Project Retrospectives

A tool for improving current and future projects

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NCSU Libraries
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What is a Project Retrospective?

Project Retrospective

A formal method for capturing and preserving the **lessons learned** from a recently completed project

Project Retrospective

Focused on identifying **mistakes or problems** that occurred in the project, to avoid repeating them in the future

Project Retrospective

Also focused on identifying **what went right**, to encourage replication of these successes in future projects
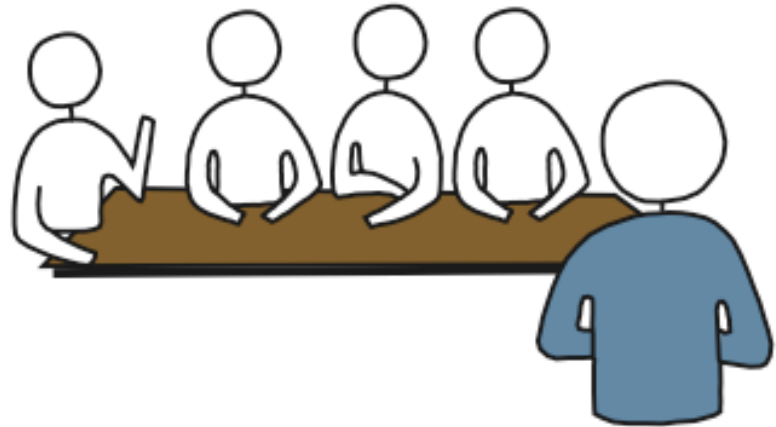
How Does It Work?

Retrospectives in a Nutshell

1. Prepare questions

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2. Get the project
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Retrospectives in a Nutshell

1. Prepare questions
2. Get the project team in a room
3. Discuss what went right and wrong
4. Compile findings after the meeting
5. Edit and share the final report

Best Practices

- Create a "safe" space for participants to discuss their work

- Select an outsider as the facilitator

- Allocate enough time for the meeting

- Offsite meeting location is best

- Don't allow the meeting to turn into a complaint session; keep it constructive

Case Study

Case Study

North Carolina Architects &
Builders: A Biographical
Dictionary

NORTH CAROLINA
Architects & Builders
A BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY

HOME   SEARCH   BROWSE   BUILDING INDEX   ABOUT

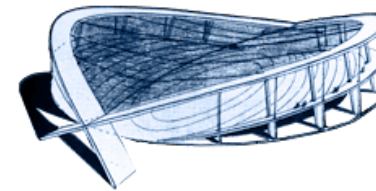## Welcome to
North Carolina Architects & Builders

This biographical dictionary highlights architects and builders who have produced North Carolina's architecture for more than 300 years. A brief biography plus a building list traces each person's work in the state. This is a growing website, with many more entries still to be added. We invite users to send corrections and updated information to enhance the site.

Hicks, William J. (1827-1911)

Central Prison [Raleigh]

William J. Hicks (February 18, 1827-January 14, 1911), millwright, builder, contractor, architect, and prison warden, began his career in the 1850s and became a prominent figure in North Carolina construction after the Civil War. He epitomized the practical, ambitious, and adaptable men who made their way in the unsettled times after the war. Hicks was born in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, the son of Martin (1797-1849) and Nancy Pendleton Hicks. William's mother died when he was three years old, and during his father's long illness he helped manage the family farm. Always attracted to mechanical work, Hicks went to work...

Read Full Entry

Dorton Arena, Raleigh
Matthew Nowicki, architect

Start Exploring

[   ] [Search]

More Search Options
Browse
Building Index

Notable Quotes

"You specify that the front, and I suppose the whole of the outside of the Church is to be a *lilac gray*. Now it has been so long since the last spring that our mason has

Project Context

- Growing collection of over 150 authored biographies of prominent individuals in North Carolina architecture

- Supports faceted search and browse of biographies by work locations, dates, and building types

- 8 person project team

- About 1 year to design and implement

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3. What did not work so well in this project, that we should do differently next time?

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1. What worked well in this project, that we would like to repeat again?
2. Would would you cite as your best personal lesson learned in this project?
3. What did not work so well in this project, that we should do differently next time?
4. What aspects of this project still puzzle us?

The Meeting Itself

Norm Kerth's *Prime Directive*:

"Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job they could, given what they knew at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand."

The Meeting Itself

- Thematic discussion questions
  - Planning
  - Resources
  - Scheduling
  - Technologies
  - Communication

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- Thematic discussion questions
  - Planning
  - Resources
  - Scheduling
  - Technologies
  - Communication
- Reflection questions
  - Best personal lesson learned?
  - What still puzzles you about this project?

After the Meeting

1. Summary report drafted
2. Retrospective participants asked to review and comment on draft
3. Final report edited and published on internal project website for posterity
4. Final report shared with relevant parties outside the project team

Reflecting on the Retrospective

- Meeting time should have been longer
- Interactive exercises would have made the process more fun and engaging
- Ideally the facilitator would be a complete outsider
- We should do more of these!

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- Inform planning for upcoming projects
- Promotes a shared responsibility for project success and failure—we are all in this together!
- Promotes a culture of continual improvement within the organization

Thanks!

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More Information

Project Retrospectives
A Handbook for Team Reviews (2001)