



Project Management for Startups

From Vision to Execution · Participant Handbook
EPM-JO Bootcamp · PMI Jordan Chapter × INJAZ mySTARTUP
Wednesday 28 October 2026 · 13:00–16:30
Trainer: Deeb Haddad, PMP

Time	Session	Your output
13:00–13:25	1. Why startups fail on execution; PM for startups	Stage and approach
13:25–13:50	2. From vision to execution plan	One-page execution plan (A3)
13:50–14:15	3. Assumption testing	3 riskiest assumptions + tests
14:15–14:45	Lunch break	—
14:45–15:10	4. MVP scope and resources	Top-5 MVP backlog
15:10–15:40	5. Risk and founder accountability	Risk register + decision rights (A3)
15:40–16:00	6. Agile operating rhythm	Weekly rhythm
16:00–16:15	7. PMI tools and learning pathways (CAPM)	Personal learning pathway
16:15–16:30	8. Closing	30-day commitment card

Cases marked “composite” are realistic teaching examples, not real companies; their figures are illustrative. Real cases are summarised from public sources. This workshop is not PMP or CAPM exam preparation and is not legal advice.

Why startups fail on execution

Execution failure can be diagnosed. Every failure pattern shows early symptoms. Project management spots them early (discovery) and acts on them (resolution).

The Execution Failure Diagnostic

#	Pattern	Early symptom	Discover it with	Resolve it with
F1	Building the wrong thing	Features shipped, few paying users	Needs assessment; stakeholder analysis; interviews	Problem statement; acceptance criteria; test before building
F2	Cash runs out before evidence	Nobody knows the monthly burn or runway	Cost baseline; planned vs. actual spend	Spend per proven milestone; runway = cash ÷ net monthly burn
F3	Everything urgent, nothing finished	Many tasks in progress, few done	Visible backlog; Kanban board	MoSCoW; work-in-progress limit; one sprint goal
F4	Nobody owns it / founder deadlock	Tasks fall between founders	RACI matrix	One accountable owner; decision rights; escalation rule
F5	Surprises that block launch	Launch stopped by a legal, tax, data or supplier issue	Risk identification; assumption and constraint log	Risk register with owner and response

Global data: CB Insights (2021, 111 startup post-mortems) — founders cited running out of cash (38%) and no market need (35%) as top reasons. Not Jordan statistics.

Three types of work

- **Project:** temporary, unique result (MVP v1, company registration, a pilot).
- **Operation:** ongoing and repeated (support, accounting, deliveries).
- **Experiment:** a small test to learn, then decide.

Approach by stage

- **Idea / validation:** experiments.
- **MVP:** agile sprints inside fixed milestones.
- **Operating:** hybrid — fixed: legal, tax, contracts, funder milestones; flexible: features.

Jordan example (composite): an Amman invoicing app spends 4 months polishing screens and leaves the JoFotara e-invoicing integration for “later”; pilot shops cannot invoice compliantly. Fix: treat JoFotara as a fixed, predictive milestone and keep the screens agile.

Why CAPM-level practice helps: the four CAPM domains — business analysis, fundamentals, predictive and agile methods — give a team the shared language and basic tools to find and fix these five patterns.

From vision to execution plan

A plan is a chain: vision → outcome → milestones → owners → resources → KPIs. If one link is missing, execution breaks there.

Link	Question	Quality test
Vision	Why do we exist?	One sentence, customer-centred, 3 years
90-day outcome	What must change for the customer or business?	A result, not an activity
Key results	How will we know?	2–3 numbers with target and date
Milestones	What proven steps lead there?	Dated; “done” = evidence
Owners	Who is accountable?	One name, never “the team”
Resources	What do we have and lack?	People, cash, runway in months, gaps
KPIs	What do we watch weekly?	2 leading + 1 lagging; no vanity metrics

Rules that matter

- **Output ≠ outcome.** “Launch the app” is an output; “20 paying shops” is an outcome.
- **SMART** objectives; **OKR**: one objective, 2–3 key results.
- If a key result cannot be counted on a date, it is not a key result.
- **Rolling wave planning**: detail the next 90 days; re-plan monthly.

Example (composite, Case A)

- **Vision**: every small shop in Jordan issues a compliant invoice in under a minute.
- **KRs by day 90**: 20 paying shops; ≥ 95% invoices accepted by JoFotara first time; ≥ 70% of shops active 4+ days a week.
- **Runway**: JD 18,000 ÷ JD 3,000 burn = 6 months.

Output → outcome across industries (illustrative)

Industry	Weak output	Strong outcome
Health tech	Launch the booking app	3 clinics get ≥ 30% of bookings via the app by day 90
E-commerce	Launch our website	≥ 40% of orders prepaid; returns ≤ 8%
Edtech (Tawjihi)	Record 100 videos	200 weekly active students; ≥ 60% of parents renew
AI chatbot	Train the chatbot	Resolves ≥ 60% of chats without a human; satisfaction ≥ 4/5
Agri-tech	Build a marketplace	10 restaurants reorder weekly from 15 farms

Assumption testing

Every key result is a hypothesis. Test the riskiest assumption cheapest and fastest. What customers say is weak evidence; what they do is stronger; what they pay is strongest.

Validation cycle

Diagnose → Hypothesize → Experiment → Measure
→ Decide

Four assumption types

- **Desirability:** do they want it?
- **Viability:** will they pay enough?
- **Feasibility:** can we build and deliver it?
- **Compliance:** are we allowed (JoFotara, PDPL, licences)?

Riskiest = **high importance, low evidence.**

Experiment ladder (cheapest first)

1. Problem interviews (10–15)
2. Landing page or demo video with sign-up
3. Concierge / “Wizard of Oz” (manual service)
4. Pre-sale, deposit or letter of intent
5. Paid pilot

Interview rules

- Ask about past behaviour, not future intentions.
- Don't pitch; listen.
- Interview payer and user separately.
- PDPL: consent and minimum personal data.

Test card: We believe that [segment] will [behaviour]. We will test it by [experiment] and measure [metric]. We are right if [threshold] by [date]. If not, we will [pivot / stop / redesign]. *Write the decision rule before the test.*

Real cases — lessons learned

Zappos (1999): photographed shoes in local stores and bought each pair only after an online order. *Desirability was proven before viability — test the money separately.*

Dropbox (2007): a demo video before the full product; the waiting list reportedly jumped from about 5,000 to 75,000. *Test the value with the cheapest artefact.*

Quibi (2020): raised about USD 1.75 billion and shut down about six months after launch. *Money does not replace evidence; reassess when the environment changes.*

Abwaab (Jordan-founded edtech): research and focus groups first; usage later revealed demand for subjects the founders had not planned. *Market wants cannot be assumed.*

MVP scope, prioritisation and resources

An MVP is the smallest thing that proves the riskiest assumption and reaches the first milestone. Everything else waits on a “Won’t (this time)” list.

Backlog and user stories

- Format: *As a [user], I want [capability], so that [benefit].*
- Definition of done = evidence from a real user.
- Non-software work: a simple WBS (deliverables → work packages).

Sizes and capacity

- $S \leq 2$ people-days · M 3–5 · L 6–10 · XL > 10 → split it.
- Capacity = people × productive days per week × weeks. Plan ≤ 80%.

MoSCoW

Must	Without it the MVP fails or is illegal
Should	Important; a manual workaround exists
Could	Nice to have if capacity remains
Won't	Agreed out of scope this time

Keep Musts at about **60% of effort or less** (DSDM guideline).

Dependencies

Mandatory · discretionary · external · internal. **Start external ones first** — you cannot speed them up. Watch for scope creep and gold plating.

Real cases — lessons learned

Airbnb (2007): air mattresses in the founders' apartment and a simple website. *The smallest MVP with a paying customer beats a full platform with none.*

Instagram (2010): cut the Burbn app down to photos, filters and sharing. *Usage data tells you what to cut.*

Careem (2012): started with corporate car booking and manual dispatch; Uber agreed to acquire it for USD 3.1 billion in 2019. *Start narrow, run it manually, then automate and expand.*

Juicero (2016–2017): raised about USD 120 million for a connected juice press; the packs could be squeezed by hand. *Gold plating is expensive; a Won't list protects money.*

Risk and founder accountability

An untested assumption is a risk. A risk without an owner is a surprise waiting to happen. A founding team without decision rights turns every surprise into a fight.

Write and score a risk

- *Because of [cause], [event] may happen, which would cause [effect].*
- Categories: market · technical · financial · legal/compliance · team.
- Score = probability (1–5) × impact (1–5). Red ≥ 15 · amber 8–14 · green ≤ 7.
- Each risk: one owner, a trigger (early sign) and an action.

Responses (PMI)

- **Threats:** escalate · avoid · transfer · mitigate · accept.
- **Opportunities:** escalate · exploit · share · enhance · accept.

Founder accountability

- **RACI:** exactly one Accountable per milestone.
- **Decision rights:** who decides product, technology, pricing, spending, hiring, equity; spending limits.
- **Deadlock rule:** a time limit and an agreed tie-breaker.

Founders' agreement — minimum

1. Roles and time commitment
2. Equity and vesting
3. IP assigned to the company
4. Decision rights and deadlock rule
5. What happens if a founder leaves

Register with the Companies Control Department and take legal advice.

Real cases — lessons learned

Airbnb (2020): raised about USD 2 billion, cut about 25% of roles and non-core businesses, then refocused. *Speed comes from clear decision rights and a known runway.*

Snapchat (2013–2014): a dispute with an early collaborator was settled for USD 157.5 million. *Write the founders' agreement on day 1.*

FTX (2022): the new CEO described “a complete failure of corporate controls”. *Even a 3-person startup needs basic controls.*

Theranos (2003–2018): technical problems were hidden instead of escalated; the founder was convicted in 2022. *Bad news must travel fast.*

Agile operating rhythm

Plans don't execute themselves; rhythms do. A short, fixed weekly rhythm turns your A3, backlog and risk register into decisions every week.

Sprints or Kanban?

- **Sprints** (1–2 weeks): building the product; fixed time, flexible scope; one sprint goal.
- **Kanban** (continuous flow): operations, sales, support; limit work in progress.
- Most startups use a **hybrid**: sprints for the product, Kanban for the rest.

Kanban board

Backlog → Ready (top 3) → Doing (WIP ≤ 2 per person) → Waiting (external) → Done. Fewer things in progress = faster finishing.

Decision log

Date · decision · options · who decided · why · review date. Stops re-arguing settled decisions.

Retrospective

What worked? What didn't? What **one** thing do we change for the next 2 weeks?

Weekly rhythm (Jordan work week: Sunday–Thursday)

Meeting	When	Length	Output
Weekly planning	Sunday morning	30 min	Top 3 priorities, owners, WIP limits
Daily check-in	Every working day (or WhatsApp)	10–15 min	Done / doing / blocked
Weekly review	Thursday afternoon	30–45 min	KPIs, risk triggers, decisions
Retrospective	Every 2 weeks	30 min	One improvement
Monthly re-plan	End of month	60–90 min	Budget vs. actual, runway, re-plan
OKR reset	Quarterly	Half a day	New OKRs

Real cases — lessons learned

Toyota: Kanban comes from the Toyota Production System. *Make work visible; limit what is in progress.*

Amazon: a Weekly Business Review of controllable input metrics (*Working Backwards*, 2021). *Review leading inputs weekly; outputs follow.*

Basecamp: 6-week cycles and a 2-week cool-down (*Shape Up*, 2019). *Fix the time, flex the scope.*

Google: OKRs since 1999, set quarterly (*Measure What Matters*, 2018). *An OKR without a weekly check-in is a wish.*

PMI tools and learning pathways

Apply first, then certify when it helps your role. Project skills are a career asset: PMI's Talent Gap report (2021) projected about 25 million new project professionals needed by 2030.

Resource	What it is	Access
PMI KICKOFF™	Free course on project basics (agile or waterfall), templates, badge; about 45 minutes	Free
PMI membership	PMI resources, standards and community	Annual fee
PMI Infinity™	PMI's AI assistant over PMI content, with sources	Free for members
PMI Jordan Chapter	Amman: development days, seminars, workshops, networking, volunteering	Chapter membership
PMI Project Management Ready™	Entry certification for school and university students	Via Certiport
CAPM®	Entry-level certification	Exam fee reported USD 225 members / 300 non-members
PMI-CPMAI™	Project management for AI products, data-first	Course and certification
PMP®	For experienced project leaders	Experience required

CAPM facts

- **Eligibility:** secondary degree + 23 hours of project management education before the exam; no work experience required.
- **Exam content (2023):** fundamentals 36% · predictive 17% · agile 20% · business analysis 27%.
- This workshop is not exam preparation and is not presented as counting toward the 23 hours.

Learning ladder

1. This week: PMI KICKOFF (free).
2. 30 days: run the weekly rhythm; attend one PMI Jordan Chapter event.
3. 1–3 months: 23-hour course if CAPM is your goal; consider PMI membership.
4. 3–6 months: CAPM exam (optional).
5. Later: PMP; PMI-CPMAI for AI products.

Fees and formats change; check everything on pmi.org. Arabic content: see the PMI Jordan Chapter and its Edraak partner page.

Closing: your next 30 days

You leave with a plan, a backlog, a risk register and a weekly rhythm. The value is in the next 30 days. Own the outcome, not the task.

Today's path

Diagnose (S1) → plan (S2) → test (S3) → scope (S4) → risks and roles (S5) → rhythm (S6) → keep learning (S7).

Your team outputs

- ☐ One-page execution plan (A3)
- ☐ Top-5 MVP backlog with rough estimates
- ☐ Risk and assumption register with founder roles and decision rights (A3)

Your 30-day commitment

- 3 actions, each with a **date** and **evidence** (a KPI or a document).
- The first tool you will use; an accountability partner; your check-in date with mySTARTUP.

Good: “Hold the first Thursday review on 5 November with 3 KPIs and the top-5 risk triggers — evidence: a decision-log entry.”

Weak: “Work on marketing” (no date, no evidence) · “Finish the app” (an output, not a 30-day step).

M.O.R.E. — the lens to keep

- **Manage perceptions:** tell your stakeholders your plan and your risks.
- **Own success:** your 3 actions, with evidence.
- **Relentlessly reassess:** your Thursday review and retrospective.
- **Expand perspective:** one PMI Jordan Chapter event; talk to customers every week.

Thank you to the PMI Jordan Chapter, INJAZ mySTARTUP and the volunteers.

Templates to reuse

Download the Word templates and use them with your team after the workshop. Each is available in English and Arabic.

Template	Session	English	العربية
Execution failure diagnostic handout (A4)	1	Download	تنزيل
Diagnostic card (A5)	1	Download	تنزيل
One-page execution plan (A3)	2	Download	تنزيل
MVP backlog and prioritisation (A4)	4	Download	تنزيل
Risk and assumption register (A3)	3 and 5	Download	تنزيل
Weekly operating rhythm (A4)	6	Download	تنزيل
PMI resources and learning pathway (A4)	7	Download	تنزيل
30-day commitment cards (A6 ×4)	8	Download	تنزيل

In the PDF version, download the templates from nxemtech-startup.nextmtech.com.

Your 90-day budget, the PMI way

Turn your budget into a decision date: how much you need, what could go wrong, and when you must act.

1. **Estimate** cost items per milestone — analogous (similar past item), parametric (rate × quantity), bottom-up (sum of details) or three-point: (optimistic + 4 × most likely + pessimistic) ÷ 6.
2. **Phase by month** and add up the **cost baseline**.
3. Add a **contingency reserve** for your top risks: probability × impact in JD (EMV).
4. Add a **management reserve** (about 10%) for the unknown; use only with founders' approval.
5. **Check the funding limit:** cash available ≥ budget? Runway = remaining cash ÷ net monthly burn.
6. Write your **decision date:** "If [milestone] is not reached by [date], we fundraise or cut burn that week."

Example (composite, Case A, JD)

Line	Amount
Cost estimates for 90 days	8,100
+ Contingency reserve (EMV of 2 risks)	900
= Cost baseline	9,000
+ Management reserve	900
= Project budget	9,900
Runway after day 90: (18,000 - 9,000) ÷ 3,000	3 months

Monthly check (earned value, simplified)

Compare **planned vs. actual spend** and **planned vs. actual progress**. CPI = earned value ÷ actual cost; SPI = earned value ÷ planned value. Below 1.0 means act now.

Jordan reminders: 16% general sales tax on many purchases; Social Security once you hire; registration and licence renewals; an accountant for JoFotara-compliant invoicing.

Glossary (English → Arabic)

English	Arabic	English	Arabic
Execution gap	فجوة التنفيذ	Product backlog	قائمة عمل المنتج
Runway / Burn rate	المدى النقدي / معدل الإنفاق	User story	قصة المستخدم
Acceptance criteria	معايير القبول	Definition of done	تعريف الإنجاز
Outcome / Output	النتيجة / المخرج	Dependency	الاعتمادية
OKR (Objectives and Key Results)	الأهداف والنتائج الرئيسية	Scope creep	زحف النطاق
Milestone	المعلم	Risk register	سجل المخاطر
Leading / Lagging KPI	مؤشر استباقي / لاحق	Trigger	مؤشر التفعيل
Assumption / Hypothesis	الافتراض / الفرضية	RACI	مصفوفة توزيع المسؤوليات
MVP	المنتج الأولي القابل للتطبيق	Decision rights	صلاحيات القرار
Cost baseline	خط أساس التكلفة	Contingency / Management reserve	احتياطي الطوارئ / احتياطي الإدارة

References

- PMI: *PMBOK® Guide*, 8th Edition; *Agile Practice Guide* (with Agile Alliance); M.O.R.E. framework; CAPM exam content outline.
- E. Ries, *The Lean Startup* (2011); D. J. Bland and A. Osterwalder, *Testing Business Ideas* (2019); R. Fitzpatrick, *The Mom Test* (2013); J. Doerr, *Measure What Matters* (2018).
- A. C. Edmondson, *The Fearless Organization*; P. Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*.
- Real cases summarised from public reporting (TechCrunch, Fortune, AP, Axios, CNBC, Wamda and others). Figures marked “reported” are company-reported or secondary.
- Jordan: Personal Data Protection Law No. 24 of 2023; national e-invoicing system JoFotara (Income and Sales Tax Department) — check current obligations with the authorities.