

Project Selection and Prioritization

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain in your own words the strategic planning and portfolio management processes.
- Compare strengths and weaknesses of using financial and scoring models to select projects.
- Describe how to select, prioritize, and resource projects as an outgrowth of strategic planning.
- Given organizational priorities and several projects, demonstrate how to select and prioritize projects using a scoring model.
- From a contractor's viewpoint, describe how to secure projects.



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How does a truly global company with fewer than 200 associates achieve noteworthy results and market leadership? Certainly strong and talented people are a key part of the answer. A good set of leadership and management tools and processes, and the discipline to use them, is another key. A small, privately held company in Louisville, Kentucky, has been fortunate to use both talent and process to achieve success by any measure. That company is D. D. Williamson.

D. D. Williamson was founded in 1865 and today is a global leader in non-artificial colors. Operating nine facilities in six countries and supplying many of the best-known food and beverage companies around the world, D. D. Williamson has more complexity to manage than most companies, regardless of their size.

Topics:

- Portfolio management
- Program management
- Projects and strategic planning
- Source selection criteria
- Statement of work
- Business case

Phase: Selecting	Initiating	Planning	Executing	Closing	Realizing
	Selection	Charter	Kickoff	Project	Administrative
Approval:	To Proceed				
			Result	Closure	Realized
			Project	Administrative	Benefits

D. D. Williamson identified the need to improve project management as a key strategy to achieve the vision. Our weakness was twofold—we had too many projects, and the projects that were active were sometimes late, over budget, and not achieving the desired results. We began by creating a prioritization matrix to select 16 “critical projects” that would have senior leadership sponsors and be assigned trained and capable project managers to improve our execution.

The prioritization matrix was a great initial step to narrow our focus and improve our results—overall project completion improved. However, 16 projects meant that the scope and impact of projects still had wide variation. Smaller, simpler projects were likely to be executed brilliantly and improve our total percentage of “on time and on target” projects, but if the project that was late or over budget was very high impact, we were still leaving opportunities for growth and profitability on the table.

We next improved our prioritization process, selecting no more than five “Vision Impact Projects” (VIPs) that would get high-level focus and attention—monitoring and asking for corrective measures in weekly senior management meetings, tracking online in our project management system for our Continuous Improvement Manager, and tunneling time and resources to help when projects get off course.

The results are dramatic—large and complicated projects are getting the attention and resources and are achieving our strategic target of “on time, on budget and on target” regularly. Our successes have positioned D. D. Williamson to continue to do what we do best—serve customers effectively, grow our business, and return strong financial results to ensure a solid future for the business.

Elaine Gravatt, Chief People Officer and North American President, D. D. Williamson