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8 steps to manage remote project teams

Working cross functionally is important to any project. But it can be complex to manage. And running a project remotely only adds to the complexity. Project Management expert, Randall Englund, has a proven process to help overcome these challenges. The eight-step process to effectively manage remote project teams is:

Step 1: Introduce the project

In this step, know your objectives and realize the need to influence without authority. Review your overview processes with the team including project management, leading change, the necessary skills and operating across your organizations.

Step 2: Prepare to build relationships

Ask yourself why you need these partners for this project. Be clear about your vision and mission for the project. If you're working with people in other cultures, make sure you're being sensitive to that. Also, adopt the **complete project manager skillset.**

Step 3: Establish relationships

Contact each person directly in your stakeholder analysis. Find out who else you need to contact to get them on board, get their thoughts and then work on that feedback! Get explicit commitments and buy-in on what the team will be doing as well. Throughout this analysis, practice reciprocity and speak truth to power.

Step 4: Develop team dynamics

Conduct a project startup event to get people excited. During this event, develop a shared vision of project success and craft a purpose statement. You should also establish and agree on a decision-making process, an issue resolution process, design change management and set goals. Criteria for a good vision statement is to: make it clear, concise, convincing and compelling; write it in present tense; desire a future state; make it unique to the company and/or project; fulfill fundamental needs and make it measurable.

Step 5: Create the right environment

Put everything together to create an environment for change! As the leader of the project, demonstrate authenticity and integrity. Also, show openness to coaching and be completely engaged. This means creating a people-oriented approach that establishes everlasting loyalty.

Step 6: Use virtual tech effectively

Video calls and other collaboration tools are key to keeping a disconnected remote team on the same page. Explore current tools for communicating and posting documents and choose the best ones for your team's unique needs. And once you have the right tools, encourage active participation.

Step 7: Maintain relationships

In this step, TRUST is key! Create an open environment with transparency to help build that trust. Be effective with your communications by adding a personal touch to all of them. As with any group, you will have conflict. Manage it by assessing it like an iceberg. There are issues above the surface and are easy to identify. And then there's what's going on underneath. Get to anything under the surface by asking questions.

Step 8: Adapt

Keep a positive attitude to adapt to whatever a project throws at you. And this means understanding the ebb and flow of every project and striving for balance. As the leader, you need to enforce a positive attitude for all team members.