

# 02 - Acquiring the core skills of a successful project manager

## Where is this course?

- Google Career Certificates - Project Management

## My Notes

My notes for this overall course will be laid out by module in the course, and have subheadings in order to differentiate between different topics/videos that are presented in the courses. I'll add in any extra notes/resources that I use where necessary, and hope it will be helpful for anyone looking!

## The core skills of a project manager/Key Competencies: Flexibility and handling ambiguity

- Core Skills
  - Enabling decision making
    - The core skills of a project manager
      - The ability to enable decision making on the team, or gathering decisions from the appropriate leader is crucial to keep tasks on time, and achieve goals
      - Gather information from all the team-mates
        - Use that information to make informed decisions
        - Also make sure to communicate relevant stakeholders of decisions
          - such as the rest of the team and higher ups
      - Your job is to get all the relevant data to inform a decision between A and B
    - Key Competencies: Flexibility and handling ambiguity
      - Make the decision making process collaborative
        - Example
          - State the goals of specific deliverables
          - Elicit input from your team on how to achieve these goals
        - Your team members may think of ideas and solutions that you may not have thought about

- Allows for you to focus on the over-arching management tasks, and prioritise them, while your team can focus on the details

- **Communicating and escalating**

- **The core skills of a project manager**

- Use communication skills everywhere
      - documenting plans
      - sending emails about the status of the project
      - holding a meeting to escalate a risk or issue to stakeholders

- **Key Competencies: Flexibility and handling ambiguity**

- Clearly communicate
      - project goals and expectations
      - team member roles and responsibilities
      - constructive feedback
    - Know how to effectively communicate, and when to escalate issues to management
    - When escalation is required, try proposing a solution to management when you confront them, as it shows that you are taking initiative as a project manager

- **Strong Organisational Skills**

- **The core skills of a project manager**

- Have the ability to organise processes and core elements of a project, so that nothing gets lost or overlooked
    - Examples
      - Track daily tasks in a spreadsheet
      - Send daily reminders to team-members

- **Key Competencies: Flexibility and handling ambiguity**

- Use organisational tools
      - *Planning and scheduling software*
        - templates
        - workflows
        - calendars
      - *Collaboration tools*
        - email
        - collaboration software
        - dashboards
      - *Documentation*
        - files

- plans
- spreadsheets
- *Quality assurance tools*
  - evaluations
  - productivity trackers
  - reports

## • Flexibility

### • The core skills of a project manager

- Be willing to change plans
- Examples of issues
  - Goals of the company may change
  - Team member leaves
- Unpredictable moments are guaranteed
- Stay cool under pressure

### • Key Competencies: Flexibility and handling ambiguity

#### • *Flexible planning*

#### • Assess external constraints

- When planning take external events into account
  - such as national holidays and team member vacations/sick leave
- Leaving extra time in the schedule allows for these events to have a minimal effect on the project

#### • Plan for risks and challenges

- Consider any potential risks, and plan for them in advance
  - example
    - Someone leaves/decides to quit
      - Are you able to replace them?
      - Can you hire an independent contractor?
      - Come up with a list of potential people that can join your team if someone isn't available
- Look at historical data
  - Review past projects, and past challenges you faced
  - Evaluate if a similar challenge can occur in your current project, and how it can be negated/managed

#### • Calculate "float" into your schedule

- calculate the amount of time you can wait to begin a task before it impact the project schedule and threatens the project outcome

- Identifying this can allow for keeping the project on track, and make sure everything is as efficient as possible
- *Handling ambiguity*
  - **Keep calm**
    - being calm, and handling ambiguity with grace and poise can set a good example, and allow your team to do the same
  - **Express empathy**
    - important to understand what your team is thinking, especially during times of ambiguity
    - let team members know you care about the challenges they are facing
  - **Communicate what you know clearly**
    - Define the aspects of the project that are confirmed and will not change
    - Allows for the team to have a better sense of what to expect, regardless of any potentially variable aspects
  - **Make decisions and stick to them**
    - Don't second guess your decisions, as it can lead to more uncertainty
    - If you have to change course, make sure you explain to the team exactly why, and why this is a better option
  - **Trust the expertise of your team**
    - Have everyone on your team discuss what they already know
      - such as resources needed, components, specific tasks, etc.
    - Then use what you know to brainstorm and figure out what to do

## Leadership and team dynamics (Influencing without Authority)

### Influencing without authority - Definition

A project manager's ability to guide teammates to complete their assigned work without acting as their direct manager

- **Leadership and Team dynamics**
  - **Key Interpersonal Skills**
    - *Communication*

- Checking in with teammates
  - understand how they are going with a task
- Providing feedback on the quality of the team-mate's work
- *Negotiation*
  - Working with a team-mate to compromise on a new deadline, when they tell you they can't get work done on time
  - You have to use negotiation often with stakeholders and teammates, to balance their needs and the betterment of the project
- *Conflict mediation*
  - Project plans will change, and tension will arise
  - Must not allow for conflict to interfere with the project
    - Setting up a meeting with feuding teammates for example
- *Understanding motivations*
  - Get to know teammates
  - Figure out what makes them do their best work
    - Learning how teammates prefer to receive feedback
    - How they like to receive feedback when they do a good job