

## Rules of Project Lead

***Communication is key to lead a project. There are seven rules that help the project manager to lead projects in practice.***

There are many standardized methods and principles when it comes to project management. When it comes to leading a project in practice, it's mostly about good communication. Below are key rules that will help a project manager to actually lead a project:

- 1. Be transparent**
- 2. Make informed decisions**
- 3. Document**
- 4. Agree and promise**
- 5. Be there**
- 6. Repeat**
- 7. Include**

Here are the rules explained:

### **1. Be transparent**

Share the goal/vision of the project to all as soon as possible. Knowing this can be crucial for choices made deep down in the design/development/production. Let's say that the goal is to transport people from A to B in an environmentally friendly way. The project fails even if the vehicle of transportation runs on water if the nuts and bolts are radioactive. The example above might seem ridiculous but there are a lot of projects that fail due to people assuming things when not being given the entire picture. Some say that "*assumptions are the root of all evil*".

### **2. Make informed decisions**

Specialists are specialists. In most projects, with some complexity, the project manager needs to rely on specialists. Taking specialist decisions without consulting a specialist is devastating for the project. If the project manager doesn't trust the projects own specialists, consult externally – never pretend to be a specialist.

### 3. Document

In projects there are as many stakeholders as different minds. One has to accept that if it's not in writing, it doesn't exist.

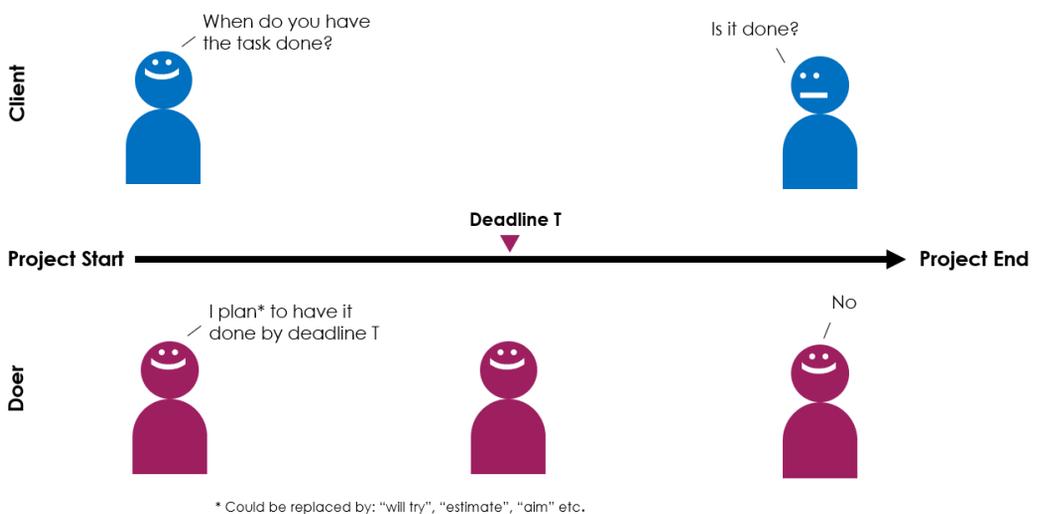
Love to take notes – what's documented overrules “well I thought that...”, “I understood it as...”, “As I recalled that to be...” etc.

Maybe needless to say but; meeting notes are not only necessary for documenting decisions, it's a efficient tool to share information as well.

### 4. Agree and promise

Internal motivation is strong, external motivation is weak. “Bossing” people around might (but is not likely to) be efficient short term but including team members in decisions and having them agree to perform things is much more efficient.

Never accept when someone says that they will attempt/aim/plan/estimate to do something if you need it in time – agree upon it and make them promise.



A promise means a lot to most people; it's their honor we're talking about.

Having a formal sign-off in writing saying that someone, is extremely powerful. This makes the person signing triple assess if it can be completed in time.

## 5. Be there

It's recommended to be at the actual place where the project takes place. It will not only reduce the amount of written communication and lag in time, the project leader will feel with all senses what's actually going on in the project – e.g. a construction site in pouring rain might increase risks of accidents or an IT team that is sitting in a noisy landscape might reduce focus and slow down the planned development.

There are many ways of hosting online meetings, but if you really want to know what your counterpart feels regarding matters in a meeting you need to be there.

Focus!

Remember that it doesn't matter if you're at site or in a conference call – be mentally present otherwise it's a waste of time for all parties. If you feel that the meeting is worthless or that you have nothing to add, there is a problem with the actual meeting (it was not planned, prepared and executed in the right way).

## 6. Repeat

Important things can't be said too many times. It's ok to start 10 project meetings in a row highlighting the same important thing – people will remember it, which is your goal.

On another level: having someone repeat what you just informed is proven to be efficient to assure that it is understood and will be remembered. Many armies around the world have this as a rule after giving orders: "Repetera!" as they say in the Swedish army. Use this method carefully, not to be seen as a dictator. One can instead say: "what I'm about to tell you is so important that you all need to be able to repeat it for me afterwards". Just hearing this will make most remember the information, which is your goal.

## 7. Include

A project usually consist of several people that are responsible for deliverables (hardware, sub-programs, documents, tests etc.). A good project manager have methods and tools to manage the activities/deliverables in a project. The different between a good and a great project manager is that the great project manger knows that the methods and tools shall be customized to suit the project (all project are unique).

Involving the project team when customizing the project is a great way of making the team feel included and accountable. E.g. if the team members identify that it is best for the project to update the risk register every week, it's more likely that they will do it than if the project manager tells the members to update it every week.