

Project Management Tips

So much is written on project management techniques, methodologies, how to's, and what not's, that it is difficult to understand where to focus attention when everything seems incredibly important. Whether a training, business, infrastructure, or process improvement project there is a fundamental set of time tested wisdom for helping projects run smooth.

The First Project Phase is the Most Important

Start out right by getting the project sponsor, stakeholders, and contributors understanding the business case, objectives, requirements, and key outcomes.

Challenging Discussions Should Be Held In the Beginning

Have the difficult and challenging conversations that are bound to occur during the initial project stage. Work through issues and objections early to avoid them arising later when it could have drastic impact on the project success.



Goals and Objectives Clearly Communicated

Communicate goals to everyone that touches the project whether on the project team or affected by the project. It is better the message come from the project team rather than by innuendo and speculation caused by inaccurate word of mouth passes.

Project Ownership is Gained Through Understanding

Buy-in can not be forced. Buy-in is gained through a clear understanding of the project benefits, process, outcomes, constraints, risk mitigation strategies, and delivery strategy.

Assumptions are Powerful

Develop a set of assumptions for each area of the project. For instance in the area of risk, brainstorm all the assumptions

that can possibly occur around risk. Once identified each assumption can be addressed, in this case, as a risk mitigation matrix.

Scope Creep is the Enemy

Be vigilant and disciplined always on the lookout for scope creep. If you are not always looking for it you may miss those subtle changes that cause scope creep.

Communication is King

People tend to make things up when information is not readily supplied and demotivated when left to fill in the blanks on their own. Communicate regularly and widely. Develop a communication plan to ensure that stakeholders are well informed and team members' understanding does not waiver.

Clear Issue Resolution Process

Develop a structured process that is well communicated so when an issue arises there is no question about how the issue will get quickly addressed.

Know Where You Are At All Times

If an effective job is done communicating and structuring this should be a no-brainer. Meetings held for the sole purpose of delivering status are a waste of everyone's time and shows the project manager is not engaged. Pay attention daily.

Nip Conflict in the Bud

Do what is best for the project. Open discussions need to be held to determine conflict root cause and arrive at a mediated solution. Bring in a neutral mediator if necessary but nip conflict in the bud.

I suspect there is more tried and true project management wisdom many of you have developed over the years. If so, we would be glad to receive your list and if we hear from enough of you, we will do a follow up article next year attributing the contributor with the tip.

Happy project managing to all!