Applied Software Project Management

Management and Leadership
Responsibility, authority and accountability

A person has *responsibility* for a task if:
- He is given sufficient *authority* to perform it
- He is *accountable* for its completion

A person has *authority* to perform a task only if he is has adequate control over the resources necessary to complete the task.

A person is *accountable* for a task if failure to adequately perform that task carries professional consequences.
Delegation

- Delegation is assigning responsibility of a task to a team member.
- When delegating a task, the project manager must ensure that the team member has the authority to perform it and is accountable for the results.
Transparency

- When the project manager creates a document, holds a meeting of interest to others, or makes an important project decision, all of the information produced should be shared and used with everyone involved in the project.
Transparency

- All work products should be public
  - All team members, senior managers and stakeholders should have access to every work product produced for the project.
  - Project managers and team members benefit because they make more informed decisions.
  - Senior managers and stakeholders are always kept informed.
Transparency

Decisions should be made based on known guidelines

- Published *standards documents* help others understand the way certain roles must be filled.
- Documents should be based on *templates* when possible.
- *Process documents* ensure that each project is done using a repeatable process.
- Use *performance plans* to set expectations for individual team members.
Manage the Organization

- Prevent senior managers from seeing software projects as a cost burden
  - A project is successful if its costs are justified by its benefits.
  - Establishing a track record of successful projects is the most effective way for a project manager to reverse dangerous attitudes in senior management.
Manage the Organization

Show senior managers the impact of their decisions

- Decisions are frequently made based on gut feelings instead of objective analysis.
- The people making decisions about the project need to understand the details.
- Show senior managers that improving project management practices will help them meet their goals.
Manage the Organization

- Don’t confuse flexibility with always saying yes
  - Don’t agree to an unrealistic schedule.
  - Change your approach when necessary.
  - Don’t confuse “easy to describe” with “easy to implement.”
Manage Your Team

Avoid common management pitfalls

▷ Don’t manage from your gut.
▷ Don’t second-guess estimates.
  • Remember Brooks’ Law: “Adding manpower to a late software project makes it later.”
▷ Don’t expect consensus all of the time.
▷ Make your mistakes public.
▷ Accept criticism.
Manage Your Team

- Avoid micromanagement
  - Don’t expect to review everything
  - Don’t fall into the “hands-on manager” trap
  - Use transparency to your advantage
  - Don’t be afraid to let your team members make mistakes
Manage Your Team

- Address performance problems early
  - Work with each team member to develop a performance plan.
  - Set standards that are fair and attainable.
  - Measure each team member’s progress against known and agreed-upon goals.
  - Correct performance problems as early as possible.