

1. Get Users Involved As Early As Possible

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Get_Users_Involved_As_Early_As_Possible)

Quote: “The secret to project success is to involve the user as soon as there is anything visible to show them”

What I learned: It is better to find out that there are problems with what we are developing early on, rather than after the project is complete.

What I expect to learn: The secret to project success.

Integrative questions: What advantages do users bring? How do they complicate the project?

It is best to get the users involved as early as possible so that they would know, understand and keep track of what is happening during project life. My suggestion would be at the start to ask what they're goals and expectations are for the project. The advantage for a successful project is to have it focused on the users at the same time benefit them during a daily basis. Problems can arise in any period of the project life, it is an advantage to be thinking of the problem during project life rather than when the project is complete because problems are a big part in developing knowledge and skills.

The cost for changes will vary based on the project schedule timeline because early stage problems are easier to manage and the amount of cost won't hurt as much rather than remorse at the end or when the problem is already in the stage where it is difficult to handle. Delay does affect the project substantially so remember to gather adequate knowledge when dealing with a problem. Getting users involved early benefits the project because their feedbacks and suggestions serve as a guide and/or motivation for the success of the project. Make sure that the occurring problem is fixed before moving on with the project life.

The Project Manager must make full use of the users in talking with the software developers early and often so that the project's satisfaction rating would be high and that it would not exceed its time and cost baselines. The time and cost of a project is essential in project life and to the project manager.

2. Success Is Always Measured In Business Value

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Success_Is_Always_Measured_In_Business_Value)

Quote: “Success starts with effective planning, proper implementation of knowledge and skills”

What I learned: Motivating teams and making difficult decisions on the spot become easier when we understand specifically how the completion of this project is intended to benefit the company.

What I expect to learn: How come it is easy to get caught up in meeting our time, cost, scope and quality baselines.

Integrative questions: How is success measured in business value?

Success starts with effective planning, proper implementation of knowledge and skills. A project adds business value to the organization through finding multiple ways to arrive at an answer and how it can benefit the users. Project Managers can easily get caught up in meeting time, cost, scope and quality baselines of its users. It takes the right combination of commitment and passion to get the job done.

Commitment and passion leads to success because the team member/s loves what he/she is doing and really gives everything for the project and for the organization. The developed skills of a project manager will better convince and earn the trust of the user. An effective strategy for is the key to success. It would be best to convince users when the demand is still high of what's unique with your product or project compared to the others because users look for a low-costing but great product that benefit them the most.

Projects must also focus on what ways it can help in the success of the business and in return, earn value. Project managers must keep in mind of how the project will help the business and not affect the business organization. Business organizations want their time and cost to be worth it because everything that a business does is aligned to its mission and vision. The best selling products must be managed and update more often because users are more satisfied with it compared to other products so project managers must make sure that the product is not forgotten and being kept track of.

3. Start with the End in Mind

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Start_with_the_End_in_Mind)

Quote: “The right combination will benefit you”

What I learned: By starting with the end in mind, you have a much better chance to be successful.

What I expect to learn: How to properly manage the right attitude. What are right people management skills to achieve success as a project manager?

Integrative questions: Why start with the end in mind?

Being a Project Manager gives you the overall control and leadership in the project to be managed. It is a very challenging job to handle because everything will be placed on your shoulders and the trust of the company will be in your hands to lead them to success. Before starting, make sure to gather every information needed that will help during project life. One advantage is to get the users involved as early as possible when something visible can already be shown.

A project manager must know what the users will expect and how it will benefit them. A project would also need originality and something unique for it to be satisfied. Find the differences between “want” and “needs” and then, get the right combination that will benefit you, the users and the business as well. A project manager must ask him / herself “What are we trying to accomplish?”, “What would make this project a success, for the user, my company and for me?”, and “What would it take to achieve that success?”

When these three questions are answered, everyone will be comfortable with you and ask more from you. Success takes the right attitude and the right people for the job that complement the project manager’s skills. Each member of the team must have an agreement and common understanding of what must be delivered. Carefully implement every procedure of the project before moving on with the next.

When the project is broken down into manageable pieces, this is the best time where the project team can determine project life by determining the duration of each individual task. It is also important to know the constraints and resources available before starting work.

4. The Fallacy of Perfect Knowledge

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Fallacy_of_Perfect_Knowledge)

Quote: “We cannot know it all”

What I learned: We cannot know it all. If we stop learning, we fall behind rapidly.

What I expect to learn: Learn to equally adjust to a state of ignorance.

Integrative questions: Why know everything about a project during its development phase? What is the fallacy of perfect knowledge?

We do not know everything. A person will always encounter someone that knows something that a certain person doesn't know. It is a good practice to always be in contact with someone or making the most out of your travel opportunities to gain new or more knowledge on a certain aspect. We cannot know it all so gather whatever you can possibly gather.

Always be updated on the latest happenings around you. Our time is more advanced compared to the past generations because our generation is developing the present in-line for the future. We have more resources to work with. Every person must constantly adjust by constantly researching on the information needed in order to not be left behind.

A project manager must have an adequate knowledge on everything regarding the project for him / her to understand and guide the team member with the work being handled. There is no such thing as perfect knowledge because requirements, even when agreed upon will change during development. It is impossible to know them all in advance. Requirements that mean different things to different people lead to inconsistencies that can affect the project substantially.

In order to create a successful project, the project manager and team must accept and even embrace these ideas. Constant use of techniques and updating of information will begin to address some of the concerns. Requirements will never be fully known at any time during a project's lifecycle because it is impossible to capture complete and non-conflicting requirements for a project.

5. The Fallacy of the Big Round Ball

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Fallacy_of_the_Big_Round_Ball)

Quote: “Problems must not be reasons to change”

What I learned: If we give up on the Fallacy of the Big Round Ball, we can become more comfortable with changing requirements and see software malleability for what it is; a huge advantage that we control.

What I expect to learn: How to inject new requirements that will avoid violations in our design.

Integrative questions: How do you prevent hacks?

Every project manager wants their project to work as perfectly and as smoothly as it can possibly be. A project requires to be polished often and constantly to not lose users and satisfaction. Defects will always occur no matter what. Work on the project never stops when demand is high and it has become well trusted.

Newer versions will take its place when the time comes through more stable updates and functions. Always consult with your Risk Manager regarding possible solutions to problems. Change control happens when the problem becomes impossible to fix. When hacks occur, act upon it immediately to make the code maintainable and return the ball to its polished state.

It would be of big help if requirements could be fully understood before coding begins in order to have no maintenance crisis but since it is impossible, we cannot know everything, it would be best to gather every information possible. Do require users to exercise their right to request changes because they can help you and your project become successful. Remember to keep your users involved even after project life because their feedbacks and suggestions are beneficial for the project. A software project must be fully useful for the end-users and open for change maintenance that will require planning and controlling of user enhancements.

Problems must not be reasons to change because when problems occur, users will recognize the commitment of the project team in dealing with the problem. They will be satisfied and pleased with your commitment and stick with the product.

6. The Fallacy of Perfect Execution

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Fallacy_of_Perfect_Execution)

Quote: “There is no such thing as flawless code”

What I learned: Source code rapidly becomes the last and only forensic clue to programmer intent. The building blocks of software don't snap together like Lego's.

What I expect to learn: How to create flawless code.

Integrative questions: Why are outputs limited to one answer? Why do building blocks give the project complications?

There is no such thing as a flawless code if you work hard enough. The functionality of the program depends on the right combination and application of codes for it to return the expected output. An output of a program can be solved in a thousand-and-one ways. A perfect execution means there is no error pop-up when the program is ran.

Outputs are not limited to one answer; execution enables countless ways to arrive at an answer. There is no need to be embarrassed but pleased because guide on what error occurs in order for the problem to be fixed. Encountering problems are good ways of learning. Everything created starts off with a building block and from this; it is developed consistently to support users in a daily basis.

The building blocks of software's, when put together in so many ways makes it complicated to determine all of the combinations. Programmers are open for questions and comments in order for the users of their programs to clarify or understand what they meant when something is unclear. In order to avoid the programmer intent from getting lost, requirement must be consistently documented especially when changes occur. Programmers also change jobs, leaving undocumented code behind which is an example of a practical person because when one is unsatisfied by his / her current position and is unhappy with his / her work, a practical person would usually find a solution to the problem that will make him / her feel better.

The source code can be a clue to recognize programmer intent because it shows in the output if he / she is satisfied or not.

7. The 60/60 Rule

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_60/60_Rule)

Quote: “Software’s must be designed to change”

What I learned: A good methodology may reduce bugs but not address migration or enhancement time or cost at all.

What I expect to learn: The challenge of designing a flexible and maintainable software.

Integrative questions: What is special about the 60/60 rule?

For me, software development is one of the most important parts of the software lifecycle even though it only holds 40 / 100% of the project and it isn’t where the money is because this is the development of a software product in a planned and structured process. The three most common purposes are to be considered: meet specific needs of a specific client / business, to meet a perceived need of some set of potential users or for personal use. The process of writing and maintaining the source code is important because this is where the output comes from. The answers come from the output.

60 / 100% of lifecycle costs comes from maintenance because it is the modification of a software product after delivery to correct faults, to improve performance or other attributes that requires consistency for the product to garner success. 60% of maintenance activities are focused on enhancements and the other 40% of it is for other attributes based on maintenance. Migration activities include moving systems to new hardware or software environments for the implementation of new enhancements to take effect. Over 80% of maintenance activities relate to changing requirements.

Changing requirements take a big bulk of maintenance activities. Understanding changes to be made is a major activity during maintenance so that the project manager would know what problems need to be acted upon and what attributes should be untouched. Proper understanding must first be applied before changing anything within the project. Our efforts should focus on creating systems that are easily maintainable.

Our software must be designed to change so it becomes flexible in the face of new requirements.

8. Clever code is Hard to Maintain... and Maintenance is Everything

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Clever_code_is_Hard_to_Maintain..._and_Maintenance_is_Everything)

Quote: “Developers can make miracles happen”

What I learned: Maintenance is everything.

What I expect to learn: How to maintain clever code.

Integrative questions: How to maintain clever code?

Developers can make miracles happen. Their logic mindset is strong and well-developed. They are capable of making new codes work with old codes and most of all make the software significant and useful again. Software developers find clever and numerous ways to make new and complicated project code work with old codes containing multiple patches.

Through skill, they are able to create clever code that can get the job done. Clever code may create future maintenance problems due to its length and complexity because it is too advance for some future developers to implement and maintain the code. By exploring new languages and development tools, developers combine knowledge from every language to create an attractive and unique interface for the users. In allowing them to explore, this is how developers discover innovative ways to improve their coding practices and results.

They will be able to design a software solution that is faster and has fewer lines of code to test and maintain which is a big advantage for the project. Adding new languages also has a share of maintenance concerns because too much code is also complex so it is best to keep it simple as possible. Before exploring new languages and development tools, make sure that someone else in your team has knowledge on it as well. In this way, the both of you will be able to support each one in the maintenance of the project and in the creation of clever code.

Always document any new practice within your code so that you can get back to it whenever needed. Timely updates and improvements are also important in every project. Focus on innovation and not on a code that has already been implemented and created. Do not go over your knowledge limit to avoid making it hard for others to follow and hard to maintain.

9. The Web Points the Way (For Now)

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Web_Points_the_Way_%28For_Now%29)

Quote: “We provide the shoulders to those who follow us”

What I learned: Software architecture is capable of coping with variations, sometimes unpredictable ones, with minimal damage, alteration or loss of functionality.

What I expect to learn: How to design distributed systems, like the Web.

Integrative questions: How do you understand the inefficiencies of current architectures?

Our deepest appreciation for the Web is to the past generations. For without them, our generation especially future generations will not be experiencing the Web as it is today. The Web would be under construction or undergoing development nowadays if not for them. “We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us”, we inherited the works of our past generations on the Web and apply our knowledge to make it better.

“We provide the shoulders for those who follow us”, the main focus of everything we do should be aligned to the future generations and how it will benefit them. They are the ones to continue the work that our generation started. New software architecture, language and platforms must rise to prominence because these have the most capability to support us in our programs and projects. Our solutions will only be able to solve today’s issues, there will also be new challenges facing us because the Web support that our generation has is the present development.

There will be new and even better developments that will be discovered in the future. Both change and/or failure of specific components will happen in a period of time so this is why constant updating and maintenance is important even with new software support. The Web, being stateless, is a mighty source of information and communication. It uses the universal language “English” so that everyone would understand. The Web points the way (For now) because programs are becoming accessible through the web, thanks to Cloud Computing.

We must learn from the inefficiencies of our current architectures because it serves as a foundation for future innovation making it possible for new development to rise. Technology, ideas and techniques change so we must always make sure not to be left behind by finding ways to adapt to new systems which have design flexibility and implement it into our systems now before we can create adaptive software systems that are ready to integrate new discoveries, providing the shoulders for those who follow us. The Web will not also be leading the way. It can be something or someone else so it is best to make the most out of the Web when it is most prominent.

10. Serve Your Team

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Serve_Your_Team)

Quote: “Guide the team in achieving exceptional performance”

What I learned: Project manager’s view there role more of as a facilitator than a teacher.

What I expect to learn: Prototype techniques from the agile approach.

Integrative questions: What are the obstacles that affect the team?

Make use of effective techniques from a forward approach. Being a facilitator, the project manager, enables his team to work more effectively; to collaborate and achieve synergy. This enables the team to make high-quality decisions by functioning effectively through an agreed structure and process. The project manager’s goal is to support his team as they achieve exceptional performance.

Through this, he/she encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility. In the end, your team would highly acknowledge the work and teachings that you have bestowed upon them. It gives you a satisfied and proven team for your next project in mind because of the relationship that was built during project life. The project manager’s task is to identify and remove obstacles that may affect the team while providing team resources that will increase team velocity.

One advantage to serve your team is to have consultation period once in awhile to recognize updates or problems regarding the project which will benefit in creating a peaceful and effective workplace. Your team can help you reach success or bring you down so every project manager must treat his / her team as family. A kick-off meeting enables shared vision and understanding of the project. Inviting people with job requirements can be interviewed and assigned a spot on the team.

User’s involvement early on helps motivate the project as well as the team. It is important to build strong self-discipline and maturity in dealing with your “ego” before starting the project because this can affect you, the team and the project substantially. Everything will be given acknowledgement and be appreciated with high regard once the project is done because the “ego” was contained inside. An agile approach can provide new tools to make you a more effective project manager.

11. Aggressively promote COMMUNICATION channels while managing distributed projects

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Aggressively_promote_COMMUNICATION_channels_while_managing_distributed_projects)

Quote: “Communication is key”

What I learned: Distributed projects create unusual challenges since the project team members are not collocated.

What I expect to learn: Creating a strategy that aggressively promotes communication channels while managing distributed projects.

Integrative questions: How do you aggressively promote communication?

It is common and important for a project to have distributed parts of the project to each of its team member to ensure the involvement of everyone. The project team members must be physically together by supporting each one while doing their part to help promote communication within the project. There are a lot of issues that can hurt the project so make sure to create an activity list and plan carefully the project scope. Communication is the best way to transfer information from one entity to another because you are not limited by the amount of information but by the time that you have.

Over time, technology has progressed and has created new forms of and ideas about communication that aggressively promote communications. Our generation is given numerous technological advances that revolutionized the process of communication. Even though there are cultural differences within the team, do not hesitate to build a relationship with them because they are still human beings and have equal knowledge as yourself. Besides the project, you will know the person more and create a better understanding with him.

The project participation of team members is crucial because there are distributed parts in the project that won't be able to start with out the missing part. Project managers must ensure the willingness and commitment of every team member when starting the project. It is also important to choose your team wisely and make sure that the people you choose can relate and understand your instructions. Nightmares affect the level of success that the project manager envisions for the project.

It is always important to be documented with the happenings on the project even if your team member is assigned in another area. There are multiple ways available to contact them for information. The project manager should know or set when the best time to reach each one. Back-up team members are also helpful to replace the member that isn't doing his job.

It is also important for team members to travel or do conference calls so that they will be able to update the happening of the project for their project manager to lessen the work-

load. The team goals and expectations must be agreed upon and each step of the project is focused to it. Having a unique communication strategy will substantially help the project because every member shares their ideas and connects it together to create the strategy.

12. 9.7 Reasons I Hate Your Website

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/9.7_Reasons_I_Hate_Your_Website)

Quote: “Be unique”

What I learned: Be unique and keep it simple when creating a website.

What I expect to learn: Becoming an effective problem solver. How to be modernized with today’s developments.

Integrative questions: Other ways how to know what the users are searching for.

Websites are intended for users to gather information. It should contain something unique that users will appreciate and it should be kept simple because complexity can ruin your interface. Flash players are a good way to start off your website but make sure that it loads quickly because users will close your site and look for another based on their patience level. Have a set amount of information in every page that you create so that the response time will not make the users wait endlessly for it to refresh.

An audio / video player is another great addition for the website because it gives a different feel to the website making it livelier. Providing an off-button also helps so that the user, after hearing the audio / video played, can turn off the player to focus more on gathering the information that he / she expects to obtain before opening your website. The right combination of color schemes is crucial for the website because it would lessen the hardship of trying to understand or figure out the words. Your website must support all bandwidths so that your website will be accessible anywhere, anytime.

It is important to be modernized and practical with today’s developments. Website maintenance is important because you always want to make sure that your website is working. Problems must be fixed quickly. Train your employees or make sure to always have someone knowledgeable when a phone call arises because users are eager to know the difference and uniqueness of your product compared to other products.

A website must be able to support every person that uses the internet because they are equal and have a common goal in mind which is to get information regarding a specific matter. The search function is the simplest and one of the most sought for functions in a website because users are not readers, but doers so they intend to access something easily. Button labeling should be appropriate to not anger your users because they expect the button to lead them to information as indicated through the label’s text. Always keep your users satisfied.

13. It's the people, stupid

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/It%27s_the_people,_stupid)

Quote: “We have the ability to inspire”

What I learned: It is challenging at times to dig deeply enough to find the desire in some team members.

What I expect to learn: Adjust to different types of people. The ability of people to inspire others.

Integrative questions: How to apply the CRAM (constraints, resources, aptitude and motivation) model. Why project managers frequently diagnose poor performance as a motivation problem?

In every project, the project team and users are the most crucial part. Aspirations, strengths, constraints and weaknesses hinges success because it is based on their attitudes and aptitudes toward the work assigned to them. The project team members cannot do the project alone, they will need someone to guide them every step along the way. This is where the project manager comes in; they are responsible for their team.

Employee promotions are based on technical knowledge of human resources or their contribution to their departments. People have the ability to inspire others because success depends on your ability to lead. Every motivated person wants to contribute, learn and achieve something in the project because we all want to be useful by sharing our knowledge and obtaining new ones as well. It is important to aggressively promote communication channels within the project because it helps the member be open, honest and direct with fellow members of the team.

A successful and effective project starts with the proper gathering and right combination of information then acting on it to have a better understanding of what is trying to be achieved and how the project will be able to benefit others in reaching success. Having conversations with your team member/s regularly determines what their issues are, their ideas and they are given a voice in the project. It is an advantage for them because they have someone to ask regarding a concern in the project. It makes them useful and effective at the same time.

Goals are what make us strive and work harder because we want to achieve something in return for the purpose of helping in the project. Poor performance motivates the team member to never give up and continue working. Being a project manager enables you to understand and connect with individuals better.

14. Every project manager is a contract administrator

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Every_project_manager_is_a_contract_administrator)

Quote: “The success of a project is measured through client satisfaction”

What I learned: Project managers are responsible for change control.

What I expect to learn: The change control and handling process.

Integrative questions: What is the proper way of enabling change control?

Every project manager has the right to enable change control. It is a must for every project manager to be present always during project life since it is his/her project so it is important to be updated of the happenings. Every project manager is responsible for contacting his/her peers like funding, sponsorship, beneficiaries and speakers. A contract is an agreement signed before starting the project.

Changes are supposed to be said and clarified before it is implemented while the problem is still young. A project manager and his/her team member must meet regarding a matter raised from the contract. Project managers must be prepared to analyze the client's requests when preparing a contract perspective and know how to alert everyone to future changes. Change control and handling process must be documented for record so that there is always something to refer to when needed.

A workshop is a very effective tool to provide team members with knowledge about the most important contract aspects and the change control process because workshop tend guide the team member in developing his / her knowledge for better understanding and agreement on the contract. Project managers are in-charge of setting and holding the training at the beginning of project life for concerns to be clarified and ideas along with other information to be agreed upon. Special attention must be kept track of because it can affect and hide something from the project that can raise problems for the team. Creating an agreement to only inform the people involved in your project about the contractual aspects will make the scope and achieving success clearer while avoiding problems.

15. Engage stakeholders all through Project Life

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Engage_stakeholders_all_through_Project_Life)

Quote: “Stakeholders are the project’s vocal advocates”

What I learned: Good working relationships with stakeholders who have significant influence on the outcomes of a project are vital.

What I expect to learn: Addressing setbacks and roadblocks as they occur.

Integrative questions: What is the degree of influence and favorability of stakeholders?

A stakeholder is a person, group, organization or system that affects or can be affected by actions of the project. Engaging stakeholders is vital all through project life because they have this interest in a project that results to good working relationships that influence the success of the project. Before starting the project, the project manager along with the project team must identify carefully their stakeholders; assess degree of influence and favorability toward the project. Aggressively engage stockholders as early as possible all throughout project life because they can supply the support needed to get the project up and running.

Stockholders are visible and vocal advocates of the project, they are able to lead and identify what is needed to achieve success for the project. It is important to know the needs of every stakeholder. The agreed project plan demonstrates the commitment of each team member because the resources needed in supporting the project is provided. Every project manager must assign a single point of accountability on the project team for coordinating stakeholder management and to interface with and actively engage stakeholders at appropriate levels because it will show how the project can be made to be a win for them, as well as for the team.

This is one of the best periods of the project to promote communication channels while managing distributed parts because it creates and utilizes content of information needed for the project. When finalizing stakeholders, do not give “no” for an answer but respect and take the need as consideration.

16. Can Earned Value and Velocity Co-Exist on Reports?

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Can_Earned_Value_and_Velocity_Co-Exist_on_Reports%3F)

Quote: “Earned value and velocity can co-exist”

What I learned: A more agile, flexible, approach to creating software is the best way to produce high-quality, working features that solve customer problems and provide business value.

What I expect to learn: The more traditional approaches that work successfully in the areas of a corporation.

Integrative questions: How does earned value and velocity impact the project?

For me, earned value and velocity can co-exist on reports because earned value is the numeric tracking of progress and the business value of that progress based on a period of time while velocity is the progress and duration of work based on the earned value principle. Software that is created to produce high-quality, working features that solve problems and provide business value co-exist on reports because it complements one another when information is gathered. Project managers, even the project team, continue to develop procedures and train on more traditional approaches that work successfully. Skill and knowledge development helps blend the report between the two because there are different ways to arrive at an answer to the question.

The project team’s report on their actual progress earns them the value worth their work. The value depends on the velocity of the work and reports show. Velocity also measures the productivity of a developer because it shows how fast he / she can get the job done while being paid the appropriate amount of value. The project team member must be alerted ahead of time when a distributed project may be done ahead of time to avoid exceeding the amount of work to be completed.

Software designers are only compared to himself and the last week’s choices, rather than a long-term schedule because there are projects that don’t reach long term and new advancements become available and created. A reporting metric is important because it measures the development of the project with regards to marketing, manufacturing and training issues. An estimate finish time is appropriate in every project because nothing is exactly sure of when it will finish. There will always be delays in a project.

17. Don't skip vacations for the sake of the project

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Don%27t_skip_vacations_for_the_sake_of_the_project)

Quote: "Project Management is very demanding"

What I learned: A team member is a better choice to fill your spot for you rather than another team's project manager.

What I expect to learn: The concept of having a self-directed project team.

Integrative questions: Is taking a break more helpful before, during or after the project?
How to keep the project running while you are away?

Entering into the Project Management profession is very demanding indeed. Project managers play an important role in the project because they have the responsibility to plan, execute and close any project. Vacations can help the project because this is the time of evaluation and enables new contacts and knowledge to come in. These breaks relieve you from stress because it gives you the freedom to think of something else besides the project because it isn't the only thing that is present in your life.

There are more important things to think of, like yourself. Planning time off is difficult because too much time off affects the project life of the project and there is no one to manage it since project managers do not have back-ups. Planning a project should be after the major release happens or somewhere in between project life when the project takes its toll on you. In order to have a hassle-free vacation, train your team and / or assign your most trusted team member to lead while you are away.

Through this, the assigned team member can gain confidence and at the same time, update you of the status of the project. It is good to keep the project running while you are away to avoid project delay and efficient development. Your team members know and understand the project scope and strategy compared to another project manager filling in to guide the project. It will only ruin your team's chemistry with one another.

The concept of having a self-directed team is an advantage for the project manager, project team and project because an easy to understand idea is put in place and highly visible processes are implemented in which the entire team follows. Each team member updates the project manager and makes his / her work less managing and more facilitating.

18. Size Matters

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Size_Matters)

Quote: “Size changes the rules of how the game is played”

What I learned: Size matters.

What I expect to learn: The different roles a project manager plays in a complex project.

Integrative questions: How do you keep the project manageable as possible to avoid losing details?

Depending of the size, work becomes more complex as the size grows. It is important to know the size of the project, the size of the team, the size of the deliverables and the size of the checklists during project planning because every project manger wants to ensure that the project can be distributed into manageable modules that maximizes each team member’s responsibility. Everything that we do must be focused on the “big picture” without getting lost in details because complexity changes the rules of the project. A project must be kept as manageable as possible to avoid losing details on the project and for easy updating and minimal workload at a time.

It takes the right analyzation of the project size and deliverables needed to be accomplished because size tends to impact the bottom line of the project which is beneficial to success. It is best to aggressively promote communication channels and manage distributed projects at this process since planning is needed in order to break-down the project into as many independent, yet manageable work-streams as possible. Having team members with overlapping roles benefits the team chemistry of the project and its project team. Constant project tracking is also important to avoid losing the project pulse and momentum.

It is easy to lose detail in a big project because of the deliverables it gives. An overall project roadmap will also help in the progress and development of the project to ensure overall stability and integrity of the project details.

19. Align Vision And Expected Outcome

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Align_Vision_and_Outcome_Expected)

Quote: “Projects are very challenging”

What I learned: With a detailed grasp of project purpose and benefit, on-the-fly decisions become easier.

What I expect to learn: Appropriate knowledge that will help me prepare to create better software results and manage uncertainty in a professional way throughout the project lifecycle.

Integrative questions: How do you properly align vision and expected output?

A vision is what a firm expects to pursue in order to fulfill its mission. Before setting the vision, core values, to which the firm is committed and core purpose, of the firm must be first talked about. The firm’s core values and purpose constitute its core ideology and remain relatively constant because without consistency, the firm will be affected substantially and hurt its stock. The project manager, being a facilitator, has the responsibility to make sure that the project’s needs and expectations are in place because the project will be successful if it has proper leadership and an effective strategy to work on.

Nothing in this world comes easy but nothing is also impossible if you are willing to step up to the challenge. The main project purpose must be well-defined because it shows why the project is being made and why it has to be made for what specific purpose and what the users want out of the project. The project manager and his / her team must understand why the project is being undertaken. The project manager must persuade and help the team understand why the project must be done and how it would benefit its users.

The aligning of vision and expected outcome of the project must be done at the start of project life while planning and also having your users in it as early as possible in order to get suggestions to keep in mind. Analyzing the impact of the 3P’s: People, process and platforms will help in determining the main reason the organization is funding this endeavor. Having the right team for the specific part is beneficial because they are the ones with the most knowledge of the task given to them.

20. Important Not Urgent

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Important_Not_Urgent)

Quote: “Think ahead”

What I learned: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

What I expect to learn: How to be highly effective.

Integrative questions: What are the elements of character ethic?

The elements of the character ethic are primary traits while those of the personality ethic are secondary. While secondary traits may help one to play the game to succeed in some specific circumstances, for long term success both are necessary. Simply changing outward behavior is not effective because we see the world based on our perspective, which can have a dramatic impact on the way we perceive things. We see things not as they are but as we are conditioned to see them.

The project benefits by thinking and acting ahead because it avoids more work down the road but also can be extremely important for averting disasters, planning well for the future and for instituting systems at work and at home that make life easier for not just you, but for others as well. Beginning with the end in mind gives you the ability to envision in your mind what you cannot at present see with your eyes. It's about connecting with the uniqueness and then defining the moral and ethical guidelines within which can be happily expressed and fulfilled by the project team. Having a mission statement is the project team's plan for success because it puts the goals in focus and moves your ideas into the real world.

Urgent tasks are deadline based while an important task drives how much time you want to spend on it. In a project, always pursue the quality of the output because thinking of it as an important task contributes more to the completion of the project. Thinking win/win and seek first to understand, then to be understood, aligns the vision and the mission of the project in the right direction because it is focused on the quality of the output. A great project will need a strong communication channel and a built production capability to get the best results.

21. A Voice From The Other Side

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/A_Voice_From_The_Other_Side)

Quote: “Plan and build slowly”

What I learned: Keep it simple and know your complexity level.

What I expect to learn: Avoiding the trap to have it all.

Integrative questions: Why does complexity add up as the user becomes familiar?

Having a voice from the other side is getting users involved early and aggressively promoting communication channels because hearing from developers and other software project managers is equally advantageous to hear from the customer. Equally, in terms of the ideas and suggestions that can benefit the project because by basing it with knowledge, a developer and project manager would know more of the functionality and technical part of the project to make it work. This will balance the ways of doing business because technology has been too expensive, too elaborate and beyond the comfort level of the employees and its constituents. It is still good to work manually because it still gives you something workable and to keep track off.

When technology breaks or dies down, the user can end up with nothing workable and wait for long days to get it functioning again. An online application can store data and correct errors, lower cost and bypassing mailing inconvenience. The user loses the flexibility to be responsive and service-oriented because the application is beyond their comfort level which makes them unable to continue working effectively. Starting off with a simpler system then adding levels of complexity as the user becomes familiar with its capabilities is more beneficial to ensure better responsiveness and being service-oriented helps benefit the users and business.

A simpler system with added levels of complexity versus a more stable system that has fewer features is a more beneficial option because adjusting to change can also lead to success.

22. Chart a Course for Change

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Chart_a_Course_for_Change)

Quote: “The power of Change management should not be underestimated”

What I learned: Solid up-front planning helps to provide a smooth transition to the new system, paves the way for buy-in and acceptance, and increases the chances of its long-term use.

What I expect to learn: When change management is being underestimated.

Integrative questions: What happens when change management is underestimated? How to create a plan for change?

New software changes the way in which people work. It gives them more flexibility to accomplish work. This may be good for the organization, but the people who work there aren't always ready to embrace change. It is understandable that it takes time to get used to a new thing. These people have been comfortable with the software they got used to so adjustment would take persuasion for the product to be tested then given a feedback.

It will be a big waste of time and money if they aren't convinced which makes important better than urgent because the quality of the output will determine if the user is satisfied with the work that was put in the new software. Forcing your team member is not a good quality of a project manager. A project manager must understand and adjust to the style of the team member. The impact of change will help understand how people currently work and how the new software will change the process.

Change must make work easier, not harder. This increases the chances the users will adapt to the new system, and improve the design of your end-product, as it ensures that it will fit the needs of its users. Try the new software for a couple of days before documenting and choose which software benefits the organization best. Consult with managers of the target user community early and often to determine whether to make or break the transition to change by mandating that end-users make the switch.

23. Roadmaps: What Have We Done For You Lately?

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Roadmaps:_What_Have_We_Done_For_You_Lately%3F)

Quote: “Good communication is a key factor in success”

What I learned: The project roadmap charts a course for change at the task level.

What I expect to learn: Controlling the flow of information.

Integrative questions: What have we done for you lately? How does one go about creating a project roadmap?

Good communication inside and outside the project team is a key factor in the success of every project because it helps the project team chart a course for change and allows the stakeholder community to understand the change that will happen. Make sure not to share every information on the project to avoid strategy and information theft. This also keeps the expectation level of the end-users high and avoids spoiling the fun. In order to control the roadmap, a conference can be conducted to introduce the product and/or update the community of the project’s progress.

Particular features must be ready by a specific date so that the project team can have feedback on the project and deliberate on its status. Newer features follow when the time is right to keep the users updated because a good foundation is the key to success for a great project. A draft roadmap is important because it will still have to be agreed upon before making the final map. Changes constantly occur becomes new ideas and revisions come up which can make or break a project.

When a good draft has been created, sponsors will deliberate on it by asking for clarity, concerns on the project and what they see meeting. Sponsors expect that they’re funding on the project is worth it and it applies to their target market. It is best to have a strong relationship with your sponsors so that you can ask for their help ones again when a new project gets underway.

The final roadmap is a strong communication tool for the project. It is a timeline of what has been previously achieved and what new features are to be expected.

24. Documents as a Means, Not an End

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Documents_as_a_Means,_Not_an_End)

Quote: “Documents are not a replacement for other communication methods”

What I learned: It is always important to consider the right level of information to be passed on and what the best method is for delivering the information to other parties concerned with the outcome of the project.

What I expect to learn: How to reap the benefits from planning without the overhead of meticulously updating their plans in minute detail.

Integrative questions: Did you deliver the most value in the desired timeframe? How accurately did you meet the plan?

Project documentation does not mean that it is the end of the project but it is a tool used to spark meaningful conversations and reap the benefits from planning without updating the plans in minute detail. Documents as a means, is another way to aggressively promote communication. It is not a replacement for other communication methods because information can be gathered in so many ways that there is no need to replace anything. Documents are important and essential to the project because it contains information and other matters regarding the project which makes it sought for in thefts.

Robbers are after the money which makes them able to sell the documents to someone else so it is best to have a safety vault hidden in your workplace where only you will know about. Planning and tracking are essential activities for a project manager because it is where he / she becomes updated and determines the expected output from the project. These two activities are always in the context of achieving a particular goal, especially in the planning process because it is where agreements come to terms within the team. Project managers must stick to the agreed document and avoid making unnecessary changes before the project starts to avoid incorrect measurement from many organizations.

It is important for documents to always be completed, distributed and archived as proof to show that the project is legal and that there is something to present when needed. The project will need people to act upon the results they highlight and for someone to convey the information they contain to other parties who would then benefit the knowledge because plans and documents contain essential information for a business to meet its goal and makes it useful for completing the project.

25. You Are Not In Control

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/You_Are_Not_In_Control)

Quote: “Being the project manager does not make you king of the world”

What I learned: Acting as if you control the situation is different from being in control.

What I expect to learn: Understand group dynamics and different leadership styles.

Integrative questions: How do you understand and interpret group dynamics and leadership styles?

Being a project manager does not mean that you are in control of everything besides the project. The project manager is the leader and guide of the project team in the project. The title “Project manager” does not make you king of the world. We must learn not to hog the spotlight and control our obsession because the project is an opportunity for some project team members to show why they deserve to be on the team.

There is nothing wrong to have a meeting everyday but when there is a need, the project manager must give freedom to each of the project team members to update him / her based on the project part being handled. Project team member's satisfaction depends on the quality of the discussions because they expect a well-oriented and peaceful meeting. The team members can quit the team because of mistreatment from the project manager. A meeting where the project manager is present and those where he is not will be carefully deliberated and it can be determined from the feedbacks of the project team. Every project team expects control that benefits to the team because it helps project managers understand group dynamics and different leadership styles which benefits them in return.

Different projects and various teams will require different levels of control because we handle different projects and teams each time. Great project managers know how to exert the right level of control, respecting skills, experiences and connections team members bring to the project. Project team members must also exert the right level of control, respecting skills, experiences and connections in order to have a balanced workload and relationship with their project manager.

26. Pay Your Debts

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Pay_Your_Debts)

Quote: “Debts cannot be wished away”

What I learned: Software gets unwieldy for many reasons.

What I expect to learn: How software can become unmanageable over time and why business stakeholders should invest in keeping code clean.

Integrative questions: What is the best way to pay off technical debts?

Debts cannot be wished away but you can pay it down with determination and the good graces of a few wealthy relatives. One of the smartest things you can do to get a handle on your debt is to do a budget. If you have assets with some significant equity, such as a home or a car you may be able to use these to get control of your debt like selling your car to pay off your debts and buying a cheaper car. You could be saving a considerable amount of money on interest if you pay off high interest credit card debt in return for lower cost debt.

Setting up a repayment plan also benefits because it helps cut back on your expenses and/or use freed up cash to pay down your debts. Pay off the debts with the highest rates first and work your way down the list. Getting a consolidation loan can make lots of sense by applying for a loan which pays off all your debts and have just one payment to make. The new loan usually has a smaller payment and a lower interest rate.

In some cases, you can make a proposal to your creditors to set up a payment plan that will allow you to pay your creditors in an orderly way and thus help preserve your credit rating. This operates similar to a debt consolidation loan except you do not borrow the money to pay off your creditors. Get a trustee to file a proposal or an agreement between you and your creditors to have you pay off only a portion of your debts, extend the time you have to pay off the debt, or provide some combination of both.

27. Software Failure is Organizational Failure

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Software_Failure_is_Organizational_Failure)

Quote: “Projects are important, not urgent”

What I learned: The software industry has a lot of work to do to help its practitioners be more consistent in the delivery of high quality, on-time releases.

What I expect to learn: Adding business functionality in a deliberate, prioritized way.

Integrative questions: How to avoid organizational failure?

To developers, software projects are important and not urgent because when deadlines are missed, they had to move the release date to fix the bugs and get the best quality possible. It may seem that the team is to be blamed, not good enough, smart enough, and productive enough or up to the challenge but you cannot forget that successful projects require active and adequate participation from all stakeholders. Everyone’s participation is crucial because we hold the key to success based on the way we think and act on specific matters. It is important to know who is building what, when and why in a project because if the software fails, it means the organization failed.

The organization is the one responsible and working to make the software function properly. It is important for the organization to add business functionality in deliberate, prioritized ways to catch problems with poorly captured and expressed requirements. Developing software requires everything from valid metrics, clear communication, engaged business and user participation for it to function and become successful. Software teams are given an estimate time-table to work on upcoming releases.

It is required that each iteration of work should include new business functionality, as well as a sanctioned effort to re-factor some of hacks that inevitably show up in the code because newer versions contain updated features that can better benefit the software. The organization must commit to tracking industry trends, acquiring tools and adopting practices that demonstrate productive influences on how programmers work. It is a must for IT professionals to expand their knowledge, both on and off the clock because the industry rapidly develops each passing day to prepare for the future.

28. Project Management Is Problem Management

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Management_Is_Problem_Management)

Quote: “The most challenging aspect is the personalities involved in the effort”

What I learned: The most challenging aspect of a project isn’t necessarily the technology or timeline, but can be the personalities involved in the effort.

What I expect to learn: How to plan better, think more clearly and have a greater strategic vision.

Integrative questions: What are the complications of Project management?

The objective of problem management is to minimize the impact of problems on the organization. Problem management plays an important role in the detection, providing solutions to problems (work around & known errors) and prevents their reoccurrence. Project manager would be receiving a request for execution that will simply align and work would proceed smoothly to completion without any need for shepherding. In this context, a problem is an underlying issue that could lead to an incident while an incident is an event that disrupts normal operation.

Problem management can either be reactive (problem solving when an error occurs) or proactive (identifying issues and potential risks before they become problematic). There is a need for project managers because they understand how to solve problems with the appropriate knowledge. Resources are over allocated, technologies and skill sets are incompatible, requirements are unclear and timelines are unrealistic is why the role of the project manager exists because that is not the reality. Individuals that know how to control change and handle the pressure are considered good project managers.

They should have the right amount of knowledge and experience on the situation. Project management is a challenging and complex endeavor because it takes a lot of work before the project can be called successful. Project managers are necessary to ensure that the inevitable difficulties become non-issues. They make sure that the project is smooth flowing and is focused on a great strategic vision to achieve its goal.

Project managers will need a well-formed team to help him / her in completing the project because success is dependent on good leadership and effective strategy implementation.

29. Under-promise, over-deliver

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Under-promise,_over-deliver)

Quote: “Always strive to deliver what you promised”

What I learned: Always strive to deliver exactly what you promised.

What I expect to learn: How to prioritize time management when having loads of work all at once.

Integrative questions: Why do people under-promise, over deliver? Why are people afraid of showing their weaknesses?

Do not commit to something that exceeds your capability because it will hurt your status as a project manager and as a person as well. At the start of the project, only commit to what you and your team know that both sides will be able to accomplish. Delivering less than you said you would make you a bad influence and people will start losing their trust on you. You must strive to deliver exactly what you promised because it is what can make you successful.

Project managers become eager to please people in order for them to be chosen for the job and garner the attention that they want. Always remember to keep the amount of commitments at a workable number. Do not promise a lot at once. Once previously set commitments are done, now is the time to make new commitments.

This makes work easy to control. We tend to be strong and sweat it out in order to deliver because we sometimes become afraid to show our weaknesses. Some commitments and features can wait to be released because there is always the right time for everything. Some software needs to be deferred to a future release because it has specs that will not be compatible to older releases.

We prioritize value too much which makes us under-promise, over-deliver in the commitments that we make. Good project managers, through their knowledge, know which features may and may not be gotten done in a release. A good project manager serves as a leader and mentor to avoid his / her team under-promise, over-deliver in order to get the expected output out of the project.

30. Use a Wiki

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Use_a_Wiki)

Quote: “Avoid wasting precious brain cells”

What I learned: Wiki’s are a great mechanism to centralize access to your project information.

What I expect to learn: To avoid wasting precious brain cells that may be needed for the actual project work.

Integrative questions: How to know if the wiki is a more appropriate place to exchange and archive the information?

Wiki’s are a great mechanism to centralize access to your project information because it helps the project team store its documents of the project. It is good to make a back-up of the documents in case something goes wrong with your wiki because you wouldn’t know when something unexpected will / can happen. Updating stakeholders with up-to-the-minute status, short term issues, long term issues, risk and budget tracking is a good way for them to follow the project. Wiki’s allow anyone to edit a page with a “permission to access” function.

This is a great way to keep the mechanism up-to-the-minute. Wiki’s serve as databases that contain every information regarding the project and the team. Using wiki’s to archive documents help refresh the memory of the team based on details covered during the previous meeting. They can check and / or prepare for future meetings with the help of this database.

Suggestions and ideas are advantageous to the project because it lessens the project manager’s getting into stress and thinking too much. Wiki’s can also be used to store instructions and tutorials on certain matters that are present in the project. Duplicating information can ruin your wiki because repetition is irritating and inappropriate. Monitoring change control is also important in the use of wiki’s because people can stop using the wiki when they notice something wrong and does not get fixed immediately.

For me, Wiki’s are more organized than emails because it allows the creation of folders to help store related documents together.

31. The PMBOK Guide is not the Holy Bible

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_PMBOK%C2%AE_Guide_is_not_the_Holy_Bible)

Quote: “Project Management Knowledge is a means, not an end”

What I learned: Do not feel tempted to rigorously establish all the processes and documents your textbook mentions, exactly as they are described.

What I expect to learn: Not to get overly involved with following a methodology to the detriment of managing a project to a useful, praiseworthy completion.

Integrative questions: How familiar is the team with specialized processes? Are they interested?

In order for the project to be successful, there is a required level of effort. Through this, project managers require a lot of administrative effort from every team member because their commitment is one of the crucial decisions to make during project life. Work hours are maximized while budget estimates are wisely used. Setting a mindset that quality of work is better than time of work makes the project successful to ensure that the expected output comes out as expected.

Executing and understanding the company’s culture correctly is also an advantage for the project’s success because the project team will be familiar with the specialized processes. Through this, the project manager will know if the project team member/s is interested to learn and if the project is going in the right direction. The project manager and project team must have a strong relationship with the functional managers and other company departments because properly executed task leads to success. There are risks that project managers are willing to take during project life because it cannot be avoided and is part of everything that we do.

The focus of the project manager must be based on how the project will benefit the users and most of all, the successful completion of the project. All the project management knowledge you have at your disposition is a means, not an end because it can help in completing the project with the expected output and will continue to grow with new information. Team members must be assigned to geographically distributed teams so that it will be easy for them to be introduced, follow and enforce mandatory procedures.

32. Favor the Now over the Soon

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Favor_the_Now_over_the_Soon)

Quote: “Now is a million times better than soon”

What I learned: Exaggeration is a million times worse than understatement.

What I expect to learn: How to optimize performance effectively without the software.

Integrative questions: How do you optimize performance without the software?

Favor the now over the soon because you are living in it right now. There is nothing wrong to having a goal and a dream because focusing more on the now determines what lies for you in the future. When you get the opportunity, step up to the challenge and make sure that it is not wasted because it provides appropriate knowledge for the future. Tasks should not be endlessly talked about and not delivered because it would hurt your record as a hardworking and committed person.

At the start of project life, serious planning and discussion must be implemented in order to address the needs of the project which falls under the team’s grasp to complete. For example, software that you can touch, run and interact with is better than a word document full of requirements because the usability of the project is present and it suits the complexity level of the users. The idea of favoring the now over the soon is to get the task implemented and in front of the user as quickly as possible. Knowing the response of the user determines whether the project will be successful or not.

Favoring the now over the soon gives you and your team the time to rethink, readjust and rewrite sooner than later. Errors must be worked upon early in order for it to not be forgotten because it affects the project. The programming language or framework must make new features available in a matter of minutes or seconds to avoid problem. Code compilation must only take minutes or seconds as well to finish for the team member to be efficient at his / her work.

33. Favor the Simple over the Complex

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Favor_the_Simple_over_the_Complex)

Quote: “Great project managers absorb complexity from all sides”

What I learned: It takes great skill and knowledge to be called a Project Manager.

What I expect to learn: Are you a complexity sink or a complexity amplifier?

Integrative questions: Are you a complexity sink or a complexity amplifier? How much complexity are you forcing onto the end-user?

It is always better to keep things simple rather than complex because there are always new users of Information Technology joining the fold. The wireframe of a project can be unique but simple in order for it to not exceed the user’s capability. Users prefer simplicity more because it avoids or lessens the stress that they can encounter while interacting with the project. A simple User Interface will have a faster loading time because of the information that it contains does not take up much memory while loading.

What does this mean for software development? Software generally solves complex problems. Complex software would not be able to solve a complex problem for a novice user because it exceeds his / her capability and knowledge towards the information system. It means that software’s may have a “one-click” button but it should lead its users directly to the preferred destination. A button must answer the purpose of the user’s click of the link.

The link must contain the appropriate information that the user seeks. Always ask yourself this at the start of project life, as a project manager, are you a complexity sink or a complexity amplifier? The best ones absorb complexity from all sides and never amplify it. The project manager’s role to clean up contradictory requirements to be sent to the developers is crucial to their understanding and knowledge of the task. The software must then be made simple or complex whichever suits the end-users capability.

As the developers provide technical reasons for not being able to fulfill a requirement, the project manager needs to translate the complexity and present the end-user with enough information to help them choose a different path to take.

34. Developer Productivity Mean vs. Median

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Developer_Productivity_Mean_vs._Median)

Quote: “Communication channels increase with each addition to the team”

What I learned: The difference between a skilled programmer and an average one is huge.

What I expect to learn: Which is more beneficial, taking a poor performer off the team then add a good one or do not do the addition?

Integrative questions: What does this mean to our project managers as they plan the development of the project?

Understand that really good software developers are much more productive than average ones. An average software developer is still a developer but they could either have less knowledge or better ideas because of their generation's role in the technology era. Average software developers can also be a reliable asset because of their record. They are fresh out of graduation and have done nothing wrong yet.

Mistakes would happen because it is always part of the learning process. Everyone experiences it. A project manager would know if his / her developer is committed to the project or not. When the developer does a mistake, is he / she going to quit or continue trying? This is one of the things that a project manager looks at.

Developer productivity is a part of the project's success. A project does not depend on one part to achieve success. It takes a joint effort to make it happen. The project manager should control his / her temper and give support to the team because through this the team member/s will ask themselves, am I a slave or a part of the company? The developer's productivity is crucial to the technical aspects of the project because it is the task given to him / her to complete.

In software development, what is programmed today becomes the foundation for tomorrow because it supports and follows the rapid development of technology for technology to work. Average developers will slow down velocity compared to the really good ones because of being a poor performer. When this occurs, the project manager would have to make a decision whether to taking out a poor performer off the team is more beneficial than adding a good one.

35. Savor Sustainable Progress, not speed.

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Savor_Sustainable_Progress,_not_Speed)

Quote: “Sustainable progress is better than speed”

What I learned: Savor sustainable progress, not speed.

What I expect to learn: How can you get things done fast with sustainable progress and not speed.

Integrative questions: How does effective planning address sustainable progress?

Sustainable progress is better than speed because the project manager focuses more on the quality of the project rather than delivering fast. Time is of the essence. It doesn't mean that when given a task, it should be done in a couple of days. A project requires effective planning and serious work behavior that focuses on success not speed.

It is better to get a code written then re-factored because a task will be easier to work on and it lessens the pressure of too much task. Applying test to make sure each piece of the code does what the developer meant it to do is appropriate because he / she would know if it is time to move on. Committed individuals want to be reasonably satisfied when doing a task because they think of the output and not the time spent in completing it. When the product or output is demonstrated to the customers, they will see if the project team is just focused on making money or think of the output that would benefit them better.

The project team must make sure that the customers love the demonstrated model so that they would know what needs work and what the end-users want in the software. The project manager will know if it needs change or to be improved. The software developer must be able to make code alterations while keeping the completed functions working. The project manager must make sure that his / her developer is knowledgeable of the task before starting the task.

36. Value Results, not Only Efforts – Work efficiently, not longer

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Value_Results,_not_Only_Efforts%E2%80%94Work_efficiently,_not_longer)

Quote: “Results are valued”

What I learned: In success, efforts and results co-exist.

What I expect to learn: Learn to work efficiently, not longer.

Integrative questions: How to make your projects flourish with adequate amount of time and fewer broadly defined tasks.

Developing software takes a lot of effort. In a project, results should also be valued because this determines if the effort paid off or not. A successful implementation of an application means that there is no redundant and unnecessary codes present in the software because not all codes are really needed for it work. One thing that can be taken into consideration is the addition of code with some perceived extensibility in mind but it has to be done correctly because when implemented correctly, extensibility can be an important part of the project.

Working efficiently than longer is better because you get to finish a task with consistency which in turn lessens the delay of the project. Project managers have the option to offer their team extra time and ask for extra effort but make sure that they produce additional, useable results at the end. Programmers routinely insist to work long hours due to work habit than call it a day and continue tomorrow. It depends on the programmer’s capability but he / she will not be able to offer even better knowledge when rested than stressed.

Individuals need energy and rest to provide the best results. Programmers produce different outputs and have their own unique ways to arrive at an answer to a problem or task. Give them small but adequate amounts of time and fewer broadly defined tasks and they flourish. Give them larger task and ask them to routinely work extra hours and they begin to break down.

They tend to overwrite and complicate code since they have too much time on their hands so it is best for the project manager to guide them in their task.

37. Don't throw spreadsheets at people issues

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Don%27t_throw_spreadsheets_at_people_issues)

Quote: "Project management is managing people in processes they are involved in"

What I learned: Diversity in ideas, goals, values, beliefs and needs are the primary strength of teams, not weaknesses.

What I expect to learn: Be a skilled project manager.

Integrative questions: How do spreadsheets explain the work of a project?

Using a spreadsheet for managing and monitoring projects is a good way to organize details regarding the project. The user interface (UI) of a spreadsheet really helps explain the work on a project. Spreadsheets prioritize the deliverables for different users to interact with. It lessens stress and disappointment because of how it is organized.

The lack of time and the skill sets necessary to manage each user's expectations creates problems for everyone in the company. This is where the project manager comes in to help prioritize and list the deliverables for the company every week, month or quarter. The project manager facilitates discussions with the various users' to prioritize the deliverables of their project. Then, the priorities are evaluated to get feedback and suggestions to help improve the project.

Not only that the users have their expectation set correctly but the project team gets a frequently refreshed list of tasks. They can stay focused on developing the most important items on the weeks, month's or quarters agenda. The secret to making this plan effective is not to stop with a spreadsheet list of deliverables but to have the project manager set the expectations by involving the team in prioritizing what features or functionalities are the most important, valuable or revenue producing, given the amount of resources present. Each member must present a report of how much work they can expect in the week, given the needs of the other distributed parts of the project.

In the end, project management is about managing people and managing the processes in which they are involved.

38. Build teams to run Marathons not Sprints

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Build_teams_to_run_Marathons_not_Sprints)

Quote: “Building useful projects is not an end in itself”

What I learned: Project managers need to spend more time empowering their teams to deal with unanticipated changes rather than trying to get involved in day-to-day decisions.

What I expect to learn: The strategic role of a Project Manager.

Integrative questions: What is the importance of a team built for marathons than sprints?

The project team must be disciplined, practice everyday and keep a sustainable speed when dealing with a project because it takes commitment and motivation to achieve success. A project does not finish in a short period of time because it takes planning, time to complete a task and sometimes, change management. When dealing with a project, its team does not want to complete it in just one sitting and exhaust themselves. They value not just efforts but results as well.

The project team focuses on the quality of the output because they would not be satisfied with the output when focused on the speed of completing a given task. Sustainable project teams are geared towards running marathons and not allowed to just run sprints. Meaning, they should be prepared for the rigors of which a project brings to them. They must accept and step up to the challenge of the task given to them.

Building useful projects is not an end in itself. Team members need to learn how to help one another, help other team members realize their true potential and create an environment that allows everyone to go beyond their limitations. Each one should be willing to learn new things and create an understanding with each other because individual commitment and team work determines the success rate of the project. The project manager is the best choice to work on team development and target a goal to build sustainable teams to ensure that the team is self-organized and know how to handle themselves without the project manager’s help.

39. Go ahead, throw that practice out

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Go_ahead,_throw_that_practice_out)

Quote: “Process is not an issue”

What I learned: Perfection is attained not when there is nothing more to add but when there is nothing left to take away.

What I expect to learn: The Less is more philosophy.

Integrative questions: How to re-factor processes along with the software?

Successful teams constantly question their own practices and try to eliminate unnecessary ones. They re-factor their processes along with their software because their mindset is focused on the quality of work based on their efforts. Perfection is attained not when there is nothing more to add but when there is nothing left to take away. Successful project teams make sure that they are satisfied with their work before they all move on to the next task.

One part cannot start when the previous part is incomplete because distributed project parts are all linked together. The project team must plan their strategy at the start of project life and create a backup plan in case any risk arises because over a period of time, the value of the end product gets thinner and thinner while the process and by-products get bulkier and bulkier. Some developers supply too much features that some become useless or makes the software complex for its end-users. The team also looks for new recruits which affects the results of the product.

The planned process is not followed which makes work stressful to the team. The team does not experience good meetings which make the project much more difficult to analyze and understanding. The amount of documents and supporting artifacts must be organized properly to control increases. Team leaders have a tendency to keep adding more processes, thinking that it can help solve the problem which the project is encountering.

Process is not an issue. Adding more processes will only make the project much more difficult for the team to see the root cause of the real problem.

40. You get what you ask for

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/You_get_what_you_ask_for)

Quote: “More software done faster does not result in successful software”

What I learned: Be sure what you are measuring is of value and may change during the project.

What I expect to learn: How to deal with multiple tasks given at the same time.

Integrative questions: How to avoid unnecessary team tensions?

It is possible to get the things that we want. Individual / team wants are different from individual / team needs, a want is something desired while a need is something that is necessary. It is a well-known fact that if you measure the wrong things, you encourage wrong behavior. Project managers must make sure that they do not track and measure their team against the wrong parameters because it affects their work habits most especially the project. Studies show that working longer results in poorer work quality because we are already stressed and our thinking will be weaker than when not in the state of stress.

Measuring and focusing on the team's velocity encourages more work to be done faster but does not necessarily ensure the most important / critical work is chosen. The expected output may not be reached and the task is focused on the amount of functionality completed by the team in a time span. More software done faster does not mean successful software because a time span is required for every task to be completed. Project managers and/or project teams must be aware of what they ask for because these could lead to unnecessary team tensions that will drastically affect the project.

Unnecessary team tensions would mean that teams when measured using the wrong parameters will adapt and optimize itself for the poorly chosen parameters. They will also lack the understanding of the project's purpose or vision led to team members defining their own success criteria and measuring themselves against their own respective, disconnected and dysfunctional parameters. An incorrect measurement does more harm than good to a team.

41. The importance of the Project Scope Statement

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Importance_of_the_Project_Scope_Statement)

Quote: “The project plan is the heartbeat of a solid project management methodology”

What I learned: The project scope statement is the breath of the project.

What I expect to learn: Different ways to increase chances for a successful project.

Integrative questions: Why is it important to regularly review the project scope statement?

The project plan is the heartbeat of a solid project management methodology while the scope statement is the breath. The project plan is used to guide both the project execution and project control. The primary uses of the project plan are to document planning assumptions and decisions, facilitate communication among stakeholders and document approved scope, cost and schedule baselines. It may either be summarized or detailed.

The project scope statement, on the other hand, details the vision of the project. It describes the goals, the deliverables and documents what a successful conclusion to the project looks like. The project scope statement should capture, in very broad terms, the product of the project. It must also include the list of users using the product, as well as the features in the resulting product.

It is important to keep checking back with the scope statement throughout the project to make sure that you and your team is delivering what the customer is expecting. The project plan is the project blueprint. It gives the technical team ideas of how the layout, features in the project would look like. It describes the characteristics of the finished product or service of the project.

The project scope statement helps manage stakeholder expectations. It is a great way to remind your stakeholders what they agreed to at the beginning of the project. It is a good idea to periodically review your project scope statement with your stakeholders so that they would know what is happening and if the blueprint is being followed according to plan.

42. How Do You Define “Finished”?

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/How_Do_You_Define_%22Finished%22%3F)

Quote: “Iterative software development is divide and conquer”

What I learned: Feedback is the most important part of the project.

What I expect to learn: Embracing the overall project scope.

Integrative questions: How do you define “finished”?

It is hard for a team to succeed if there is not a clear definition of what success means. Success entails delivering a product or project that meets the customer expectations with the expected output in place. A project is not complete without the feedback from the end-users because you will know what to improve on and what to expect the next time around. In order for a project to be finished, the overall project scope must be embraced and completed to be called successful.

A project can be defined finished when the project scope statement is followed and completed. Finishing the goals of one iteration can be clearly set out as creating working software which passes unit tests, possibly clears limited integration tests and allows promised software features to be demoed to the stakeholders for their approval and feedback. When the expected goes as planned, this would deem the project finished. Projects that are not defined as finished undergo renovation and improvement for new features to work in its interface.

What it means to be finished differs from the accumulated finishing of a set of features within iteration. Missing items per iteration can alter the way a feature is implemented, tested and perceived by the customer. Project managers must not over-burden their developers with administrative or business issues. The underlying concept that they will need to spread is that iterations are not just for software developers.

Project managers must be coordinated with tasks important to the project team and must coordinate their crucial activities with those of the developer. They are the person’s responsible for this coordination to complete the project.

43. Introduce A More Agile Communication System

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Introduce_A_More_Agile_Communication_System)

Quote: “The key to agile methodologies is timely communication loops”

What I learned: A more flexible, agile process is much effective in solving a problem.

What I expect to learn: How do agile project managers keep communications to the essentials?

Integrative questions: How to implement agile methodologies within the project?

Communication is used in order to conceptualize the processes by which individuals navigate and assign meaning. Communication is also understood as the exchanging of understanding. Project managers are taught to mitigate communication breakdowns between team members and provide constant, effective communication because failed projects place a great deal of blame on communication breakdowns when not completed with the expected output. The weight of this responsibility sometimes leads project managers to overreact.

To solve this problem, many software development endeavors are moving toward a more flexible, agile process because communication is important in everything that we do in order to gather information and garner understanding. Using timely communication loops which enable agile teams to respond effectively to unforeseen changes, quickly reassess and reprioritize project features. A more agile communication system entails the project manager and project team with better understanding of what they have accomplished since their last meeting. This type of communication gives flexibility and determines the strengths of each one in dealing with the project.

The project manager must make sure that team meetings are made effective in which it integrates a task management tool that shows the output of a feature's test. Through this, the task management tool gives a more accurate representation of the state of the feature for better understanding and analyzation of the project. Results show the objective picture of progress because outputs determine whether the project is doing good or not. Using a Wiki system is also a good communication tool because it easily keeps the vision of the project adjusted to the reality of the development progress and stores your files as a secondary or backup resource.

44. The best people to create the estimates are the ones who do the work
(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_best_people_to_create_the_estimates_are_the_ones_who_do_the_work)

Quote: “The best people to create the estimates are the ones that do the work”

What I learned: As a project manager, leave the estimation decision to the leading team.

What I expect to learn: Which is the more appropriate approach when dealing with estimates?

Integrative questions: Have you been on a project where one person creates all the estimates for the work to be done? Is this a successful approach?

The best people to create the estimates are the ones who do the work because they are knowledgeable of the task and had the skill level appropriate for it to be completed. The individuals that did the work will be and have more accurate estimates compared to the ones who create the estimates but did not contribute to the task because their paces vary. Based on comparison, having more people involved in estimation than just one gives better results because the risk of the result being incorrect will be low. Each member of the team will be handed an estimate that they must meet.

The project manager does not hold the decision whether he / she is qualified to provide the estimates for the team, the lead architect has the decision to set the estimate. Project managers cannot adequately choose the estimates for the team. It will depend on how long the project manager has held an active development because the worst the estimates are going to be if it has been too long. The project manager will need to seek assistance with the lead architect to set the estimates for the team and the project.

It is inappropriate for the lead architect to create the estimates if the project team will be using an unfamiliar technology to complete the project so it is better to consult with the project manager for better understanding of the scope of the project before proceeding with the estimates. Group estimation is also another effective approach because suggestions and different outputs will arise which can be documented and taken into consideration. The more conservative figure will be chosen because of how it will fit in and benefit the project.

45. Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Alice_Doesn%27t_Live_Here_Anymore)

Quote: "Hitting two birds with one stone"

What I learned: The advantages and disadvantages of having a virtual team in a remote location.

What I expect to learn: How to use your knowledge to your advantage.

Integrative questions: What advantage and disadvantage does a virtual team bring?

Current discussion among software developers tend to resolve around the best programming language. Using and learning every programming language the Information Technology Industry has to offer is important because the developer and/or user will really get to interact with the codes and alter the features and user interface at their fingertips. People may be more important than projects to their employers because through this, they would know if they are part of the company or just being used to complete the organization chart of the company.

Landing a wonderful job in a developing country will be more possible because not much work has been done and there will be more opportunities to develop things. Satellite frequency is stronger in the same area compared to being miles away because of the delay and gap between communication systems. It is also a great opportunity to be working with different people because it enables the communication channel to get information from another area which is not present in your previous area. Not having a permanent office also helps because you get to interact with different people and go to different places to enjoy work.

It is hitting "two birds with one stone" because it makes work more enjoyable and stressful. An example is working in the comforts of your home or under a tree and doing your work gives flexibility. A disadvantage of communicating with someone in a different area is that the project manager will need to carefully research numerous small issues to allow the team to function smoothly.

46. A Project Is The Pursuit of a Solution

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/A_Project_Is_The_Pursuit_of_a_Solution)

Quote: “Begin with the end in mind”

What I learned: Always begin with the end in mind.

What I expect to learn: How to assign work packages properly.

Integrative questions: Why include the team? How can you plan, budget and schedule before having clearly defined the work of the project?

Beginning each task with the task in mind gives us full control and responsibility for the outcome. By taking control of our task, we use our imagination and conscience to build a solution for a specific problem. Project management is leadership management; management is doing things right while leadership is doing the right things. A starting point in beginning with the end in mind is to develop a mission statement and philosophy for the team to give each one a better understanding of the project scope and what has to be accomplished in order for the project to be successful.

It will help each member of the team focus on what they want to be (character), do (contributions and achievements) and on the values and principles upon which their individual being and doing are based. The project team can make the mission statement balanced and easier to work with by breaking down the project into distributed tasks that focus on what each one wants to accomplish in each area of the project. Another way to figure out a solution to a problem is to use visualization techniques because along with affirmation, both are self-programming techniques that should be used in harmony with correct principles. If there is no involvement in the process, there will be no commitment to the statement.

An organization may have an all-encompassing mission statement, and each location, or even each team may have their own. However, each mission statement should all link to each other leading up to the main mission statement.

47. True Success Comes With A Supporting Organization

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/True_Sucess_Comes_With_A_Supportin_g_Organization)

Quote: “Wise executives make sure the company is supporting the attitudes and behaviors that allow team members to be effective”

What I learned: Success cannot be achieved alone.

What I expect to learn: Learn to deal with troublemakers.

Integrative questions: How project managers provide objectivity toward the project?

If organizations avoid risk planning, aggressive problem seeking and timely issue resolutions, it could be due to a problem with the culture. Those on the project team who can't get along with the other members are labeled as troublemakers because the project cannot risk keeping a problem alive until after project life. A supporting organization will share troublesome issues and make known of any problem regarding the project because they support the project team in getting the expected output in the final revision of the project. The project manager must provide a predictable project delivery with as few unexpected distractions as possible.

Wise executives will make sure that the company is supporting the attitudes and behaviors that allow every member of the project team and project manager to be effective. The help of the Human Resource Manager will be needed at this time because he / she will evaluate human resource policies and incentive plans to make sure that they are in alignment with behaviors that lead to the development of strong products and services in which the project team would provide to the end-users. The upper management of the company should establish consistency between what they profess to believe and what they provide as a work environment to encourage productive behavior, both the individuals and the organization will flourish. Project managers in turn, provide objectivity toward the project.

All committed project managers and project teams want to work in an organization with a cohesive and effective strategy to support new software project development that leads to better success for the project.

48. A Project Depends on Teamwork

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/A_Project_Depends_on_Teamwork)

Quote: “A project is a collective effort”

What I learned: To delegate, you need to take into consideration the adequate combination of technical and managerial competencies required for each task.

What I expect to learn: To always make better results guaranteed.

Integrative questions: How do different centers of knowledge work together? What is the project’s work breakdown structure?

An individual cannot handle and complete a project on his / her own. It takes teamwork to be able to complete a task to ensure the best output and time management. Some individuals obtain the willingness to learn new knowledge and skills in order to arrive at a solution to tasks in different ways. The quality of teamwork may be measured by analyzing the effectiveness of the collaboration in the following ways: communication, coordination, balance of contributions, mutual support, effort and cohesion.

Accounting techniques may be used to provide financial measures of the benefits of teamwork which are useful for justifying the concept in a business setting. Teamwork is a collective effort because when it is jointly performed by individuals of great diversity and once deployed according to their own unique skills, competencies and properly coordinated techniques, they are able to produce major results and fulfill the expectations agreed upon. Project activities are work units that require the participation and coordination of individuals from different groups within the organization and eventually participants from external organizations to give support. These groups are formed with different centers of knowledge and competence that manage and/or carry out the project activities.

In order for the project to be successful, the project team must work effectively and produce a positive result in the project environment while the allocation of responsibilities should tie directly to the individuals and not to the departments or organizations to which people belong. These responsibility assignments should be documented in the project plan.

The overall participation and contribution to the project results is measured by each group’s collective sets of activities in which each group member completes.

49. Establish Project Management Governance

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Establish_Project_Management_Governance)

Quote: “Project governance should be planned in advance to be effective”

What I learned: How to establish an effective Project Management Governance

What I expect to learn: The relationship between Project Governance and Project Management processes.

Integrative questions: Why is project governance needed? What advantages, disadvantages does it bring?

Project management governance relates to accountabilities and responsibilities for the management of the performance of an organization. It makes responsibilities more explicit and will introduce new requirements and standards relating to the production of financial and other data. In many organizations, this will include project data, creating a direct link between key project management information and corporate governance. Project management governance extends the principle of governance in both the management of individual projects in line with the governance structures and the management of projects at the business level.

Today, many organizations are developing models for Project Governance Structures which can be different to a traditional organization structure because it defines accountabilities and responsibilities for strategic decision-making across the project. This can be particularly useful to project management processes such as change control and strategic (project) decision-making. When implemented well, it can have a significantly positive effect on the quality and speed of decision-making based on significant issues regarding the project. A project that is not clearly exhibiting commonly accepted characteristics of project failure should be allowed to proceed to their next phase without clear resolution of issues.

This would be an important step up in an organizations competence in managing internal corporate or business projects. The organization must control the assurance that projects are being well-managed and meets the requirements of Governance across the organization. Portfolio management should also be optimizing the return from corporate resource and maintain alignment with strategic objectives. The project team must assure that their project does not exhibit conditions of project failure.

50. Do not fall into the “Not Invented Here” syndrome

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Do_not_fall_into_the_%22Not_Invented_Here%22_syndrome)

Quote: “Project management is linked with Asset management”

What I learned: Trust your skills.

What I expect to learn: Not to fall into the NIH syndrome.

Integrative questions: What is the NIH syndrome? How can I avoid it?

What is the “Not Invented Here” syndrome? Not Invented Here (NIH) is a term used to describe persistent social, corporate or institutional culture that avoids using or buying already existing products, research or knowledge because of their external origins. As a social phenomenon, this syndrome is manifested as an unwillingness to adopt an idea or product because it originates from another culture. Incoming Information Technology Professionals must focus on innovation, not on what has already been created in order for their knowledge to be put to use. The industry and the web deserve new and unique inventions because of the development of the technology era in our generation.

In programming, it is also common to refer to NIH syndrome as the tendency towards re-implementing something that is already available based on the belief that in-house developments are inherently better suited, more secure or more controlled than existing implementations. Most developers would rather be known as the hero who developed the User Interface (UI) framework that the whole company now relies on than simply the guy who made the suggestion to use a different user interface. If it has been the practice of the organization to develop all new software internally, it would be easier to go with the flow rather than introduce the relative idea of bringing in all or worse, a part of the new package from the “outside”. Organizations or developers with an open mind to using external software may be unaware that what they need is already available.

51. PMO – Project Management Office, Effectiveness In Practice

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/PMO_-_Project_Management_Office,_Effectiveness_In_Practice)

Quote: “Fulfill your responsibilities”

What I learned: PMO’s are intended to be centers of intelligence and coordination.

What I expect to learn: PMO’s functions within a business.

Integrative questions: How PMO’s intended to be centers of intelligence and coordination? How does it link strategic business objectives to employee’s actions?

The Project Management Office is the department or group that defines and maintains the standards and processes which are related to project management within an organization. Being in a project management office is a good and effective practice because you get to see what is happening and experience everything that occurs during project life. Having this practice requires change management because the benefits outweigh the effort. In today’s complex business environment, new projects are constantly being developed as organizations seek new ways to reduce costs, improve processes, increase productivity and build their bottom line because managing these diverse projects along with their people, resources, technology and communication is a difficult endeavor for which the risk of failure is too high.

An effective solution would be to create and establish a more centralized management structure for large groups of projects is the Project Management Office. Launching a Project Management Office is just like any other organizational change project. Investments in a PMO as a work management discipline can provide common planning, reporting processes, bring structure and support to evaluating, justifying, defining, planning, tracking and executing projects. It also encourages the resolution of conflicts caused by limited resources and other constraints.

There is no guarantee for success with any model. It is how the organization values the Project Management Office and the role of the Project Manager, in general, and how the supporting organization/s interacts with the PM that plays a significant role in the PMO’s organizational success. There is a way of doing things, a way of getting thing done but they are not always the same.

52. Managing Human Factors In IT Project Management

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Managing_Human_Factors_In_IT_Project_Management)

Quote: “Anticipate risk factors that could derail the project”

What I learned: The most prevalent cause of project failure is the Human Factor.

What I expect to learn: How to establish a proven team.

Integrative questions: What leads to stress on your project team? What is more stressful than undertaking a new software project?

The objective of most projects is to create a new product, service or solution, agility and flexibility of mind and working style are major positive behaviors to encourage human factors instead of repeating past actions. Following old processes may be counter-productive when faced with a new, different challenge. Human failure to perform a given task can be tied to our tendency to repeat our bad behaviors which is critical for the status of the project. Project managers must make sure that this is avoided because risk factors can derail the project.

Project developers, when faced with time pressure, appear to compromise the project and revert to using some favorite techniques that worked well in the past and are non-software related experiences. Personal, financial, work-related and other issues can lead to stress that can be difficult to manage. It is the project manager's job to be on the lookout for symptoms or behaviors that can lead team members to revert to old behaviors. This can be done by having active conversations with them and careful management of their work environment, the PM can help prevent or minimize the effects of stress.

Stress leads to past behavior, not active problem solving actions. Human emotions are natural in the workplace. It cannot be avoided so the project manager will have to assist his / her team members to avoid these human factors that can derail a project. It is best to nurture and manage your human capital as carefully as you monitor and protect your non-human resources because this will also be able to avoid stress and give success to the project and its team.

53. The value of Planning

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_value_of_Planning)

Quote: “No plan survives contact with the enemy”

What I learned: The value of planning.

What I expect to learn: How to create an initial level of mutual understanding.

Integrative questions: Can you assign your resources to other tasks that can be done next time? Will you need more time, money?

When in the process of planning, the comprehensive blueprint must include the contingency planning and worst case scenario. The supporting organization must also be provided with an emergency contingency plan to serve as backup data. The most successful plans are those that promote a constant awareness among employees, who, in turn, influence senior management to put a plan in place. Commitment without money is not a real commitment.

If the organization prepared for the worst, they will be able to recover quickly and successfully. The person in-charge of planning must assume complete responsibility for putting the plan in place. You must learn where you are most vulnerable at because if you prioritize assets and protect them, success is along the path that you are in. The most important consideration is the survival of the company and the attempt to minimize losses of the owners and stakeholders.

While it is important to protect both the people and the company, do not forget about the stakeholders because they rely on the prosperity of the company. Strategies involve deciding how to implement plans from where you are going to operate, who is going to be there, and the services and equipment that you will need. The planning process is one of the most important parts of the project because this is where everything about the project is to be determined. No plan will work if you have not practiced it so practice the plan because it will never be perfect no matter how many times you go through it.

54. Who is my customer?

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Who_is_my_customer%3F)

Quote: “Customers make or break your project”

What I learned: Not all stakeholders are able to fully analyze all the technical nuances of what is transpiring without the project manager’s help.

What I expect to learn: Find an effective input tool and work to achieve as much understanding of the underlying tasks as you can.

Integrative questions: Was the team learning a new programming tool or language?

The more customers, the better for a project because out of trust and satisfaction from the companies standpoint. At the start of the project, this is one of the things that has to be planned, who is my customer?, it determines what type of individuals the project is intended for and how it would benefit them. It is best for the project team to supply end-users with surveys and feedback forms to gather important information.

As a project manager, it is your role to help your team understand why providing a report is important to other team members or other departments who need to plan based on team progress. The project manager must be sharp at all times with what is happening inside and outside the project to know if the team has been complying with their tasks. You can know if they learned a new tool or language and if unexpected problems and challenges arose because this will be counted as documentation and once compiled, it adds explanatory information to help others interpret the numbers. Individuals appreciate proper recognition for a successful and complete task because they want to be recognized for something outstanding that they contributed.

If you are managing more than one member in a team with the same job title, it is possible to create a group incentive as a reward for a job well done. A project manager makes sure to look at the task of completing periodic status reports from the other person’s perspective because status reports are important since everyone needs to know what’s going on.

55. Immortality of scope changes

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Immortality_of_scope_changes)

Quote: “There is always the date”

What I learned: Scope is one of the most flexible constraints.

What I expect to learn: Keeping cost stable.

Integrative questions: How can the team eliminate “nice to have” items?

The project scope is vulnerable to change. Changes can happen anytime, expected or unexpected. The project manager must first determine whether the change has to be done or not before he / she can accept or reject the decision. The only or three (3) things stopping the project manager is the triple constraint: cost, time and scope. A constantly fluctuating scope greatly affects the organizations status in the industry.

When the project is in trouble, throwing in extra money or resources rarely helps because it will do more harm than good which will affect the project more. The cost is required to stay the same because if changed, it will create confusion over how things need to be done. Time can be constrained because at times, having flexibility to surround the delivery time will only give a small amount. Scope is one of the most flexible constraints because for example, every new software product has “must have” and “nice to have” features and functionality.

Especially when developing commercial software rather than software built and customized for a specific customer because developing commercial software benefits the end-users more since it is more flexible and does not focus on only a specific customer. The nature of software development projects is to release software versions that will support an existing product. They can consider adding what they originally planned to support in the existing version or release it in the next version which is to be released. Planning possible scope reductions from the beginning will make the project manager’s decision about what to do and how to do it easier should it become necessary.

56. Know Your Integration Points

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Know_Your_Integration_Points)

Quote: “The heartache of every project manager is systems integration”

What I learned: The heartache of every systems administrator, development engineer and software project manager is systems integration.

What I expect to learn: How to integrate effective system integration.

Integrative questions: What are your integration points?

System integration is the process of linking together different computing systems and software applications physically or functionally. The system integrator brings together discrete systems utilizing a variety of techniques such as computer networking, enterprise application integration, business process management or manual programming. No matter how promising a newly created application, a freshly produced software package or a long awaited, new-feature laden upgrade, the business value rests in getting it to work smoothly within the existing company system. The word “integration” can confuse the individual.

An experienced project manager who is new to the information technology industry must learn and know his / her project’s integration point. System integration can give trouble to a smoothly running process flow due to new software upgrades. When this occurs, most IT departments have diagrams showing how the various components of their hardware visual representation of how data flows throughout the organization. A good documentation helps illustrate if the systems are reliant to one another.

Supporting organizations engaged to manage the upgrades. The controlling organization has the option whether to share the business flow diagram due to confidentiality of the document. System integrators should be good at matching customers’ needs with existing products because they will benefit from knowing a little bit about a large number of products. System integration, on the other hand, includes a substantial amount of diagnostic and troubleshooting work. The ability to research existing products and software components is also helpful for the project’s scope and project documentation which is beneficial to the project.

57. A word that makes you miss your deadline

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/A_word_that_makes_you_miss_your_deadline)

Quote: “English is the best language to use in systems development”

What I learned: Make sure the product works flawlessly in a different version.

What I expect to learn: Sequence task in a way that quality control of functionality is done separately from quality review.

Integrative questions: Which word can make you miss your deadline?

It is not a good practice to miss your project's deadline but excuses can be made because of changes that will need to be made before the project can be released to the public. This ensures that the project team is really focused and determined to achieve the expected output of the project. Be careful when releasing a product in a different language because new risk and constraints are added to the project. Some of the risk and constraints are technical and obvious because it has to support the appropriate fonts for it to work.

Font compatibility is not under your control but translation is because it has to be considered and made accessible to other users before it becomes written into code. Make sure that the development practices follow international standards that will eliminate such issues. The mere need for alternate language version also constraints what decisions you can make and when so it is best to use the English language since everyone understands due to its universal recognition. Localization happens in parallel with English development with a certain lag because translation of foreign versions have to catch up with the English version which takes a few days, weeks or even months.

A word that makes you miss your deadline is affects the software development process because the developer must make sure that a foreign word can be properly translated and that it corresponds to the given word in return. The mistake less experienced project managers make is simple, they underestimate the effect and magnitude of making unexpected changes to the English version.

58. Clear Terms, Long Friendship!

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Clear_Terms,_Long_Friendship!)

Quote: “Clear terms equals long friendship”

What I learned: Clear terms equals to long friendships when development progresses no matter where in the project environment you look.

What I expect to learn: How to convince the supporting organization to sponsor your project.

Integrative questions: How can you integrate clear terms to assure long friendships?

The idea behind scope statements, setting goals and deliverables, and creating project definition documents applies to the many aspects of project management discipline. All project teams are geared towards starting up-front the terms and goals the project team is setting out to accomplish. From developing the project charter, scope, WBS, schedule, cost estimates, to quality / HR / communications and procurement plans. These measure the project lifecycle. The project manager makes sure to build, simply state or set clear project meeting guidelines and expectations your team expects.

Before the start of the project, a master attendance must be provided to prepare and require participants to plan ahead of time. Each participant will prepare by gathering information, taking to outside experts, reading relevant publication or research, and consulting old notes or company records as appropriate. The agreement to respect each other on the project team members by refraining from running sidebar conversations, interrupting, or talking over someone who is speaking is needed to ensure clear terms, long friendship in the project. It is also best to keep your customer involved with the happenings of the project because they expect to be advised to know more about the product and why they should choose it.

Contracts are documents and a helpful tool in which the agreement on the project is based upon. It must include specifics of how changes will be requested, approved and what the charge for each change will be. When terms are clear and expectations are about to be met, the project team has now acquired a long friendship due to the project's status and success.

59. Empowering Developers or a story of a man named Tim

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Empowering_Developers_or_a_story_of_a_man_named_Tim)

Quote: “Project managers set the vision and priorities”

What I learned: When making a hiring decision, more weight would normally be applied to a project manager’s personal experience with the candidate as compared to a cold interview.

What I expect to learn: An Agile development methodology.

Integrative questions: Why label someone as unproductive?

A project manager acts as a leader and role model to the project team in order to be guided in the proper direction in the project. It is important in the first meeting to set the vision and the priorities the project wants to answer and address. The vision and priorities of the project should be remembered at all times to serve as enlightenment in each one’s task. The project team member must not lack motivation because it links to one’s commitment with his / her work.

Lacking an important characteristic or attitude can hurt your stock in potential hiring’s. You must convince and show that you really want that open spot. When making a tough decision, more weight would normally be applied to a project manager’s personal experience with the candidate as compared to a cold interview. If the individual’s skills significantly exceeded those of the other candidates then that person is the right one for the job.

Tasks are then entered into the task tracking system where it is used for developers to see what tasks are started and/or if they finished their tasks early. The project manager is a good mentor if the hire turns out to be outstanding because he / she was able to out produce everyone else on the team. The project manager must learn to adjust to unproductive behaviors because it is a management style that can be excessively controlling. A good team has a clear vision, well-defined acceptance criteria and shared project priorities not determined by a lone project manager but known, documented and managed by the entire team.

60. To thine own self be true

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/To_thine_own_self_be_true)

Quote: “An empowered team has phenomenal capability”

What I learned: Always believe in yourself.

What I expect to learn: An empowered team enabled with phenomenal capability.

Integrative questions: What is your project’s market potential? Is it a superior product compared to others?

No one trusts you better than yourself. Always believe and be true to yourself because it will get you passed challenges and problems in whatever you do. A project takes self-control, teamwork and patience, when the project manager loses control of his / her self, someone from the team must help him / her recover because a project fails without the project manager completely focused. In order to manage or lead a team, project managers need to be in complete control of themselves.

They must have a strong understanding of their own personal purpose, vision, mission, as well as, personal and professional goals. When a solid personal life structure is in place, the project manager’s life is empowered. Without such empowerment, the project manager is easily defeated by the challenges that he / she has to face in a project. An intelligent, talented project manager loses focus on the management tasks at hand.

If the project manager becomes visibly distracted and starts to feel out of control will experience failure. Worse, the project manager does not feel in control and empowered to do what is needed to protect the project. When the unprotected team starts to experience communication breakdowns, the project cannot continue without the project manager in control and in focus because he / she starts the project’s engine. Communication breakdowns lead to tasks failure because it is not aligned with the project baseline.

Uncontrolled tasks and a project manager unable to bring things back under control lead to team despair. The project team’s morale fails that adds additional complexity to a project that is already out of control and most of all, they can lose their trust and commitment with the project and project manager.

61. Make Money On Your Issues!

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Make_Money_On_Your_Issues!)

Quote: “Find ways to make money”

What I learned: The importance of an activity list and project scope.

What I expect to learn: Other ways to make money on issues.

Integrative questions: What issues should you be aware of?

Issues either give the same problem or a new one that will challenge the developer or project team to configure the distributed part of the project to be able to move on with the task because every task is linked to each one and cannot move forward without completion of the task needed in order to do the next. Make money on your issues by investing on new and improved system development when it is fully functional to use. This will give financial security to the project because it is earning while experiencing issues. Make sure to create an activity list and plan carefully the project scope because this will help determine ways on how you can make money with the issues that will surface in the project during project life.

Using new software or technology development can help make you money because older technology developments or software versions will not be able to address an issue compared to a newer development or software. The project manager must always be alert and identify issues and potential risk at all times even before it becomes problematic. You can make money with your issues by seeking assistance from the company's supporting organization to sponsor your project. Make sure to get as much sponsors for the project as possible to have a positive outlook in the finances.

As a project manager, you will need to learn, understand and analyze how to make money from your issues and how to gain more. It is your responsibility to get all the help you need to make the project successfully.

62. Effectively Manage the Deliverables

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Effective_Manage_the_Deliverables)

Quote: “Components vary depending on the kind of software you are building”

What I learned: Everything that we do must be focused on the “big picture” without getting lost in details.

What I expect to learn: The key to being an effective project manager.

Integrative questions: What are the ways to effectively manage deliverables?

Project deliverables are important for the project in order for it to be complete. Effectively managing the deliverables is crucial because when this is done, the project will be in the right direction and on the right track to become successful. It is important to know the size of the project, the size of the team, the size of the deliverables and the size of the checklists during project planning because every project manager wants to ensure that the project can be distributed into manageable modules that maximizes each team member’s responsibility. Everything that we do must be focused on the “big picture” without getting lost in details because complexity changes the rules of the project.

A project must be kept as manageable as possible to avoid losing details on the project and for easy updating and minimal workload at a time. It takes the right analyzation of the project size and deliverables needed to be accomplished because size tends to impact the bottom line of the project which is beneficial to success. As a project manager, always remember that size matters when managing the deliverables of the project. Effectiveness of the work flow and the project team will depend on the right amount and management of deliverables assigned to each member.

An overall project roadmap will also help in the progress and development of the project to ensure overall stability and integrity of the project details. This will help lessen or avoid losing project details while managing the deliverables.

63. You Aren't Special

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/You_Aren%27t_Special)

Quote: "You are not special"

What I learned: Without fail, teams who believe they're "special" are always behind when judged by how well they meet the project metrics.

What I expect to learn: Avoiding NHI "Not Invented Here" syndrome from derailing your team.

Integrative questions: How do teams spend their day?

We are not special. We are all equal. Each one of us has our own set of strengths, weakness and skills that can make or break us in our careers. These determine how successful we can be by using our strengths and skill to our advantage and by not being afraid of our weaknesses.

It is a good practice to always be in contact with someone or making the most out of your travel opportunities to gain new or more knowledge on a certain aspect. All of us have the capability and eligibility to become successful if we understand and interact with different people. It is a good practice to always be in contact with someone or making the most out of your travel opportunities to gain new or more knowledge on a certain aspect. There is no one in this world that can know everything.

Our knowledge lies in our expertise and how we understand and implement our knowledge on given tasks that need to be analyzed, answered or completed. Our time is more advanced compared to the past generations because our generation is developing the present in-line for the future. We have more resources to work with. Every person must constantly adjust by constantly researching on the information needed in order to not be left behind.

We should not think of ourselves as special due to the fact that past technology developments paved the way for new developments to happen because these developments were made for us to make tasks more workable and easier to do.

64. Share the Vision

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Share_the_Vision)

Quote: “Project management is about working together on a common goal”

What I learned: Everyone wants to succeed.

What I expect to learn: Know your team’s labor in darkness.

Integrative questions: Does your team members want to bankrupt the company? Should you be surprised that everyone sees a different end goal to the project?

It is good to share the vision of the company and of the project so that your customers and end-users will understand what you expect to achieve in the project. A vision is what a firm expects to pursue in order to fulfill its mission. Before setting the vision, core values, to which the firm is committed and core purpose, of the firm must be first talked about because the project manager understands the scope of the project better and has better analyzation regarding it. The firm’s core values and purpose constitute its core ideology and remain relatively constant because without consistency, the firm will be affected substantially and hurt its stock.

The project manager has the full responsibility in making sure that the project meets the expected results required. The project manager and his / her team must share the vision of the project with their organization so that they would understand why the project is being implemented and how it would like to benefit their needs in the business. The vision must be well-defined because it shows why the project is being made and why it has to be made for what specific purpose and what the users want out of the project. Sharing the vision of the project should be done and clarified at the kick-off meeting of the project.

The project scope is also important when sharing the vision to upper management and end-users because it will give them a better understanding of the vision and the project output in general.

65. The Missing Link

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Missing_Link)

Quote: “Project team selection is a compliment to the project’s success”

What I learned: One of the most difficult challenges in project management is keeping your team properly engaged in the details of the project.

What I expect to learn: Modifying the SME’s job description.

Integrative questions: Does those participating in the project go the extra mile?

Every project manager agrees that one of their most difficult challenges is keeping team members properly engaged in the details of the project and on top of their assigned tasks and schedules because if this is properly implemented, the project will be successful and everyone on the team will be given high praise on a job well done. They understand that team members are conflicted between the routine, operational responsibilities of processing daily work, troubleshooting problems, coordinating departmental issues, answering everyday communications and completing time-sensitive work of project development. The point of doing a project is because you and your team want to achieve something big and want to put your skills to good use. It is all about putting the right team together and selecting the right people for the job.

Selection for a project team is seen as a compliment because how can you get a specific task completed if nobody is working on it. Many developers feel that participation on a team is a major distraction from day-to-day duties so in order to avoid this; the project manager must ensure that the group he / she chose for the project makes known of their commitment to the project. As a project manager, you must know and understand if a person does not belong on the team, if your work can’t or won’t be given a clear priority because a task cannot be lying around in order to avoid delay and achieve success. When an organization has limited numbers of subject matters expert’s (SME’s), changing team members or locating a more dedicated one may not be an option because this will disrupt the project team in supporting their goals and objectives of the project.

66. Estimate, estimate, estimate!

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Estimate,_estimate,_estimate!)

Quote: “Performing as team members on various projects is needed”

What I learned: True accountability around estimating does not involve getting people to hit their estimate but to have them warn you as soon as they think they are going to miss.

What I expect to learn: How to get better at estimating.

Integrative questions: How does management and Human Resource emphasize change?

Getting an estimate is often expected in project management starting at the beginning of the project when we know the least and then we revisit the estimate during the project’s lifecycle. In project management, the best people to create the estimates are those who do the work because they are the most knowledgeable among the group in the task assigned to him / her. It is inappropriate for the project manager to estimate the work for that person. The PM must give freedom and support the estimate of the person assigned to that task because they do not focus on effort and speed but on the results and expected output of the project.

It is a good practice in the organization you are working for to estimate once a week on the project so that you will always be updated on the progress of the project each week. Specific tasks that have been previously estimated but haven’t been worked on yet must be estimated again to know how much time it will take for it to be completed. As you get the feel in estimating, you get better doing it the more you do it and it helps develop your knowledge on estimating. Estimates can lessen the “fear” built in as you learn more about the new technology because sometimes we learn that we did not know as much as we thought we did which helps us estimate.

The best way to get better at estimating is to make sure to keep track of deliverables so the team gets feedback on how well they did it. Estimation is a great conversation process to implement in a project.

67. Add talents, not skills, to your team

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Add_talents,_not_skills,_to_your_team)

Quote: “Talents are better than skills”

What I learned: Project management is about new frontiers, learning new techniques and technologies.

What I expect to learn: Whether talent or skill is makes a better team.

Integrative questions: Are candidates excited about learning new things? Do they get along well with others?

If the project manager focuses on the team building and individual growth, on time and within budget deliverables will automatically fall into place. This also ensures that teams are self-organized and don't require the project manager to guide multiple projects simultaneously. The project manager should target a goal to build sustainable teams because it is a primary way to add extra value to the project. To build a strong team, you, as the project manager, should seek to hire for talents and not for skills.

The project manager should give the candidate/s an interview to know if they get along well with others and if they are open to learning new things. In an agile environment, learning technology is fast and easy. Hiring for talents, not skills is a different way to build a team because existing team members want to work with those poised to move enthusiastically with someone into exciting and future technology developments. The organization could offer to sponsor the candidate's growth if he / she is accepted into the team.

The project manager will realize when the organization stops investing in the team member's growth because at times, the organization does not look for fresh, new talent but very specific and already developed skills. They do not want to waste their time developing fresh talent when they can already get a person with skills in order to avoid delays in the project. The project manager, through knowledge, knows whether and when talent or skill is better to add in the project.

68. Increase Communication by Having Fewer Meetings

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Increase_Communication_by_Having_Fewer_Meetings)

Quote: “Show and tell”

What I learned: Never hold meetings where only one person gets value out of it.

What I expect to learn: Build the right infrastructure to support communication.

Integrative questions: Were meetings held without you? How can you replace unproductive meetings with simpler communication paths between team members?

Good communication in the workplace is essential and helps improve morale, increase efficiency and create healthy working relationships with those involved in the project. Good communication skills are a real asset and are more important than ever to be able to communicate effectively with those involved in the project. It would be beneficial for you, your team and the organization to remove workplace communication barriers because they are costing you more than you think since effective communication skills are an extremely useful resource. A major benefit of good communication is that it leads to the improvement of workplace morale.

Poor communication includes interpersonal conflict, wasted money and effort, poor productivity, legal exposure, low morale and high turnover that account to workplace woes. When a team member does not get any feedback or idea of how the company is performing then it will be difficult for him / her to stay motivated. This may also trigger a sense of distrust which will lead to increased tension and conflict within the project. Proper systems and infrastructure must be practiced to enable effective exchange of information between persons involved.

Different people make different deductions from the same information and proceed to do the opposite of what the project manager expects. Clear communication results in asking the right questions, gaining clarity and confirming what we have heard to achieve a common understanding of a project issue or the course of an action. Project managers must be aware of this and facilitate the process to make sure that everything is going as expected.

69. Teach the Process

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Teach_the_Process)

Quote: “An effective process results in common understanding between those involved”

What I learned: Teaching the process is a powerful empowerment tool.

What I expect to learn: How to make the right estimates.

Integrative questions: Why do project managers require the clients to take a class in their process during the course of the project?

For a process to be truly effective there must be a common understanding of the process among all stakeholders. One way to make sure of this is to teach the process to all stakeholders involved in the project. Stakeholders of a project include the project sponsors, key users, the project manager, developers, designers and quality assurance specialist. It would be best and easier to teach all of them together so that you will get feedback from mostly everyone right away.

Organizations require their clients to take classes based on the process during the course of the project so that they would gain knowledge and better understanding on how the process is implemented in the project in order to achieve success. They want to make sure that their stakeholders understand how to direct the project team in an effective manner that implements what they learned in the classes that they attended. Everyone will be taught the estimating practice so that they know how to treat the estimates and how a proper estimate can benefit the task of a project. They are also to be taught a planning technique that applies the project scope based on these estimates and is to be checked with business value.

More aggressive estimates means more work in less time since dedicated team members will enjoy striving to meet their estimates. You must be willing to accept mistakes because it is part of the process and learning. Teaching the process is a powerful empowerment tool that help the project team understand the structure of work in the organization.

70. IT Program Management: Shared Vision

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/IT_Program_Management:_Shared_Vision)

Quote: “Effectivity is the key to success”

What I learned: The strategy is to complete the program in a more cost effective way and gain strategic benefits for the organization.

What I expect to learn: How achievement contributes to the success or failure of the overall program objectives.

Integrative questions: How will you convey the real business objective to the project team wherein their individual tasks must achieve? What is the concept of bundling projects into programs?

IT (Information Technology) Program Management is the process of managing several related projects with the intention of improving an organization’s performance with the use of IT infrastructure. The difference between a project and program is that, projects deliver outputs while programs create outcomes. A project delivers a new IT system to assist with the deliverables and changes so that the program will be able to deliver increased income from a new product or reduced operating costs due to improved technology. A program could be either defined as a large project or a set of projects that is intended to reduce coordination costs and risks.

The project manager’s job is to ensure that the project will be successful and that it succeeds expectations. The program manager, on the other hand, does not care about individual projects but is concerned with the result or end-state of the program. Program management is concerned about doing the right projects with the program manager keeping the overview in mind. Successful projects deliver on time results, budget and specifications while successful programs deliver long term improvements to an organization.

An organization should select the group of programs that will take the project/s towards strategic aims while remaining within its capacity to deliver change because improvements are usually identified through benefits. In practice, programs can be managed as sub-projects within a single project. A project is designed to deliver either a deliverable or an output that improves the organization. Benefits will be enjoyed after the program and the project is completed.

71. Buying Ready-Made Software

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Buying_Ready-Made_Software)

Quote: “Spend more time identifying the need and research functional and technical details of the software”

What I learned: Ready-made software leverages efficiency and optimizes effectiveness.

What I expect to learn: Advantages and disadvantages of using ready-made software.

Integrative questions: Why is it useful to buy ready-made software?

It is very common and useful to buy software that is ready-made and ready to be tested, implemented and used out of the box because it manages to bring order and effectiveness to the project. Ready-made software's are an optimal solution for business because it is getting more and more popular and it tends to be much better for its quality than its counterpart. Ready-made software developers can afford investing far more time and efforts to assure best quality for their products because of a single project being managed. It also saves end-users time greatly and can be used right away but it will require some template modification to suit the users' needs better.

Ready-made software is easier to manage and expand because it is designed and tested to support wide-client base. It tends to be very convenient and user-friendly for administering and does not require technical skills to use. Such software allows organizations to leverage their efficiency and optimize their effectiveness by cutting time spent in the developmental and implementation phases of the project. Each organization has its own procedures, policies and legacy software but new software needs to be customized in order to support the company's policies and procedures and to integrate the programs with previously installed systems.

After this process is carefully followed and documented, the software developer will have very clear information in determining which software should be purchased, the estimated time required for customization and the actual associated costs. You will need to spend more time identifying the real need and research the functional and technical details.

72. Document Your Process, Then Make Sure It Is Followed

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Document_Your_Process,_Then_Make_Sure_It_Is_Followed)

Quote: “An effective and well-documented process leads to project success”

What I learned: Don’t leave processes unattended.

What I expect to learn: Systematizing business needs.

Integrative questions: How can you strategize your process in order for it to be followed?

Systemizing your business needs to be all about documenting the processes that make up your business will make it easier to follow since it implements a process and may be using a software development system. It is a good idea to organize your system and process documentation so that it would be easier for you to find what you need each time you has to do the process. A good way to do this is to create a folder that stores the project template and three sub-folders: completed, in progress and pending. Completed tasks should have documentation for each system created and can be followed by the project team and organization.

The “in progress” folder will contain any process that is in the middle of documenting. The “pending” folder contains processes needed to be developed in order to create a new system or processes needed to be added to an existing system. This serves as your holding file where you can store all your ideas for the processes that need to be created to successfully run the business. Always take time to document your process and make sure that it is followed in order to be updated on what has happened and what is yet to happen in the project.

For example, the name change process has been documented but has never been followed. The user’s request should have been granted and the issue would have been avoided if the process was properly followed. Make sure that your documentation is followed.

73. Don't Always Be The Messenger

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Don%27t_Always_Be_The_Messenger)

Quote: “Information becomes the air and water feeding the growth of the project”

What I learned: A project manager needs to get the right stakeholders together to talk about the right topic at the right time.

What I expect to learn: How to avoid being the “messenger” or “scrambler”.

Integrative questions: How does a project be organic as it progresses? How will you identify all those involved that need to receive the information?

One of the most important roles of the project manager is to facilitate an open dialogue between the various members of the team because he / she serves as the guide and sets the tone of the project. For a project to be successful as it progresses, information becomes the source of growth that is based toward fulfilling the mission of the project. The project manager and team members should experience constant exchange of information which can aggressively promote communication within the project. The project manager must avoid being the “messenger” of the project.

The team members should act as the messengers of the project manager because they are the ones assigned to the tasks and they can provide progressive or effective information to the project manager. If the stakeholders are forced to channel all knowledge through the PM, numerous problems are guaranteed to happen. The project manager will need to understand everything happening in the project so that he / she is capable of being the single point of conductivity regarding project wisdom. They must also be focused on the big picture and aware of possible issues that surround the project.

Project managers can inherit an even more damaging role known as “The Scrambler”. As a project grows, so does the amount of non-technical information needed to keep the project running smoothly. A well-meaning but clueless PM becomes this when they become disoriented with the flow of project information. Developers need to know the business rules; the project manager needs to know the status of the deliverables while other team members need insight of where the project stands in relationship to its schedule, cost and quality metrics.

74. Planning for Reality

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Planning_for_Reality)

Quote: “Use buffer time to deal with inherent variances over the project’s lifecycle.

What I learned: Getting ahead of the curve always has more advantages than disadvantages.

What I expect to learn: How to kill “Non-productive” time when reviewing your schedule.

Integrative questions: How will you introduce buffer or reality time into your schedule?

Planning for reality gives the project manager a heads up in the project. Projects can fall into late, over budget and off-quality situations when it lacks reality planning because the project team is not thinking about the future or with the end in mind. International certifications, maturity assessments and the trials of managing the very fluid environment of software development are many. The pace of development naturally varies throughout the life of the project because sometimes the project will be ahead of schedule and sometimes behind which happens in reality.

Project managers seek to control these fluctuations through strict, detailed project timelines that lay out prescribed task assignments and deadlines but this can make the team members disoriented and lost on the progress when it is not clearly clarified. There is nothing wrong in a project to have multiple revisions that are planned along the way to deal with the dynamic nature of creating software because project managers and project team focus on the big picture by achieving the expected outputs in assigned tasks. Development and execution of a detailed estimated project plan is important in the success of any project because project managers get benefit by adding reality time into their plans. A critical chain method uses the concept of “buffers” as a means of dealing with inherent variances over the lifecycle of the project.

Buffer time allows for a degree of flexibility within a phase of the project without the need to perform major scheduling adjustments. The process of planning for reality is simply straightforward so you should use it to your advantage and put to good use.

75. Avoiding Contract Disputes

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Avoiding_Contract_Disputes)

Quote: “Be fair when negotiating the contract”

What I learned: Well-defined requirements are not always a reality in the world of project management.

What I expect to learn: How to approach the project with a mindset that the customer is a partner, not an adversary.

Integrative questions: How can you become a certified Project Manager Professional? How will you address contract disputes?

Project managers who have been certified as Project manager professionals are and should be familiar with the various types of contracts through their experiences and time in the profession that they gain this knowledge for the project and their job. They know which type of contract is appropriate for the situation and the level of risk they and the seller of the software is are willing to assume. Best contracts do not guarantee that disputes will not arise because well-defined requirements are an obvious way of avoiding possible conflicts. A contract must clearly define what is expected from the project in order for both parties to reach an agreement regarding what the deliverables will be.

Resolving disputes requires valuable resources, makes the contractual relationship present and how it would affect future business relationships between the two parties. Some of the leading causes of contract disputes are the easiest to minimize through careful contract negotiation and administration. Many agree that most contract disputes occur as a result of disagreements over terms of the project. In order to avoid disputes, the contractor should look for areas in the project contract that raise potential misunderstanding and clarify it before submitting the proposal to the project manager.

The best defense against receiving an unpleasant surprise after the contract has been awarded is to devote the resources necessary beforehand to ensure that the requirements are understood and that it can be met by the project team. Neither party should attempt to “slip in” a beneficial contract provision with hope that the other party will accept it while being unaware of its implications.

76. Project Sponsors – The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly ([http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Sponsors_- _The_Good,_the_Bad,_and_the_Ugly](http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Project_Sponsors_-_The_Good,_the_Bad,_and_the_Ugly))

Quote: “Project sponsors are project champions”

What I learned: Project sponsors have the important task of communicating the business process for the project and ensure that benefits are understood across the organization.

What I expect to learn: How project sponsors articulate the business process for the project.

Integrative questions: How can you find the best sponsor? What are their qualifications in sponsoring a project?

The project sponsor is more than a figurehead which means a person or group who holds an important title that executes little actual power limited by convention rather than the law. Being a project sponsor is a vital role on a project because an effective sponsor can be the difference between success and failure. Many sponsors make the mistake of believing that they do not need to get involved and that the project should not take up too much of their time. In fact, sponsors on successful projects understand the importance of their involvement in the project.

The project sponsor serves as the driver of the project that pushes it forward in the organization. If the sponsor is not active, the project will fail to gather momentum and its priority will begin to slip against other, more important projects. A project without support will not get the necessary resources (time, people or money) and the expected output that it wants to achieve. It is the sponsor's role to support the project within the senior management levels of the organization because they should be demonstrating both public and private support to help every team member understand why the project is important.

They ensure that the project remains aligned to the strategic goals of the organization and through timely involvement ensures that key decisions are made. This means that the project sponsor will have to make the key project decisions which are outside the approved boundaries of the project manager. Through an effective working partnership, the project manager supports the project sponsor; ensuring he / she is aware of the key issues of the project while providing possible alternatives to support the decision.

77. Not superheroes

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Not_superheroes)

Quote: “We are project managers, not superheroes”

What I learned: Use an available strengths inventory to assess your team.

What I expect to learn: Use knowledge to create complimentary partnerships.

Integrative questions: Do you know your personal strengths and weaknesses? Do you know the personal strengths and weaknesses of your team?

Every project manager should know and understand their own personal and project teams strengths and weaknesses. Project managers can deliver training on project management skills to address or develop strengths and weaknesses of others to become a good project manager. It would take a superhero to do all a project manager must do and to do it well. Some become good project managers because they are willing to take the challenge and committed to be successful at their profession.

As a project manager, you will also need to know the personal strengths and weaknesses of your team in order to know where they would excel in the project. Use this knowledge to create complimentary partnerships with team members who possess strengths where gaps are present. A good project manager has to be flexible, be able to diagnose each situation and work out of his / her comfort zone to respond in the most effective way. You will need someone to help you drive the project forward more forcefully than in your comfort zone.

A good project manager makes sure that his / her team members have complimentary skills that work in partnership with you in areas where your weaknesses lie. To help understand your strengths and weaknesses, a project manager can refer to old personality or work behavior tests that they took. Do not try to figure out which label would make the best project manager because there is no right answer to that question. After that, the rest is downhill.

78. How To Spot A Good IT Developer

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/How_To_Spot_A_Good_IT_Developer)

Quote: “Project managers know how to achieve project success”

What I learned: You are looking for a rare bird.

What I expect to learn: How to know if this person is the right one for the job.

Integrative questions: How do you spot stellar performers in the pool of applicants? How do you plan in assessing their knowledge?

The first time you try to fill an open position, if you're like most people, you place some ads, maybe browse around the large online boards and get tons of resumes. A project manager can go through thousands of job applications and never see a great Information Technology (IT) developer, not a single one. Great software developers, the best people in the field, are never on the market because they get recruited right away by organization's that do not want to pass on them. An average software developer will apply for maybe a total of four jobs in their entire career.

The great college graduates get pulled into an internship by a professor with connections in the industry and then they get early offers from that company and never bother applying for any other job. If they leave that company, it is often to go to a startup with a friend or to follow a great boss to another company or they realized that they can be in a better situation than where they are currently in. If you're really lucky, good software developers will show up on the open job market looking for work. But for the most part, great developers recognize their strengths and skills quickly which means that they get to work wherever they want by not sending out a lot of resumes or apply for a lot of jobs.

Project managers know that project success rests on having excellent developers because they are the ones handling the technical part of the project. The PM also needs to assess knowledge because good developers will be able to fix syntax errors immediately and without any mental stress. They can read other people's code and understand its intent without extensive documentation or translation.

79. Communicating Is Key

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Communicating_Is_Key)

Quote: “It is better to see a task done once than hear about it a hundred times”

What I learned: The benefits of communicating are enumerable

What I expect to learn: The key to having effective stakeholder management.

Integrative questions: “Do you want to become a good communicator?”

One of the most critical knowledge every project manager should have in any industry is how to be a good communicator because if they do not know how to collaborate with others, the work of the project cannot be accomplished properly. At the start of project life, project managers should meet in person with all of the stakeholders. They should introduce himself / herself, discuss the project goals and all the critical issues with the stakeholders. Projects rest on person to person communication which makes communicating the key because it is where valuable knowledge and understanding will be obtained in order to apply in the projects success.

It is essential that effective team communication occurs throughout the project in order to minimize misunderstanding and unnecessary delays. Environments that foster effective communication are those that provide the foundation for building the synergy needed to ensure timely and successful project implementation. The entire project team must not only understand that each and every team member needs to recognize the importance and impact of effective communication on the overall project but they should also understand that each of them has a role and is responsible for making it happen. The team must know the benefits upon communicating, the methods that will be deployed and how to overcome any potential challenges.

Communication is at the core of project success which makes the project manager spend an inordinate amount of time communicating with the various project constituents. Communication represents the links that bind all the project pieces together.

80. RESTful Architecture Makes Project Management Extremely Simple (http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/RESTful_Architecture_Makes_Project_Management_Extremely_Simple)

Quote: “Do not develop an attachment to any one weapon or any one school of fighting”

What I learned: Leaving your mind open to new paths through software design provides a pleasant way to handle software projects in the world of constantly changing requirements.

What I expect to learn: How to choose the right weapon and plan.

Integrative questions: How can you make project management simple? What are the available enterprise environment factors?

It is imperative that we do not get too attached to any one management principle, software tool or programming language as our only weapon. It is only through seeing our resources in a flexible way, arrangeable in many varying configurations that we are able to prepare the best response to the end-users problems that become our project. It is best to take an open-minded approach right from the beginning when you define your project requirements because you will be able to make sure that your pre-defined solution is the best one. A project manager must examine all end-user requirements before choosing the appropriate weapon and strategize an effective project plan.

Problems are usually attached to business logic that shows current resources are not rich enough in features or functions. The project manager must consider the pool of existing factors and systems within the organization by reusing parts of existing environmental systems skillfully because it can shorten and ease the project path. Enterprise environment factors include complicated things as the company infrastructure of existing facilities, equipment and software, commercial and private databases, programming tools and human resource skills. A resource-oriented analysis of the end-user's requirements must be met by the project deliverables because it would reveal underlying resources which already exist in the organization.

The project manager's role would be to ask the right questions about various final performance results expected by the end-user, how existing resources / software or systems and your new code output are to interrelate with each other.

81. Keep your perspective

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Keep_Your_Perspective)

Quote: “Perspective means looking for the best solution”

What I learned: Project managers emphasize with users.

What I expect to learn: The probability of a successful outcome in a subsequent project.

Integrative questions: How can you emphasize your perspective with the users? How will you increase the probability of a successful outcome in your project?

Implementing the proper project management techniques will benefit the project. Failure to do so often leads to less than satisfactory results or even failure. Project team members envision performing large amount of dull, boring exercises and doing documentation that just does not matter to them. Too often in these types of environments, the work associated with the management of the project becomes the main tasks that get done while the real work does not always get accomplished.

The reality is to plan out a project in sufficient detail to accomplish the intended goals of the team. The key is to understand how much detail is necessary to keep everyone on task and on track without having the management processes become an unnecessary burden. Your job as the project manager is to keep everyone focused and on track when dealing with the project. In order to support this case, a project charter is an effective tool that defines the scope, objectives, deliverables and overall approach for the tasks to be completed.

It is a critical element for initiating, planning, executing, controlling and monitoring the project during the project lifecycle that will help you in keeping your perspective intact. Another useful way is to have project management software that will help automate the management details associated with the project so that the project managers get time to look back and see the big picture. A good perspective provides a custom-designed solution that reduces end-user frustration because end-users can provide the project team with impressive contributions to a project by sharing their knowledge.

82. Keep It Simple Simon

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Keep_It_Simple_Simon)

Quote: “A successful project conclusion is reached through simple techniques”

What I learned: You cannot describe the value of a project in terms of how you implemented it.

What I expect to learn: How to develop the ability of team members to visualize objectives of the project and complete actual work.

Integrative questions: What is your perspective of simplicity?

We are not always great at project management and part of the problem could be that we do not have a boss pressuring us in every turn and holding us accountable for our mistakes. Big projects are overwhelming and intimidating because it takes a longer time to complete and we would not have a clear picture of how the project should look when it is finished. At the start of the project, the project manager should work with the client in getting the big picture of the desired outcome of the project. Not clearly defining the outcomes of the project will result in delays and frustrations along the way.

Once the outcome is clearly defined, set a meeting with your client discussing how you will work together in order to manage the project. A long-term project will require a timeline and communication process that would have to be clearly defined to the client. Detailed timelines have a tendency to break down after a short period of time so make sure that you make a flexible timeline. Focusing on the next action reduces the intimidating / overwhelming aspect of a project, just focus on one task at a time.

Communication can delay the project but in the end, it produces a better product and the client will be happier. When scoping out a project, make sure to scope the minimum functionality that will meet the client's needs. You cannot describe the value of a project in terms of how you implemented it.

83. The Holy Grail of Project Management

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_Holy_Grail_of_Project_Management)

Quote: “Convey the essence of project management”

What I learned: Success comes from being fair but firm and earning the trust of people.

What I expect to learn: How to define goals and the project scope clearly.

Integrative questions: How will you point out the fixed relationship between the three project constraints?

It is the job of the project manager to define the roles of every team member at the beginning of the project and explain why it is important for them to anticipate that their skills are vital to the success of the project. The challenge of every project manager in project management, even when working with a new team, is to convey the essence of project management without intimidating and overwhelming the team with detailed information. Project failure is not discriminatory; it affects the project manager and project team in equal measures. The key to success lies with human issues such as good communication, realism, truthfulness and creating trust with your team members, other organizational staff and the customer

Formal methods are useful but they simply do not work in the real world. As a project manager, you have to adapt to the environment and culture, taking what you need to apply in the project. You must learn to accept your mistakes by constantly developing your approach to make it more effective because getting it right is important. Things go wrong and people make mistakes. Success comes from being fair but firm and earning the trust of people so that they can tell you if there is any problem.

If your project team trusts you enough to tell you that they are worried about something then that gives you an opportunity to fix the problem. Blaming is easy but being solution-oriented and constructive is much, much harder. Every project manager must ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the project before starting with the scope.

84. Meetings don't write code

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Meetings_don%27t_write_code.)

Quote: "People can do something more productive when trapped in meetings"

What I learned: Actions before the meeting establish the groundwork for accomplishing the expected results.

What I expect to learn: How to create an effective meeting plan.

Integrative questions: How do you indulge long-winded participants?

A meeting becomes successful when its objectives are met at the conclusion. Learning how to conduct a successful meeting is of importance to any organization due to planning and evaluation of tasks. The characteristics of a successful meeting are starting and ending on time, transition of all points in the agenda in a satisfactory manner and the observance of proper decorum by all concerned. Proper preparations by the project manager and team members before the meeting will ensure that the meeting progresses without a problem.

If there are insufficient members for a meeting to constitute, the project manager should postpone it for a certain period and wait for the others to join the group. A meeting is conducted with a specific purpose geared towards certain goals that the team would like to accomplish when the project is finished. To obtain the desired results, a conscious and joint effort on the part of the project manager and team members is required. Every project manager should be aware of how to conduct meetings effectively and those present should have basic knowledge on the different types of formal meeting motions in order to guide them through the meeting until its successful culmination.

People spend so much time in meetings that they turn time spent into sustainable results which is a priority of successful organizations. If you neglect meeting management opportunities, your meeting will not culminate with the desire and time spent in the meeting. Project managers must conduct meetings in order to guide project team members in achieving expected, positive and constructive outcomes that will be beneficial to the success of the project.

85. Provide Regular Time to Focus

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Provide_Regular_Time_to_Focus)

Quote: “Infomania has a huge impact on productivity”

What I learned: It is important to know your top two priorities to plan effectively.

What I expect to learn: What is Infomania? How can you control it?

Integrative questions: How can you focus on having many things in your head at once?

Project managers must focus on three dimensions of project success which is time, within a budget and to a level of quality that is acceptable to sponsors and stakeholders of the project. They must also keep the team’s attention focused on achieving these broad goals by providing regular time to focus in order to stay sharp with happenings in the project. The single most important activity that project managers engage in is planning detailed, systematic, team-involved plans that are the foundation for project success because planning is everything and ongoing. Project managers must feel and cater to their team members a sense of urgency because projects are endeavors with limited time, money and resources available in order to keep on moving toward completion.

Since most team members have their own priorities, it is the role of the project manager to make sure to keep their attention on project deliverables and deadlines. Regular status checks, meeting and reminders are essential to the completion of a project. Successful projects use a time-tested, proven project lifecycle because these models support quality and minimize rework of tasks. Project managers can help ensure that professional standards and the best practices are built into the project plan.

It is the project manager’s decision to identify and defend the best project life cycle for the job. All project deliverables and project activities should be visualized and communicated in detail because the project team has to create a picture of the finished deliverables in the minds of everyone involved so that all the effort is focused in the same direction.

86. Work in Cycles

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Work_in_Cycles)

Quote: “Our bodies are full of natural cycles and our productivity is no different”

What I learned: The most effective software projects are created in environments that ensure developers are mentally productive.

What I expect to learn: Know where I am and what I want to do.

Integrative questions: How will you create an effective project in environments that ensure mental productivity? How must you strategize your work cycle to be successful?

The planning cycle brings together all aspects of planning into a coherent, unified process. By planning within this structure, the project manager can ensure that the plans are fully considered, well focused, practical and cost-effective. They will also ensure of learning from the mistakes they make and review this in future planning and decision-making that will be helpful to the project. Planning using this cycle will help plan and manage ongoing projects up to a certain level of complexity which depends on the circumstances.

It would be best to think of planning as a cycle, not a straightforward process. Once the project manager devises a plan, he / she should evaluate whether that plan is likely to succeed or not. This analysis will show that your plan may cause unwanted consequences, may cost too much or may simply not work. It is likely to review what you have learned with one plan and implement it onto the next plan.

A project manager is required to understand the pressures for change because some people may be convincing you to change the way you do things. Once you have completed a realistic analysis of the opportunities for change, the next step is to decide what the aim of your plan is because deciding and defining an aim sharpens the focus of your plan and helps avoid wasting effort on irrelevant issues. At this stage, it is best to spend time generating as many options as possible in order to get a hold of the first idea that comes to your mind and have a good picture of where you are, what you want to achieve and the range of options available to you.

87. Responding to a Crisis

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Responding_to_a_Crisis)

Quote: “Establishing clear responsibilities for dealing with a crisis is a good start”

What I learned: Crisis Management is a new field of management.

What I expect to learn: What is a project manager’s role in a true production crisis?

Integrative questions: How will you respond to a project crisis? What is your defense strategy?

In some environments, the project manager holds no role in production at all. They work on development and installation, tend to changes but never really worry about what happens next. Their knowledge of the stakeholders, the application and the logic behind why the software functions the way it does never comes into play. The operations and support teams contribute what they can to keep things running and use their own internal systems to respond to crisis situations because project team trained the operations and support teams to handle these kinds of situations.

A project manager that remains with a company usually becomes involved when their products get affected. They are already working on another product release, patch or just general maintenance because their network of product specific contacts carry in information from the field, revealing potential problems before the supporting organization realizes something is wrong. Leveraging all of those resources can prove dangerous, even fatal in a crisis if handled incorrectly. Project managers make use of both influence and power to affect change while they retain the authority to make decisions.

Failing to react can lead to even worse problems because no one is working on fixing the problem. If the project manager simply provides advice to the teams and other resources, the project will remain down for an extended period of time. The longer it stays down, the more likely the executive team will come in search of sacrifices. The project manager’s effort to get things done will undoubtedly earn him / her to a number of enemies which will lead to their dismissal.

88. What Do They Want to Hear, Anyway?

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/What_Do_They_Want_to_Hear,_Anyway%3F)

Quote: “Engage left brain logic with right brain creativity to sell ideas”

What I learned: The correct balance is needed on a project team when it comes to communication.

What I expect to learn: How to develop a common repository for project information.

Integrative questions: How will you convey project information from one person to the next? How can you capture the interest of your customers?

Communication is the most important component of any project. Whether handled by a dedicated project team, project success is determined through effective communication skills and techniques. Communication and human interaction make or break a project. We sometimes forget that project communications refer to the specific behavior and techniques used to motivate, lead, delegate and report back to all stakeholders working on the project.

Communication affects performance because you will need effective communication skills and techniques to make sure that the expected results of the project are met. Successful project managers have good communication skills and techniques that include being able to effectively present the issues, listen and act on feedback and foster harmony among team members. Proper communication provides the basis for the project team and project manager to work together and understand the objectives and tasks that are to be completed. Better communication means better performance.

Be used throughout the software development process because defining the user requirements before implementing the project will need a proper communication plan to aid in informing the project stakeholders of what communication channels will be used in the project. By reinforcing project communication, you will notice a reduction in project documentation from the day the project starts until it is completed. The project manager will need to ensure that the correct information reaches the project stakeholders without overloading with documents that are irrelevant. Skillful project managers know how to plan their communications, understand what type of information each team member needs and utilize a wide range of communication methods within the project.

89. Make Project Sponsors Write Their Own Requirements

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Make_Project_Sponsors_Write_Their_Own_Requirements)

Quote: “Project managers need to spend time with those funding the project”

What I learned: Project sponsors are the critical links between corporate and project governance.

What I expect to learn: How will the software be used to run the infrastructure or make money for the company?

Integrative questions: What resources and skill sets are crucial to create the software that they want? Do they make it available to the team?

Project sponsors are the critical links between corporate and project governance. They ensure that the governance requirements are met and that projects receive the support they need in order to complete the project. Project sponsors act as the bridge between the organization and the project and must have experience, knowledge, perspective, credibility and authority. They should have good communicators who are passionate about their cause and capability of handling ambiguity as well as managing their time and stress. Project managers discovered that project sponsors play a pivotal role both in influencing the success of the project and overseeing its governance requirements.

The project sponsor role has often been taken for granted, the new emphasis on corporate and project governance. It is difficult to be a good project sponsor. The sponsor is considered to be provider of funds, the individual or group for whom the project is undertaken, the primary risk-taker and the person/s to whom the project manager. The project sponsor is considered responsible for ensuring its success whose business unit offer benefits and whose effectiveness is used to predict project success. While most project management bodies of knowledge recognize the sponsors as a key stakeholder on any project.

Recent studies have stressed the role of the project sponsors with respect to project success because getting advice from the project manager on how to deal with inadequate project sponsors. The project sponsor is a person, group or organization responsible for representing the customer and acting as day-to-day manager of their interests within the project.

90. One Deliverable, One Person

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/One_Deliverable,_One_Person)

Quote: “A deliverable can be so interesting to work on that multiple people end up wanting to assume responsibility for it”

What I learned: Every deliverable should have a single person who is responsible for its completion.

What I expect to learn: The responsibilities of handling a project deliverable.

Integrative questions: How do you allocate deliverables to multiple people without them interfering with the other?

In every project, a small deliverable must have a single person responsible for its completion so that it would not be difficult to handle for the person assigned to the task. The deliverable can be assigned to multiple team members if it is big and requires more than one to complete because one team member will not be able to complete the task on his / her own and will need support from fellow team members. All project team members should know who and what their responsibility for the delivery of a project deliverable is. They like to work on high visible deliverables that they know are going to be successful.

You would not know if a project deliverable will be successful or not until you start an item and get results. Actual development may involve a large group but the responsibility for ensuring its time completion and to understand the technical issues surrounding the deliverable is more appropriate for one person. Responsibilities are shared at the start of any project when instructions or deliverables are somewhat unclear to the project team member or group. One person will be held accountable to notify other project team members and the project manager when a problem is present in a deliverable.

People have a tendency to assume that what they are not accountable for will be held by someone else. The project will end up in a crisis in the hands of the project manager because team member/s does not want to be held accountable for a deliverable.

91. Requirement Specifications – an Oxymoron

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Requirement_Specifications_-_an_Oxymoron)

Quote: “Requirements describe how the features of a project are going to solve existing or potential problems”

What I learned: Good requirements describe how features are going to solve existing or potential problems.

What I expect to learn: How to keep the “what you are trying to build” separate from the “how to build it”

Integrative questions: How will you avoid blurring the lines between requirements and specification that will lead to the wrong people making the decisions?

For project developers who haven’t experienced designing software requirement specifications (SRS, also known as software functional specifications or system specifications) may assume that being given an opportunity to do so is either a reward or punishment for something that they did or failed to do in a previous project. SRS is an ideal project for software developers to be involved in the project because they are responsible for laying out the foundation for the development of a new product and for the types of user documentation and media that are required in the next stages of the project development life cycle. Playing a visible role in the project is very beneficial because you are contributing to the success of the project. An SRS is an organization’s understanding of a customer or potential client’s system requirements and dependencies at a particular point in time prior to any actual design or development work that occurs in the project.

It assures that both the client and organization understands each other’s requirement from the given perspective at the given point of time. The SRS document states in precise and explicit language the functions and capabilities the software must provide and state any required constraints by which the system abides. It also functions as a blueprint for completing a project deliverable with a little cost growth. All subsequent project management documents such as design specifications, statement of work, software architecture specification, and testing, validation and documentation plans are related to SRS because it is referred to as the “parent” document.

92. Speed is Life: More is Better

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Speed_is_Life:_More_is_Better)

Quote: “More deliverables is better”

What I learned: Optimal speed, not maximum speed is the goal.

What I expect to learn: How do project managers balance speed to ensure long-term relevance in the project? Is having “speed is life: more is better” a strength or weakness?

Integrative questions: Does the first company to launch a new technology always win? How will you balance speed to ensure long-time relevance of the product release?

Speed is not entirely the life of the project but is a sign that there is life and more is better as long as the quality is there. Like a car, uncontrolled speed makes the driver think of crash and burn because too much speed can disable the break (check and balance) which enables the car from running over someone or colliding with another car. In some industries, speed is essential to them because it translates to more – more number of calls handled per hour, more transactions handled per hour, more sales produced in an hour which all translates to more revenue generated per hour but they should make sure that they are giving the right information while slowing the pace of their speaking in order to be understood. Speed can be very useful as long as it is managed but effort should always be the main focus in completing the project to meet the expected results to become successful.

However, lack of speed can lead to missed opportunities and low returns. For some, speed is the presence of sufficient knowledge because it is knowledge that materializes within an amount of time. Someone who knows how to apply his / her knowledge can work faster compared to someone who just learned how to solve the problem. Studies prove that the advantage of optimal rather than excessive speed for specific moves, tactics and delivery profiles are better to implement because optimal speed, not maximum speed is the goal in completing a project with the expected outputs.

93. The 2-Day Rule

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/The_2-Day_Rule)

Quote: “Know when to stop”

What I learned: The point of the two-day rule is to make sure that everything you produce is always top notch.

What I expect to learn: How to make sure that the work produces is always top notch. How does this practice boost self-confidence.

Integrative questions: Why do you always need to work with users to evaluate features as it is created?

The project manager sets a rule/s for a project that has reached the finish line in implementation and project life. That rule is to stop work and do nothing for two days in order for the project to first cool off before turning it in. It is not necessary to completely stop doing everything but do not send off the project, work on the project, open its documentations or even think about the project for two days to give it a rests. Following the two-day rule improves the quality of the output tremendously without putting much effort into it.

As a professional, it is required that you always pass all your work by your biggest critic first, which is yourself. There is nothing wrong with having the best project perspective looking from the inside out. What’s important is that you were able to follow your perspective and meet the expectations of the clients that made you and your team engage in the project. The worst time to critique on your project is right after you finish it because you will know the strengths and weaknesses of it.

After the two-day rule is complete, bringing back a finished project provides a fresh perspective. The point of the two-day rule is to make sure that everything produced is always top notch and the talent behind the work can deliver it with pride. The confidence of the project manager will be helpful to the clients when presentation are conducted knowing that you are offering the best solution possible which makes your clients believe in you.

94. Scrolling Through Time

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Scrolling_Through_Time)

Quote: “Agile project management practices relieves the project from issues”

What I learned: It is important to always document project deliverables.

What I expect to learn: How to resolve issues quickly. The agile project management practices.

Integrative questions: How will you recognize the importance of interfaces between the developer and customer?

A project requires constant updating and documentation of assumptions regarding the project and insists in reviewing requirements with the end-user. By recognizing the importance of communication between the developer and end-user, prioritizing features based on the business value is provided to the end-user rather than the list of requirements. Written requirements can be used against you when it is poorly constructed. Project managers implement agile project management practices that address issues regarding the project.

If no direct contact with the end-user is made, all requirements will be sent back to the project manager and will then be passed on to the project team members through a series of random e-mails. A project's interface must always be focused and updated on the development and trend in the technology-era. End-users hate scrolling horizontally because scrolling vertically is common to every interface in using a browser. Early and frequent feedback comes in a one or two week iteration process that gives the opportunity to clarify customer expectations.

There are clients that highly consider vertical scrolling because they want large amounts of content in the page. Issues can be resolved quickly through knowledge from past experiences because it avoids the crisis of the past in setting realistic customer expectations. Higher resolution is favored at this time because only a few pages can be viewed lengthwise and content can be provided more. End-users would get upset if oversized content would be realized and fitted in the display of a single screen.

Running into the same situation again can happen but it would be easier to solve.

95. How To Kill Morale

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/How_To_Kill_Morale)

Quote: “Good Morale provides extra effort”

What I learned: Morale is hard to grow and measure. High Morale is not only about a better workplace but about a more productive team.

What I expect to learn: How to kill morale in project management.

Integrative questions: How can you make the project more fun and less work?

The tone for the type of workplace you work in has to be set at the very top and it is the project manager job to implement day in, day out. Their behaviors and expectations will set the standards of how people will feel and respond to situations occurring in the project. Project managers can improve morale regardless of circumstances because being a manager is always a challenge wherein managing people is tricky but maintaining morale, engagement and motivation is a critical part of any project manager’s role. Even a project manager needs to maintain engagement and minimize complacency in the project as to not ruin the project’s scope and expectations.

The project manager also needs to know and understand how to respond and work with their team as a way to keep people on board. Whatever the strategy of the team or organization is, they have to win the hearts and minds of every team member if he / she want to see them perform at their best. High performing teams are built from the results of behavior, values and beliefs which identify the way people work together in order to achieve success. It is the project manager’s role to communicate how things are done in the workplace because attitudes, behavior and performance affect how every team member performs in an assigned task.

Sometimes, despite the best of intentions, setting and clearly communicating the expectations and vision of the project with how people work together, some things ruin the results.

96. Can You Measure Morale

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/Can_You_Measure_Morale)

Quote: “Foster the growth of morale”

What I learned: Morale is a combination of many numerous factors all depending on what is important to the organizations culture.

What I expect to learn: The soft skills of communication.

Integrative questions: Do you talk with your team frequently? Do you regularly seek their outputs?

A major role of the project manager is to create and assure a work environment that focuses on the growth of team morale. Morale is more important than the budget and the schedule of the project but they impact one another. Better morale can be measured by a better team communication because your sense of confidence, usefulness and purpose will show in your performance. In a small team, if they are in flow, they can outperform a bigger team because it is easier for them to communicate and interact with the other team members.

Team morale begins even before the project is started which begins when the project manager chooses the members that will compose the project team. If team morale is poor, the team will produce just enough results or sub-standard results because of their lack of confidence and usefulness in the project. The impact will cause damage to the project. If team morale is low, the team's attitude will be realized by the client's of the project which will translate to less business. Teams with good morale will supply excitement and energy into their project thus increasing sales, quality of production, etc.

The project will be more successful, under budget and ahead or on schedule in the completion of the project. Project success depends on the state of current morale within the team and the project. The whole team should know and understand that morale is a combination of many numerous factors like being valued and being part of a successful team all depending on what is important to the organizations culture.

97. We Have Met The Enemy...And He Is Us

(http://pm.97things.oreilly.com/wiki/index.php/We_Have_Met_The_Enemy...And_He_Is_Us)

Quote: "There are times when you're focused and times when you let your curiosity guide you"

What I learned: You can be a support, not the enemy to your project team by opening your mind to the new world of software development.

What I expect to learn: How to avoid being the enemy.

Integrative questions: How will you gain the respect and trust of your team? Do you plan in keeping your alter-ego away in order to achieve this?

Even when you're doing a job by yourself, who you put in charge may be the key to how well the job gets done. Most of the time, we leave to chance which one of our sub-personalities will be in charge at any given time. The secret to great success is to make this unconscious process an intentional one. At the start of a task, the team member can think for the achievements in it that can be achieved.

Do not let your alter-ego break you during the project. Keep on identifying the next possible task that you want to accomplish so that you are committed and useful to the project. Also identify the key trait that the task requires because you would be able to determine the main attribute that you are looking for who is right for the task. The project manager and project team must put all their senses to use when they get into character.

When the task is done, it is appropriate to take a moment to clear your mind in order to clear your head before starting your next assigned task in the project. In doing this routine, project team members found the secret to not only get more done but also enjoy tasks they used to avoid. It is possible that you, as the project manager, will have conflicts with other managers, team leaders or other employees within the organization. Engage your key opinion leaders along with the project manager and others.

Finally, identify facts contributing to the conflict and make the decisions necessary to get the change management strategy back on track.