

Nuke *the* Elephant

FROM FREELANCER TO
PROJECT RINGMASTER



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SECTION 1:

TAKING CHARGE



CHAPTER ONE: Bottling the Magic

1. How do you define “creative professional”? What qualities and traits come to mind?

2. I recommend getting yourself a copy of the book StrengthsFinder 2.0 and doing the assessment to determine and build upon your professional strengths and gain awareness of areas that can be improved upon.

3. What’s the most frustrating client job you’ve worked on and what did you learn from the experience?

4. What would you have done as project ringmaster on the “Janice, Steve & Dan” project in the case study? How would you have gotten the project back on track?

5. What are your biggest concerns about becoming ringmaster of a big creative project (high profile, lots of money at stake, lots of people and moving parts, etc.)?



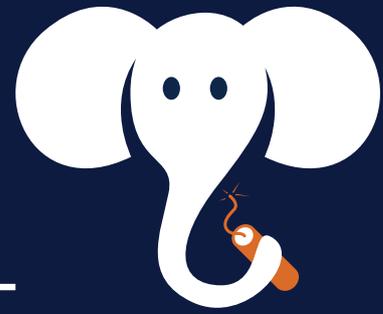
CHAPTER TWO: A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

1. What do you love (or at least like) about science and math? Even if those subjects weren't exactly your favorite in school - what are the positives?

2. What do science and creativity have in common? How are they different? How do they complement each other?

3. In this chapter's case study, how would you have addressed client Jim's initial doubts and concerns about the project & your ability to make it a success?

4. What lessons did you learn about this case study?



CHAPTER THREE: NUKING THE ELEPHANT

1. What big potential project “elephant” scares you the most? What can you do in advance to prepare for the possibility of experiencing it?

2. Which past project elephants have trampled over you? What did you learn?

3. Which past project elephants have you conquered? What did you learn?



SECTION 2:

MEGA PROJECTS, MEGA PROBLEMS



CHAPTER FOUR: HOW TO ENGINEER CREATIVITY

1. Make a list of ALL your stress coping mechanisms and post it visibly somewhere in your workspace to draw from as needed (before the meltdowns!).

2. Print the worksheet on the following page and use for future projects!



CHAPTER FOUR: HOW TO ENGINEER CREATIVITY

3. What is your favorite scheduling tool? How strict are you about putting EVERYTHING into it - appointments, tasks, benchmarks, deadlines - and leaving nothing to chance? (If it's not on your calendar it's significantly less likely to get done on time!)

4. What is your process of managing deadlines and project schedules?

5. Look at all the moving parts in the types of projects you typically work on (or aim to in the future!): Is there a missing process that needs to be added to make things run more smoothly?

6. Research as thoroughly as possible and choose a PM tool that best serves your projects and your personal technology & project management style.



CHAPTER FIVE: HOW TO TALK TO HUMANS

1. How would you rate your interpersonal communication skills on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best)? What education, training, etc. could you invest in to improve?

2. Why should business be “strictly business” with no personal feelings involved?

3. Why should business always be personal?

4. Where can you draw the line between the two and strike a balance?



CHAPTER FIVE: HOW TO TALK TO HUMANS

5. Define your overall communication policies clearly and then write them down. For instance, in which situations you use email, frequency, texting policies, when social media is appropriate, client boundaries, etc. This is not necessarily to share with others, but rather to help YOU stay consistent, especially when the elephants start stampeding mid-project!

6. How comfortable are you with the “money conversation”? Here are some book recommendations in the domain of “money mindset” in case you need some help in this area:

“All the Money in the World: What the Happiest People Know About Wealth” by Laura Vanderkam.

“Money Magic: Unleashing Your True Potential for Prosperity and Fulfillment” by Deborah L. Price

“You’re a Badass at Making Money” by Jen Sincero

“Pilot to Profit” by Lisa Larter.



CHAPTER SIX: HOW TO ROW TOGETHER

1. What traits and skills do you already have that make you the perfect person to “herd cats” (deal with mega projects and mega personalities gone awry)? Which would you like to learn? What is your plan for working on this?

2. What are the best leadership/project management stories you've heard? Whether how a movie director “saved” a film (or sunk it), a famous military battle story, a CEO/business tale or otherwise - seek out some stories and write down what you can learn from them?

3. How can you strengthen your inner resolve & ability to stay calm in chaos (a mind-body practice such as meditation, knowledge, other tools, etc.)?

4. Communication Challenge: Before hitting send on your next few emails, see how you can shorten them to 5 sentences or fewer while still getting your point across.



CHAPTER SEVEN: HOW TO SURVIVE INFERNOS

1. What's the BIGGEST project inferno you've ever been a part of (not necessarily in charge of)? What lessons did you learn, even from the sidelines?

2. How do you exercise self forgiveness and self compassion? It's better to know the answer to this now BEFORE you're in a "self beating up" situation.

3. Is there a self forgiveness process you can put in place now, before the beatings commence? (Ex. Allow self blaming only until you see the lesson, then stop it immediately and move on.)

4. How do you build your humor muscles? Are there funny books, movies, YouTube videos, you indulge in on a regular basis? How do you practice "finding the funny" so the muscle is there when you need it in times of project nuking crises?



CHAPTER EIGHT: HOW TO DO BETTER NEXT TIME

Print the following checklist and fill out with your team each time you close out a project.

Debrief Checklist

For you and your team:

1. Which existing processes need to be adjusted? How?
2. What processes and procedures were missing?
3. Which people/roles were missing?
4. What training, additional knowledge, or skills are needed (for anyone you'll be working with again, but most importantly for yourself)?
5. Which problems resulted from someone not having access to the information, resources, or current status updates at any time?
6. Is there any type of automation or technology that could benefit our processes next time?
7. What additional tasks or services can be added to the project next time to add value for the client?

For the client to answer:

1. On a scale of one to ten (one being “disaster” and ten being “stress-free smooth sailing”), how smoothly did this project going for you?
2. Where could we improve?
3. Are there any services or value-adds that you would have liked to see included in your project?
4. Any other feedback for us?



Christine Whitmarsh

Bestselling Author, Speaker, CEO & Entrepreneur

About Christine

Bestselling celebrity ghostwriter Christine Whitmarsh helps authors, speakers, entrepreneurs, and high profile personalities develop, write and promote books that make a difference in the lives of their readers. A ghostwriter since 2001, Christine has worked with traditional and independent publishing companies including Simon & Schuster and Penguin Books USA. In addition to penning dozens of titles for her clients, Christine is the #1 Amazon bestselling author of the content marketing book *Personal Paparazzi: Your Brand Story Told Your Way*, the novel *Canyon Road* and the book *Nuke the Elephant: From Freelancer to Project Ringmaster*; a project management guide for freelancers looking to level up in their careers. Her memoir *The Power of the Curve* is in progress.

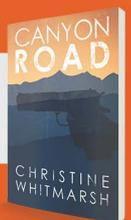
The Ink Agency, Christine's creative agency of professional writers and book strategists has served clients worldwide since 2003. The Ink Agency helps clients write, publish and promote extraordinary books that drive powerful personal and professional brands.

Christine resides in Jacksonville Beach, Florida with her husband Mike and their four legged friends Gracie and Troy. When not changing the world with books she enjoys beach walks and is a student of the aerial arts.

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