Work Plan Development

1. Read through all of the goals and objectives developed as part of the retreat. Try to determine which goal the project would fit under. Make sure that the project you are planning is not duplicated somewhere else in the list. If there is a similar project, try to understand exactly what the difference is. Can the other project be included as part of the steps of this project? If yes, try to integrate that project into the work plan.

2. Look closely at the specific wording of the project. Does it fit the criteria established at the retreat for objectives—is it measurable, fundamental, attainable? If necessary, rewrite the statement to fit these criteria.

3. Get a general idea of the scope of the project before you begin the work plan. Is this clearly one of the top priority projects for your organization, and as such requires as much time as is necessary to complete the project? Or is it one of many priorities that must share equally for the organization's resources? Get a clear idea in your own mind about the size and scope of the project.

4. Make a list of all of the necessary tasks required to complete the project. List them all. Don't use general descriptions — be very specific. Each step should be an individual task, something that you could assign to someone all by itself and could be completed. Combine tasks that clearly can fit into one description, and will be done by one person. Break out all of the others.

   Example for a newsletter work plan:

   > ***Well defined tasks:***   "Assign articles to writers"
   > "Write articles"

   > ***Poorly defined tasks:***   "Get articles"
   > "Put together newsletter"

5. List all of the tasks on a copy of a blank work plan. Use several sheets if necessary. Put the tasks down according to their logical sequence.

Work Plan Development (continued)

6. Assign responsibility for all of the tasks to an individual person. In several cases, more than one person will actually be involved on the project, but only one person can be the task coordinator. Contact people who have shown an interest in the project to see if they are interested in helping on that particular task. Give them a general idea of the task responsibilities and timing. If you do not know of someone willing to accept responsibility for the task, leave it blank.

7. Figure out approximately when the task will need to be completed. In many cases, this step is best accomplished starting from the last task and moving to the first. Juggle these times according to holidays and other key events.

8. Identify which tasks are going to require money. If possible, estimate the cost of the task. If you are unable to determine the specific costs for the project, note that it will require money somewhere on the worksheet.

9. Look at the entire work plan and give it a reality check. Is this everything? Is this realistic? What are the chances of this project happening according to the work plan? What possible problems or situations might change the work plan, and how likely is it that the change will be necessary? How can you adjust the work plan to make it more workable and realistic?

10. Give the work plan to someone who has not seen the project before. Do they understand it? Does it clearly explain what is going to be done, and how? Incorporate any suggested changes into the work plan.

11. Submit the work plan to the committee for their review. The projects should be reviewed to see that they are consistent with the committee's purpose, and compatible with the other projects developed within the committee. All suggestions that can make the projects more effective should be incorporated into the plans.