APPENDIX E. HOW DO I RUN A PHASE PLANNING TEAM SESSION?

This appendix describes how you might conduct a phase planning session (or “mini-workshop”) with your project team (working level) or program team (managers). Include all the programmatic and technical leaders for the project and phase.

Schedule it towards the end of the current phase. You’ll need to have a clear idea of what objectives you will have accomplished by the end of the current phase. On the other hand you’ll want to finish the planning session for the next phase before that phase starts so that you can focus on the technical work there as soon as the current phase is completed.

E.1 Advance Preparation Activities

Before you conduct a phase planning session with your team there are preparations to be made. Start far enough in advance to ensure that you have a successful meeting. The session location and schedule need to facilitate concentration on planning activities and minimize interruptions. The major preparation activities are outlined below.

Identify Facilitator

- The facilitator can be from the CVISN Team or can be an outside resource. A facilitator’s role is to run the meeting so that the Project Leader can feel free to participate in the discussions about the project rather than be distracted with the process of the meeting itself.

Arrange Session Logistics

- Attendees – be sure to invite the leaders of each major effort.
- Invitations – written invitations are better than verbal ones where details can be forgotten; use e-mail or your organization’s electronic calendar.
- Meeting Space:
    - ❑ A room to seat the entire group.
    - ❑ Tables and chairs or other arrangement that allows the group to optionally work in breakout subgroups.
    - ❑ Room equipped with computer and projector, screen, easels with paper, and markers.
    - ❑ Objectives, WBS, work assignments and phase schedule posted on walls and/or copies for all attendees.
    - ❑ Equipment and supplies for small group breakouts.
- Agenda – an example is provided later in this appendix.
- Schedule – no longer than 2 days; often one day or less.
- Break and meal supplies.

Notify Participants

- Advise participants of proposed schedule and agenda.
- Determine whether all participants will be needed in all of the sessions or whether there will be specified breakout sessions for subgroups of participants.
- Obtain confirmation of participation.
- Include technical resources outside the state CVISN team such as contractors, when appropriate. (Such resources could participate in the whole meeting or only in portions where they contribute technical and schedule information.)

Distribute Pre-Work

- Develop and distribute whatever pre-work materials and instructions that will help kick-start the session itself.
- Identify any up-front analysis that must be completed before the session begins.

E.2 Phase Planning Session Activities

The phase planning session consists of three main stages, as shown in Figure E-1.

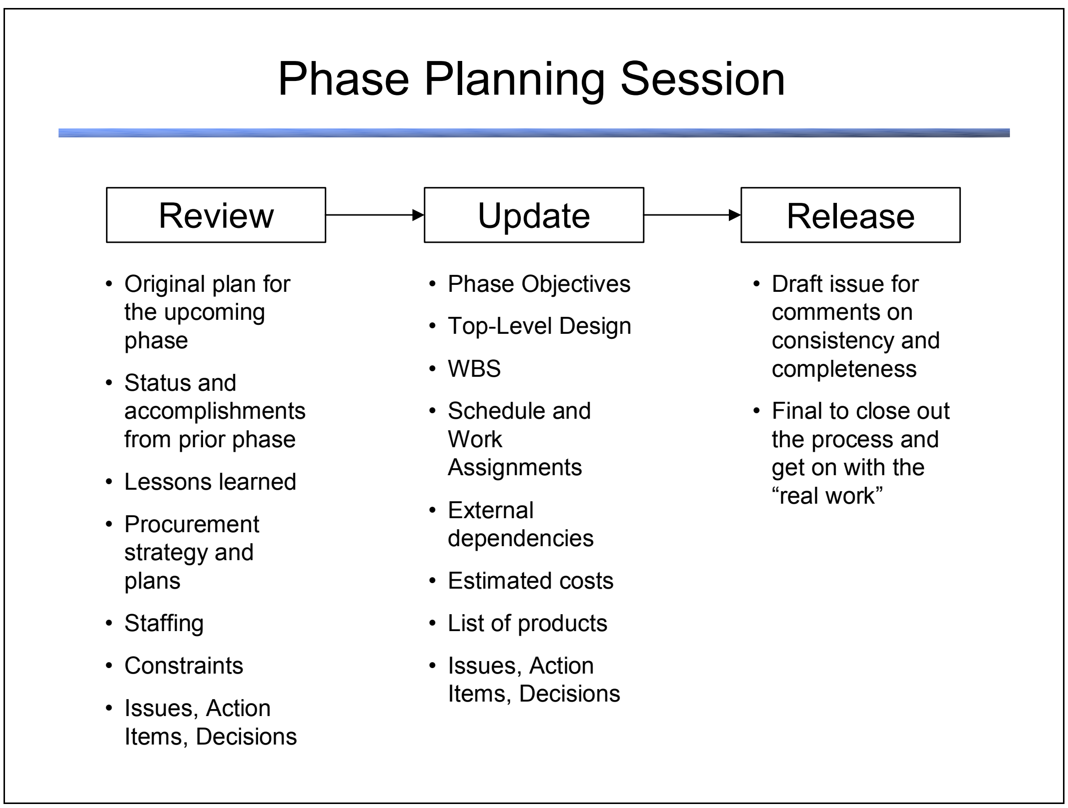

Figure E-1 Phase Planning Session Activity Breakdown

For the "review" and "release" stages, you'll probably want to keep the whole team together. For the "update" stage, you'll need to assess whether the work is best accomplished with the whole team together, or whether it would be more effective to break the group into smaller subgroups to discuss details and update their part of the plan.

Each of the activities is discussed in some detail below.

Review

As you think about what the upcoming phase entails, begin by reviewing your original plans and where you are now. Here's a list of what you might want to look at or think about:

- Original plan for the upcoming phase: Back at the beginning of the project, what did you think you would be doing in this phase? Are the COACH commitments, goals, builds, and assignments still valid?
- Status and accomplishments from the prior phase: As you wrap up the current phase, where are you? What did you accomplish? Was that more or less than you planned? How should the outcome of the current phase affect the next phase?
- Lessons learned: Study both your successes and shortcomings. Appendix F has some ideas about how to collect lessons learned.
- Procurement strategy and plans: What do you need to procure? What's the philosophy that guides how you will accomplish the procurements? Are there existing subcontracts that should be closed or renewed? What else?
- Staffing: Identify any problem areas or needs.
- Constraints: Are there any new regulations or external forces that should be accounted for as you update the plan for this phase?
- Issues, Action Items, Decisions: Revisit what you've said before; face the issues that affect this phase; make sure action items that involve the objectives for this phase have been closed.

Update

You may want to divide the team into smaller sub-teams to make the updates. A reminder list is given below:

- Phase objectives – Refine what you originally planned, including shifting any unmet objectives from previous phases.
- WBS – Extend and flesh out the lower-level details.
- Schedule and Work Assignments – Identify the start time (or criteria) and duration for every task in the phase. Make sure that every task in the phase is assigned to someone.
- External dependencies – Check the status of external deliveries or other external dependencies (specifications, data), and update the expected dates in your own schedule. Be sure that the linkages between external dependencies and project tasks are correct.

- Estimated costs – Re-figure the estimate to complete the phase, and make sure that you have adequate funds to keep the team going.
- List of products – Make sure that the tangible products of the phase are included in the WBS. Every major deliverable should be included as well as support products such as documentation. Some deliverables could also be highlighted as milestones for extra visibility.
- Issues, Action Items, and Decisions – Update the lists to show new assignments, closures, and progress or stuck-points, as shown in Figure E-2.

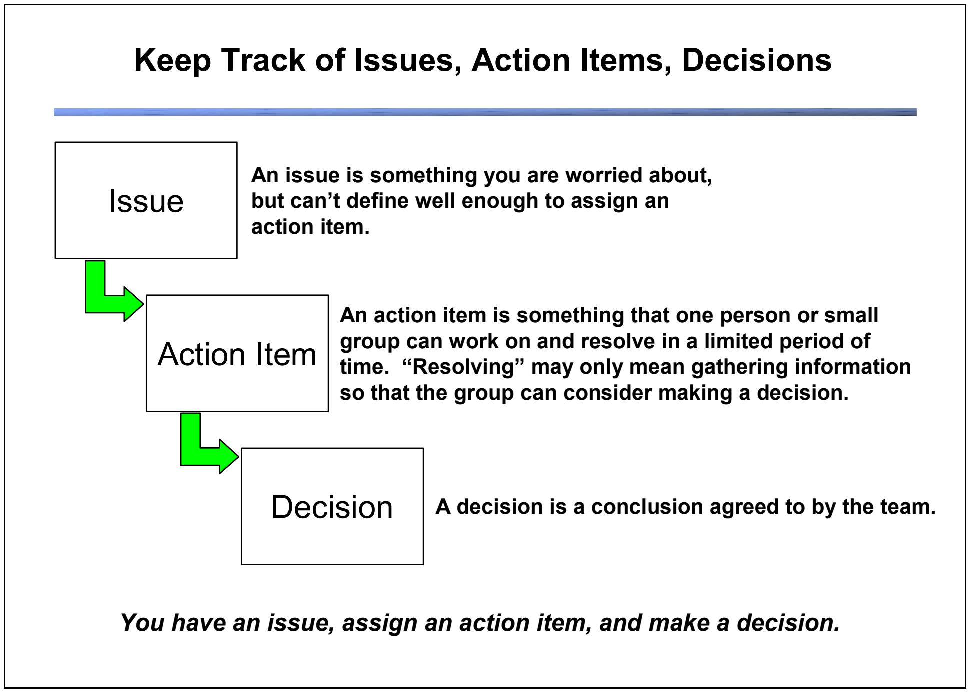

Figure E-2 Maintain an Informal Database of Issues, Action Items, Decisions

Release

Once the updates have been made, you should gather them together and make sure that there are no conflicts, and that everything is internally consistent.

In some phases you may have detailed information that you also want to summarize for external distribution. For instance, you may want to summarize the status of your interoperability testing for the benefit of an external audience.

If the phase coincides with a fiscal planning cycle, you may need to summarize past and estimated future financial information such as labor, travel, subcontracts, and other direct costs. Related to that would be your organization's need to formally enter anticipated budget needs for future fiscal years. It is not unusual to have a 2-year planning horizon for funding requirements.

The next section contains a sample agenda for a phase planning session. You should adjust the agenda topics and durations based on what makes sense and works well for your program or project.

E.3 Sample Agenda for Phase Planning Team Work Session

Day 1

8:00-8:30	Coffee Available
8:30-8:45	Introductions & Overview of Schedule
8:45-10:00	Review of Key Milestones, Planned versus Actual Activities, Issues
10:00-10:15	Break
10:15-10:45	Lessons Learned Session
10:45-11:15	Update on Credentials Administration Systems
11:15-11:30	Update on Safety Systems
11:20-12:00	Review Phase Plan Methodology & Contents
12:00-12:45	Working Lunch Provided
12:45-2:25	Update/Develop Phase Objectives, Implementation Steps, and Milestones (Breakouts)
2:25-2:40	Break
2:40-3:10	Report Back to Group
3:10-3:25	Lessons Learned Gathering and Multivoting (prioritizing)
3:25-3:30	Day 1 Wrap-up

Day 2

8:00 - 8:30	Coffee Available
8:30 - 8:35	Overview of Day's Schedule
8:35 - 8:45	Lessons Learned Results Presentation
8:45-10:00	Update System Design (Breakouts & Report Back to Group)
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 12:00	Update WBS & Phase Products (Breakouts & Report Back to Group)
12:05 - 12:45	Working Lunch Provided
12:45 - 1:30	Update Phase Resources
1:30 - 2:30	Update Phase Schedule, External Dependencies, & Work Assignments
2:15 - 2:30	Break
2:30 - 3:00	Report Back to Group – Phase Schedule & External Dependencies
3:00 - 3:20	Report Back to Group – Work Assignments
3:20 - 3:30	Planning Session Wrap Up

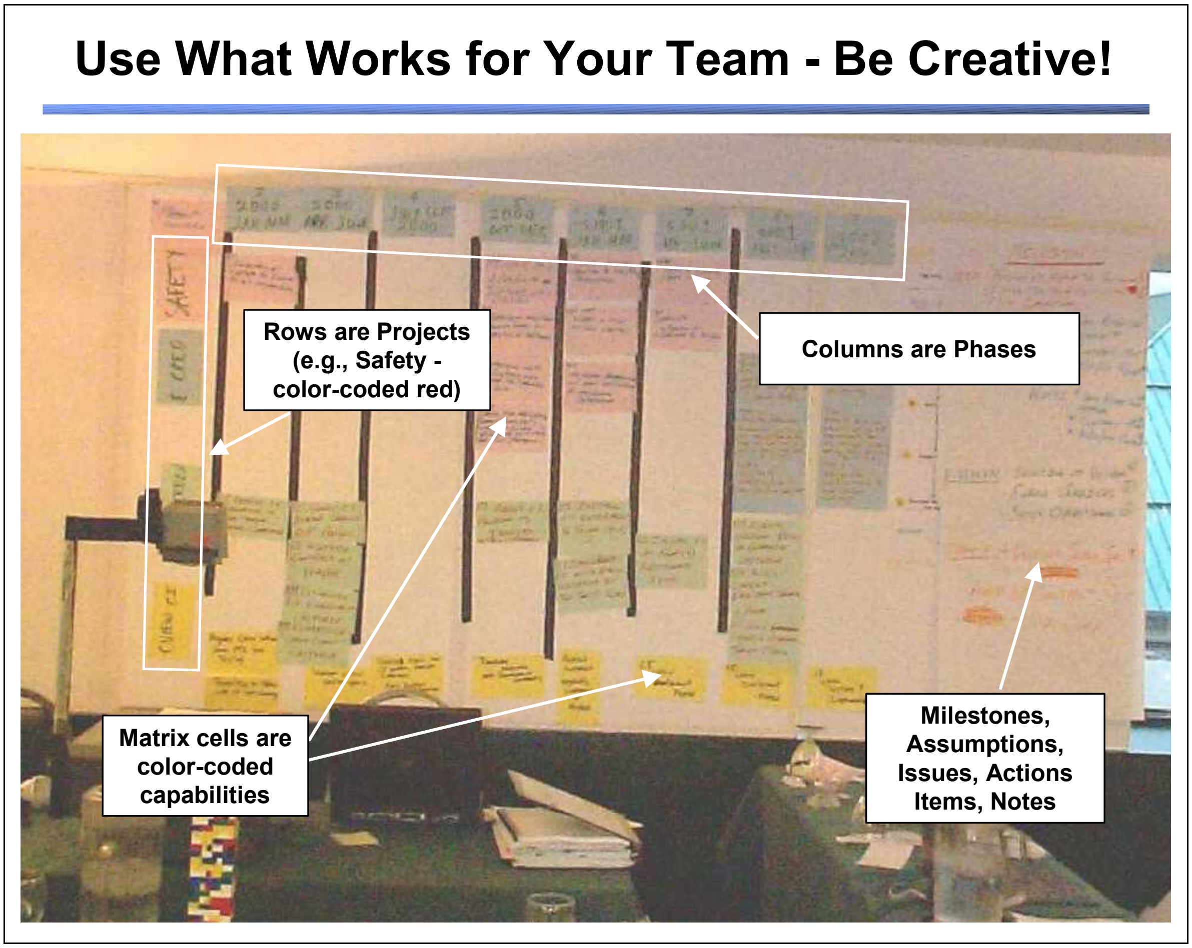

Figure E-3 Simple Tools Will Work Fine

Although there are many fine computer-assisted planning tools, simple tools, such as that shown in Figure E-3, work fine and allow the whole team to participate. That photo shows how some state teams at CVISN Planning Workshops used a white wall and construction paper to create this planning matrix for their breakout sessions.