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SWENG505

The company that I am currently employed at operates under a mix of both a traditional and a matrix organization. Organizationally, I have a group lead that I report too. My group lead then reports to a department head who reports to a division head and so on until someone reports to the CEO. This is representative of the traditional organization. Functionally, however, we operate as a matrix organization. Some of my project leads have not been in my department or even division. I have even been a project lead for other division projects. Sometimes your project lead will also be your group lead, but that is usually just coincidence. The project leads often deal with project specific details, such as project updates, while your group lead will often handle HR and/or other personal issues you may be facing. This may include your goals or if you are having difficulty working with a particular person. On paper, I have a static position in the organization, but functionally, I work in many different types of roles - from software engineer, to consultant, to project lead, to many things in between.

The nature of my company means that we have access to various different types of project management tools. This can depend on what tools the team is familiar with or what the sponsor prefers. I am personally most familiar and comfortable with using JIRA. The most important piece of it is managing tasking, but it also integrates nicely with Confluence. This helps manage documentation for the project so other team members can stay up-to-date on other pieces of the project. I have been on projects that just use MS Teams to track the project. Some of my colleagues use tools in Gitlab to manage their team. I know there are others available, but I haven’t been exposed to them yet.

I have progressively built my project lead experience. When I first joined the company, I was assisting another colleague with their tasking. They eventually left the project and I became the lead engineer for the piece of the project (I was still the only developer for that piece). This work then led to me being asked to be a lead for a similar component on a different project. This time I had a new grad that was assisting me with my tasking. After the successful deployment of that project, I was asked to be a project lead for 8 summer interns. This was the first time that I had to lead without truly doing any of the development. I had to come up with and document the project goals and direction. I then had to convert this into direct tasking for 8 people of various skill sets. We needed to have working prototypes by the end of the summer, so I had to make sure the team stayed within scope and did not add “nice to have” requirements. I did not have to do too much around cost estimation because the intern program was already fully funded. However, once they left for school, I then had to estimate the level of effort needed to productionize some of their prototypes. This estimate on development time and expertise needed would help to determine how much the project should or is going to cost. This summer was the first time I truly acted as project lead and didn’t do any of the development myself.