



## 9 PROJECT MANAGEMENT **TIPS** THAT WILL **WOW YOUR BOSS**



*Florida Institute  
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High Tech with a Human Touch™



## 9 PROJECT MANAGEMENT TIPS THAT WILL WOW YOUR BOSS

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

*Businesses across the world are looking for ways to control spending and improve project results. Very often, these companies adhere to project management methods and strategies to cut costs, reduce risk and improve success rates.*

*In fact, the Project Management Institute reports that 80 percent of global executives believe that having project management as a core competency helped them remain competitive during the recession. The PMI further illustrates the high cost of low performance in its 8th Global Project Management Survey which found that due to poor project performance, organizations waste \$122 million for every \$1 billion invested on projects.*

*Project management requires you to juggle many responsibilities, often at the same time. Along with superior organizational skills, it's important to exhibit certain traits if you want to be the most effective you can be at managing various projects. Read on for nine tips to help you lead a successful project and impress your boss as well.*



**80% OF GLOBAL EXECUTIVES BELIEVE THAT COMPETENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT HELPED THEM DURING THE RECESSION.**

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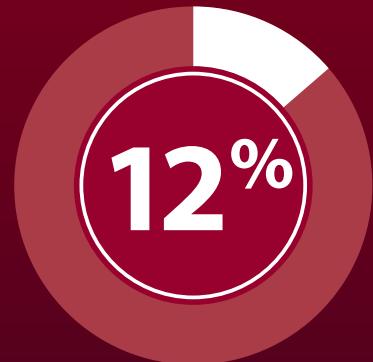
## BE DETAIL-ORIENTED



Because a project encompasses many things, it's important you fully understand all the details surrounding it before progressing. This can help you understand what your boss expects from you, goals you have to set as the project advances, and budgetary requirements.

Moreover, it also helps you set the framework for the entire project. By understanding all the details in advance, it ensures that you, your boss and your clients are all on the same page - a crucial aspect of a project's success. It also makes it easier for you to plan everything from goals to communication strategies since you know what's expected of you.

**\$122 MILLION IS WASTED FOR EVERY \$1 BILLION INVESTED IN PROJECTS DUE TO POOR PROJECT PERFORMANCE.**



## DELEGATE TASKS ACCORDINGLY



One of the most important tasks is choosing who you want to work on the project. This requires you to find the staff most suitable for each position based on skill sets and personalities. Attracting the right people can make the difference in determining if the project succeeds.

As you build your team, look for ways in which these team members may contribute. If your team has been selected for you, evaluate their individual skills, strengths and weaknesses and try to task each person with a responsibility that aligns with their strengths and interests.

Along with this, it's important that each team member understands their role within the scope of the project; this includes tasks, goals and the overall objective. Once tasks are assigned to team members, outline those work definitions so that all stakeholders are clear about who's responsible for what. Document these roles and have all team members sign off on them to help avoid confusion or duplicated work down the road.

Encourage team members to offer - and execute - their own solutions when problems arise rather than take on every issue yourself. Trust your team. Not only will it free up your time to focus on other, perhaps more important, things, but it will build confidence in the team member and will draw on their own expertise and that of their team's. In addition, you should use tools like Trello to monitor each team member's performance and delegate tasks during the project. This will be an enormous time saver so you are free to devote your attention to other duties.

### **WHEN LOOKING FOR A PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE TO HELP YOU KEEP TRACK OF TEAM TASKS AND PROJECT PROGRESSION, YOU'LL WANT TO KEEP A FEW THINGS IN MIND.**

**1. AUDIENCE:** Who will be using the software? The features you will require will depend on whether the users will be executive management, project management, or team members.

**2. COST:** Project management software can widely vary in price. Low-end solutions can

be free or just a few dollars per month per user. Mid-range products can fall between \$2,500 to \$25,000; High-end systems can typically start at \$50,000.

**3. STORAGE:** Are you looking for a locally installed solutions, or a hosted application in the cloud? Installed software

puts you in control of your upgrades and data backups, is not dependent on a wireless connection, and requires no maintenance fee; a web-based (cloud) solution can be accessible from just about anywhere by multiple users and does not need to be installed and managed locally.

**4. SIZE:** Small teams can get by just fine with a low-end solution, whereas enterprise teams will typically need a higher-end solution that can handle more users and offers more sophisticated features.

## SET GOALS



A great way to measure a project's progress relative to its deadline is to set benchmarks along the way. This ensures your team remains on task, allows you to update your boss with measurable data on progress, and provides you an opportunity to make adjustments along the way if things don't run smoothly.

As part of this, CIO.com's Jennifer Lonoff Schiff recommends setting realistic goals to manage expectations. She quotes Hernan Clarke, CEO for 4Sight Technologies, who suggests having a representative from the project team, the client and the management staff involved in setting goals. This ensures everyone has the same understanding of the project's benchmarks.

Finally, take time to see the bigger picture and how this project - or even a particular task - affects other projects, the company and your clients.

***FROM THE VERY EARLY DAYS OF A PROJECT, IT IS CRITICAL TO SET REALISTIC COMPLETION DATES [TO] ENSURE ACCURATE FORECASTING.***

– Hernan Clark, CEO, 4Sight Technologies

## COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY



Communication is arguably the most important factor in whether a project succeeds or fails. Oftentimes when employees or managers work in silos, information falls through the cracks which can cause issues within the project; therefore, having a collaborative team is a must.

As such, the responsibility is on you to create an effective communication strategy, where teams have access to the resources they need while also being aware of goals and updates as the project progresses. Status report meetings should be brief but regularly scheduled. **Use tools like interactive whiteboards, group chats, shared calendars with reminders, and shared folders to encourage communication between status updates.**

## 5 BE DILIGENT WITH PAPERWORK

One part of being a great project manager is keeping proper documentation throughout. Not only is this important from a compliance standpoint, but it also ensures you have documentation available you can review later to assist you in providing supporting evidence for future projects, evaluation and more.

One of the most important parts of this is to take notes on everything. From team meetings, to goal settings with clients, to one-on-one time with a member of your staff, note taking is an invaluable way to keep a paper trail of your project. Not only can this help you keep things organized, it gives you vital reference points should you need them in the future. Among the areas you should document are:



**TIMELINE:** Use a Gantt chart to map out start dates, due dates, and target milestones along the way. Make sure to be realistic in planning your timeline, allowing room for change. Ask your team for input in creating the timeline so that their individual pieces are accounted for and given the proper amount of time. Set the project's priorities ahead of time, and make sure all team members are aware of them.



**BUDGET:** A well-documented, itemized project budget will keep your expenses in check by keeping all team members informed of expenses as they accrue. The aforementioned timeline/priorities and budget will also work in tandem; building these pieces simultaneously can help you and your team identify pitfalls ahead of time. If a priority task is not budgeted for properly, problems can arise down the road. Likewise, a more ample budget area for a low-priority, low-time-intensive part of the project may not be the best use of funds. Make sure that the timeline, priorities and budget are in line with each other to keep the project running effectively.



**PROCESSES:** Don't limit your documentation to just before the project gets started. Document everything along the way as well: steps you've taken, tasks you've completed, bottlenecks you've encountered, changes in scope the customer has requested, and anything else that may come up throughout the project. This record of processes can help you in two ways. First, your team will be able to reliably trace all project efforts for status meetings and in case of any disputes; secondly, these documents can help refine future projects.

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## EMBODY LEADERSHIP

Everyone is looking to you to keep things running smoothly. With this in mind, it's important you practice what you preach, as the saying goes. Whether it's in sticking to the budget or process, filing your documentation properly and on time, or in the way you speak to your team members, lead the team by example. When things get stressful, people will look to you for guidance and will follow your example.

You need to cultivate an environment of transparency and open communication by being accessible to associates, clearly stating project objectives, and thinking quickly of solutions to problems that might arise. Furthermore, it's imperative that you notify your management team and clients of any problems as they arise, as they will appreciate your keeping them abreast of developments.

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

**32%**

**32 PERCENT MORE PROJECTS ARE SUCCESSFUL IN ORGANIZATIONS THAT INVEST IN ONGOING PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING, OFFER A DEFINED PROJECT MANAGEMENT CAREER PATH, AND ESTABLISH FORMAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PROCESSES.**

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## EVALUATE

After a project's completion, it's important to go back and review it in detail. If the project encountered problems, this gives you an opportunity to review the root causes and find solutions to prevent them from happening again. It also provides you with a chance to reflect on your leadership abilities.

A great way to finalize this evaluation is to write a report, outlining the highlights and struggles of the project. Use this report to note opportunities for improvement moving forward, best practices you learned to adopt, strengths that helped you keep the project on point, and notes on individual employees' performance.



## FOSTER TEAMWORK

A great way to foster a collaborative environment is to hold regular meetings with your project teams, clients and management. This makes it easier for everyone to stay in the loop and gives you time to collaborate on solving any problems that might arise.

Encourage all team members to speak up during brainstorming and status updates. An employee who holds back or feels disempowered to contribute and collaborate may not only feel under-appreciated, but may be withholding information or ideas that could be integral or impactful to the project, even when it comes to an area outside his or her expertise.

Don't forget to have a little fun along the way. Part of being a good leader is building team unity. If you have a staff that hasn't had much experience as a team then it's ideal to do team-building activities to help them become acclimated to working together. Reward employees when milestones are achieved - even small milestones; this can go a long way in motivating your team members to go the extra mile.

**60% OF EMPLOYEES FELT THAT PROJECT MANAGERS CAN INFLUENCE TEAM MOTIVATION POSITIVELY, DESPITE NEGATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS SUCH AS CULTURE, STRATEGY, ETC.**

(SOURCE: SCHMID & ADAMS)



## EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

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New technologies are making project management easier than ever. With a wide variety of applications ranging from paid to free, local to cloud-based, and large to small, every project manager is bound to find just the right tool for their team.

Aforementioned Trello uses an interface similar to that of Pinterest, using cards (like pins) to organize project stages. Open a card to add comments, attachments, checklists, labels, due dates and more. Best of all, its basic subscription is free, which is great for anyone looking for a project management tool to use on their own or in a small group. For larger organizations who need a bit more in terms of features, Trello can be upgraded to “Business Class” for a small charge.

For larger companies still, Basecamp may be the way to go. It is less visual than Trello, but with its impressive list of features Basecamp tends to be the go-to project management platform for enterprise companies. In fact, it is so popular with large-scale project managers that outside companies are updating their products to integrate seamlessly with Basecamp.

For those working in software engineering, Jira comes highly rated by users, mainly for its versatility. Like Basecamp, Jira integrates with hundreds of other developer tools to keep your day running smoothly. It can be enhanced with add-ons – free or purchased separately – for a wide variety of areas such as timesheets, diagram drawing, calendars, email and more. You can even build your own custom add-ons to make this tool exactly what you need it to be.

For those looking for simple budget management, collaboration, Gantt charts and milestone tracking, Microsoft Project is a classic solution for project stakeholders. This is available as a local application or as a cloud-based platform within your Office 365 subscription.

No matter which of the hundreds of project management software applications you choose, you can be an innovator for your company by streamlining your project’s task, asset, and time reports and more. With any of these technologies on your side you will take collaboration, organization and efficiency to a whole new level for your teams and your business.

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT EARNING A FLORIDA TECH MASTER'S DEGREE IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

By implementing these nine tips, you can become a more effective project manager. If you are interested in developing your project management expertise and want to enhance your career, consider earning a master's degree in Project Management. Your expertise will only grow as you master valuable skills and competencies in improving business performance that can translate into a rewarding career as a successful project manager.

**LEARN MORE HERE**



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