TEN PARAGRAPHS FOR A PROJECT PLAN

Writing a simple plan for a project or campaign—even just a page or two makes for better execution. Why? The writing forces more careful thinking, allows for better coordination between team members, and memorializes our best thinking. They also are helpful in getting approvals from the boss and other team members. Respond to these ten points below (pausing as needed to reflect, or to carry out research or discussions with others), and you’ll be on your way to having a good plan. Once approved, I always advise summarizing the plan into the One Page Business Plan format—ideal for looking back on the plan each month to stay focused and to track progress.

1. Describe the project/campaign in general terms. (75 words)
2. What is the purpose of the plan? What are we trying to achieve?
3. Who will lead execution of the plan? Who else will be on the team?
4. Why is it essential that we carry out this plan? What is at stake if we do not?
5. List all of the activities that need to be executed to succeed in the plan, in rough chronological order. Put start and finish dates for each task.   
   1. Also list the key decisions that will need to be made, and when (things like price, location, selection of partners/vendors, product features, etc.)
   2. Also list all the things we decided we WILL NOT do (so we won’t have to debate them again).
6. What are the dependencies for this plan? List each person, departments, event or situation, or other thing upon which you will depend for the success of this plan.
7. What resources – both time and money – will be required to execute the plan? Be specific as to timing as well.
8. What are the contingencies that might affect this plan? Certain things that if they do happen, or don't happen, will change this plan?
9. How will we know that this plan has succeeded? What can we measure that will show the level of success, or lack thereof?
10. What are the biggest risks that are faced in executing this plan?