

Exposé

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COLUMN A

In the project structuring phase 0, you as the project manager have to mediate or sell your still incomplete project to involved actors and clients. Products such as a brochure, leaflet or prospectus gather the necessary information briefly and concisely and can be brought into play as media to gain access to decisive project management arenas. These products can be summarized under the term “exposé”. On this page, the exposé is to be laid out on its theoretical-conceptual foundations in the Modes of Play practical form.

ABOUT COLUMN A

We have already learned in the theoretical-conceptual basics of the e-Learning arrangement Project Management in Urban Design that the exposé is part of the semantics respectively supports exploring all kinds of uncertain aspects of a yet to be realized project in the iterative phases (A) coming into play and (B) how to play.

Writing an exposé is an intermediate step in a project. Often it is practical or necessary to acquire further resources and to communicate the planned project as realizable and opening up potentials through its realization. Even if the exact allocation of phases and scopes of services at the beginning of a project is vague, we can locate the exposé as part of the project conception. The project exposé summarizes all notations in relation to the project motif at a time set in the extended project team and provides an overview of the content of the project and how you want to implement it over time. It serves to present the project in its present and future aspects and should provide orientation to the motivated or still to be motivated actors in the uncertainty of the project conception.

In what relation and position to the field do you write an exposé?

Depending on the addressees and situation within or vis-à-vis a project, the content and formal centralities may differ. Before and during the exposé writing process, it makes sense to consider who the exposé is aimed at and what exactly you want to achieve with it. On the one hand, avoid

working towards a “smallest common denominator” or writing your project or the motif in “simple language” or even in the language of other actors. On the other hand, avoid arguing from an avant-garde perspective that only keeps itself alive by not really opening up what drives or is supposed to drive it as well as others. It seems obvious to *describe* the projected aspects of your project in the way you plan to carry them out.

The exposé should provide a framework for the articulation of the project motif for all foreseeable and unforeseeable situations in the project conception for the actors and aspects of the project that are yet to be motivated. Similar to exposés for ethnographic research studies, an exposé has to fulfil four functions: it should be explorative, explanatory, descriptive and enabling (cf. Creswell 2005). Reduce the guesswork around your project. At the beginning of a project there are not only the factors location, project idea and chapter (AHO 2006, 91), there is also a reflective and questioning process, which is finally synthesized in the form of a motif. Here, too, it is worth looking at the process of projecting ethnographic research projects in order to come into play. What in Project Management in Urban Design we call the motif is transposed into the research question. “Good questions do not necessarily produce good research, but poorly conceived or constructed questions will likely create problems that affect all subsequent stages of a study” (Agee 2009, 431). After initial and always provisional notations of your motive or interest, “projective participants or actors are sometimes invited to participate in the formulation of research questions, especially in participatory action research. All stakeholders - those whose lives are affected by the problem under investigation (problematization) - should be involved in the process of investigation” (Stringer 2007, 11). Studies that are “reciprocal” (Lawless 2000) or “collaborative” (Lassiter 2005), in which a researcher collaborates with the participants as co-researchers in order to help shape representations, correspond much more to an understanding of urban production.

How can we write an exposé without knowing about the necessary actors and resources, and without having discussed them with the actors? Here the idea of the motive seems to offer a certain workaround: As a project manager, you are involved in an evolving urban situation. The articulation of integrating this performance into the project world spurs your project to structurally orient towards a processual emergence of the project work. For the time being, it centers what is at stake in the relationship between process and product - for you and other actors involved. This interacts at all times with the assemblage of the urban situation around a concern that brings the fragile and brittle aspects of a situation into the focus of the project manager, especially at the beginning of projects - the project structuring phase. The motif's – and its articulation's – strength is its motive aspect and its capacity to remain ambivalent: while often being understood as causal

telos, it is better described as a structural hub, an anchor for rhizomatic structures. The motif drives the process, and it is intersubjective, relational. As an affective structure it introduces a moving vector that is always subject to change.

“Have meaningful conversations about writing life” (Adams 2008, 188). Adams encourages us that these conversations should certainly begin with the formulation of research questions, yet they can also take place during and after the research process. Answers are seldom readily available in the field. Your exposé should also highlight relevant aspects of a situation to enable yourself and participants to problematize this situation. Project managers are expected to actively and reciprocally translate between the situation as found and the project.

Take Exposé

Write one to three pages of text, schedule and representation of the project on site.

The following structure may provide orientation.

(0) Project title

A) Locate (1) your project in the urban initial situation. (2) Your motive and the (3) research question expose your interest and rationale in undertaking this project.

B) In the next paragraph, show what you strategically propose (hypothesis), say how you theoretically contextualize it and methodologically ground it within the relevant research and practice fields.

C) Then operationalize your methods, tools, theory and discourse by giving an overview of your collected and selected data and production plans. Relate the project’s planning, implementation and documentation to the services still to be performed; every decision will have repercussions for the next, so bear in mind what you want to do next.

D) Name and describe the formats coming into play in the four iterative phases of the modes of play practice form.

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