always get it right the first time. They keep trying. As renowned coach Vince Lombardi said: "It's not whether you get knocked down; it's whether you get back up." Project Management is a life skill that shows you how to get back up and stay on the road to success.

**Five Keys to Give Your Goals some Get Up and Go**

**1) Know Your Top Priority**

Look back at your goals or resolutions. What has changed since you wrote them? Are your priorities or the priorities of your organization different now? This is where a Project Agreement is an invaluable tool. A project agreement is a living document. When life changes, as it often does, document the changes in your project agreement and adjust your timeline and tactics accordingly.

To keep a project moving fast, the project team, team leader and project sponsor all have to remove or prevent obstacles that may get in the way of the project's success.

The first step is to set up the project correctly so that it is built for speed and efficacy. This means getting the team aligned on what is required to do the project: setting up the project agreement and project plan together, and then agreeing on the overall project priorities

## 2) Identify What’s Getting in the Way of Your Success

What’s getting in your way? Here are some common project blockages and how to remove them and get back on the road to success.

Blockage	Removal
<p><b>“Feature Creep.”</b> You keep adding new features trying to make the end result better, but time is running out and your team is restless.</p>	<p>Use a change impact matrix. You can also freeze the design of the product or service, including the set of features, at a specified time in the project. The earlier this is done, the faster your project will move. Save your future feature ideas as upgrade possibilities for later versions of the product or service.</p>
<p><b>A Broken Team.</b> Is your team broken and no longer communicating or working from the same set of goals?</p>	<p>An inability to work together towards a common goal comes from lack of commitment, lack of interaction, and a lack of interest in constructively resolving conflict. Many projects also lose and gain people during the execution of the project. When this happens, it is important that the team spend a half hour together developing their new team guidelines and meeting protocols. With any new people joining the team, it becomes a new team. Re-developing your guidelines and protocols is done for the same reason it is done initially – to facilitate working relationships, to create a way to positively interact, and to prevent destructive conflict.</p>
<p><b>Lack of Focus.</b> Is there too much multi-tasking going on or are people overscheduled?</p>	<p>If people are working on multiple projects, it’s best if they set aside blocks of time to focus on one task at a time.</p> <p>If people are too over-scheduled, they become less effective. Let the team members create a schedule that they can do in a normal workweek and still</p>

	have some time to breathe and live their life outside of work.
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### 3) Be a Bureaucracy Buster

Envision yourself as a business ninja who breaks down time-consuming bureaucracy at every turn. In your personal life, this could be tasks in your home that can be automated, but are not. Are still paying your bills manually or are you saving time and paying them online? In business, when you identify bureaucratic time wasters and get rid of them, the entire team will operate more effectively.

### 4) Create Calm Instead of Chaotic Work Environments

How long does it take you to find the information you need to get your job done? Clutter, on your desk and on your computer, slows down project work. It is also distracting and causes multi-tasking. A calm work environment helps people to focus and use their energy to get things done. Ask your team members what you can do in your office to make the environment more effective for them. The changes are often small, but can reap big rewards.

### 5) Give Your Project Heart

Is your project like the Tin Man looking for a heart? Here are some ideas to infuse some humanity into your project:

- **Passion.** Give people a reason to be passionate about it. What is the outcome of their work going to be? What is the impact, what will the success look like, and how will it feel when they've finished?
- **Pause.** Celebrate the successes along the way as you reach key milestones. This gives people time to pause and realize what they've accomplished, and gives them the fuel to keep going.
- **Recognition.** "Thank you" are two words that go a long way. Show your gratitude to your team members regularly and in front of others. Do it with authenticity. When you let others shine, the light reflects on you, too.

### It's Never Too Late.

It's never too late to be more effective. Use the Five Keys to reinvigorate your project or your personal goals. If you need more Project Management prowess, consider becoming PMP® certified. It's one achievement that will pay you handsomely with a solid foundation to build on for every goal to come. Here's to the second quarter. Go get 'em!

*"PMP" is a registered certification mark of the Project Management Institute, Inc.*



## Michelle LaBrosse

Author



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is the founder of Cheetah Learning, and author of *Cheetah Negotiation* and *Cheetah Project Management*.

The Project Management Institute (PMI®) recently selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World, and only one of two women selected from the training and education industry. She was featured in the October 2006 issue of PM Network Magazine, and also graduated from the Harvard Business School's Owner President Managers (OPM) program in March 2006. She created the origins of the Cheetah Project Management methodology as an Air Force Officer in the mid 80's. In 1995, she prototyped the concept of accelerating learning using "virtual classrooms," to accelerate the way people learned and applied core business skills. As a corporate research scientist in systems engineering and adult learning for a large multinational corporation, she later created and tested a one-day approach to teaching Project Management. This approach would later evolve to become Cheetah Project Management, a fast and effective way of launching projects. Today, she is the leader of the course development team at Cheetah and sets the strategic direction for the company. Using the Cheetah Project Management techniques, LaBrosse has grown the company from three employees in 2000 to more than 100 in 2006. Cheetah is now the global leader in Project Manager Professional Development. Her articles have appeared in publications such as: *European CEO Magazine*, *Plant Engineering Magazine*, *Industrial Engineer Magazine*, *Control Engineering Magazine*, *Journal of the American Association for Medical Transcription JAAMT*, *NSSEA Essentials Magazine*, *ASTN Network Magazine*, *Radio Sales Today*, *Sprinkler Quarterly & Technology Magazine*, *The Federal Credit Union Magazine Online*, *Business Quarterly Online*, *American Society of Landscape Architects*, *ACRP Wire Association of Clinical Research Professionals*, *American Council of Engineering Companies Association* and more. With a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering, and an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, LaBrosse has done extensive postgraduate work with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Educational Studies and with the University of Washington Industrial Engineering Program in accelerating adult learning with respect to meeting core business objectives. She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you'll often find her kayaking, golfing or hiking.