

AT YOUR SERVICE

To get ahead, put others first.

BY ALFONSO BUCERO, MSc, PMP, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

T rue project leaders aren't afraid to be servants to their teams. In doing so, they will not always be popular and they may not always impress the higher-ups. Yet they are willing to pay that price because they're motivated by concern for others rather than a desire for personal glory.

To best serve your team:

- 1. Put others ahead of yourself and your desires.** This requires more than putting your agenda on hold. It means being aware of your people's needs and being available to help them. When a team member comes to you to talk or to discuss a problem, you must be willing to stop all your activities and focus on the conversation at hand. Be ready to not only listen, but to act.
- 2. Possess the confidence to serve.** How we treat others is really a reflection of how we think about ourselves. Only secure leaders are able to give power to others. Show me the project manager who thinks he or she is too important to serve, and I'll show you someone who is basically insecure.
- 3. Initiate service.** Just about anyone will serve others if compelled to do so. And some will serve in a crisis. But the true leader *offers* to serve others without being asked.
- 4. Don't focus on rank or position.** Project managers should serve all stakeholders in the same manner, without distinction. You must talk to managers, executives, subcontractors, team members and the rest of a project's stakeholders—regardless of the authority and power they have. True leaders focus on doing what's best for the project.
- 5. Serve out of care and respect.** The call to service should not be motivated by manipulation or self-promotion. It should be fueled by love and respect. In



Project managers must see their team members both as contributors to the project and as human beings.

the end, the extent of your influence depends on the depth of your concern for others.

Project managers must see their team members both as contributors to the project and as human beings. Respect them and show them how much you care. Take small breaks with your people every day—have a cup of coffee and talk (and not just about the project). Try to truly understand their needs and issues. And don't forget to ask for feedback.

Your team members need you. Put your people first and your project will be a success. *PM*

Alfonso Bucero, MSc, PMP, is an independent consultant who manages projects throughout Europe and Asia. He is the author of Project Management: A New Vision, coauthor of Project Sponsorship: Achieving Management Commitment for Project Success and a contributor to Project Management Circa 2025.

