



PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Interested in a career in project management? Maybe you're already a project manager but you're looking to up your game and improve your skill set moving forward. Whichever situation you find yourself in, you came to the right place!

In this ebook we talk about all things related to project management. You'll learn:

- What modern project management is
- Workplace trends that will affect you as a project manager
- How to effectively manage projects in 2020 and beyond
- Tips regarding remote project management
- And more!

If that sounds interesting to you, then keep on reading. We have a ton of information to share and can't wait to get started. See you on the next page!

MODERN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: *A Definition*

Before we define project management, it might be helpful to first ask the question, “What is a project?” According to the **Project Management Institute**, a project is, “A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.”

Project management, then, is the act of effectively managing these “temporary endeavors” so that they reach completion in the most efficient way possible.

For example, if [Company X] decides to release a new software

product in Q3, a project manager within the organization would be tasked with overseeing its development and helping to bring it to market within the stated time frame. The project manager would work with the product, marketing, and sales teams to ensure every aspect of the project is kept on track.

As you can probably tell, project management is a BIG job. But those who do it well are in high-demand at many different organizations around the world.



3 WORKPLACE TRENDS THAT WILL AFFECT *Project Managers*

We'll show you how to effectively manage projects in the next section. But first, we need context. Here are three workplace **trends that will affect all project managers** in

2020. Without an understanding of these trends, you won't be able to do your job properly.

1.

Technology Will Continue to Expand

It should come as no surprise to you to learn that technology will continue to progress in 2020 and beyond. **As a project manager** you need to be prepared for technological advances, especially as they pertain to artificial intelligence and automation.

AI will allow project managers to easily collect the data they need and automation will allow them to use said data on autopilot, saving them time that can then be spent on other tasks.

This doesn't necessarily mean you need to become an expert on AI automation. But you do need to have a general idea of how these technologies can assist you in your project management efforts. We suggest speaking to thought leaders in the field this year and acquiring a basic understanding of the tech.

2.

PMs Will Diversify Methodologies

In years past, project managers would typically subscribe to a single project management methodology. There are many to choose from, but some of the **most popular** are:

- **Agile:** This methodology was originally created for software development teams in order to provide them with a clear structure in which to innovate. Users are asked to break down large tasks into manageable chunks and tackle them in short sprints. It's a great methodology for product development purposes where constant change is the norm.
- **Waterfall:** The Waterfall methodology is rigid. It's a linear approach to project management where things flow in one direction, like a waterfall. Once one phase has been completed, teams are allowed to move onto the next — but never before.
- **Kanban:** The Kanban methodology was first developed in the 1940s by Toyota. It's a highly visual project management workflow that allows users to easily see their projects and identify potential bottlenecks, usually via a board of some kind. Users can look at the board and quickly determine what needs to be done *now*, as well as next steps.

Each of these project management methodologies have proved successful for the teams that use them on a regular basis. But here's the thing: in 2020, project managers will likely need to rely on *multiple* methodologies to accomplish their work in an efficient manner. This is due to modern projects growing more complex day by day.

A hybrid approach to project management will allow teams to take the most effective aspects of each methodology, combine them into a unique workflow, and produce better results faster.

3.

Remote Work Will Continue to Grow ~~~~~

Lastly, all project managers need to realize that remote work is **NOT some passing fad**. Experts on the topic expect the number of remote workers to increase in the coming years. In fact, **70% of the workforce** is expected to work remotely, at least part of the time, by 2025.

What does this mean in regards to project management? The way you, as a project manager, oversee your projects might have to change.

We'll talk more about remote project management in a later section, but for now, just realize that communication techniques, the right software tools, and a quality hiring processes will prove indispensable to you as a project manager in 2020 and beyond.

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE *Projects in 2020 and Beyond*

Now that we've covered what project management is and three important workplace trends that will affect it in the coming years, we can discuss how to manage projects effectively. The following five tips, when implemented and used correctly, will help you become the best project manager that you can possibly be. We encourage you to take them to heart!

1. Understand Your Role

In general, project managers are tasked with forecasting workloads, constructing project plans, and monitoring project progress to ensure that deadlines and budgets are met. But what does your company require of you in regards to project management?

Every organization is different and the role of the project manager will vary depending on the company he or she works for. It's imperative that you understand your role before diving in and attempting to manage a software build, new service offering, or other project.

That being said, there are specific skill sets that just about every project manager needs to have and hone. Let's take a look at them!

2. Hone Your Skill Set

What skills are the most essential to project management success? Ask 10 different project managers that question and you'll probably get 10 different answers. But the following abilities are the ones we deem to be most vital:

Leadership

Without strong leadership abilities, it's impossible to reach peak PM performance. Why? Because everyone working on your project will be looking to you for guidance and support. While you might not have subject expertise in every area needed to complete your project, you are in charge of leading the folks who do and bringing them together to form a cohesive team.



This begs the question: how can one **improve their leadership skills?** We have a few tips:

Be Confident: If you aren't confident in the direction you're leading your team, why would any of them want to follow you? If you feel that you lack confidence, educate yourself. When you know what you need to do, you'll become more self-assured.

Inspire Your Team: As a project manager, you need more than confidence. You need to be able to inspire your team to work hard and complete goals. This can be done by sharing your complete project vision with them and how it will benefit the company.

Hold Everyone Accountable: When everyone on your team (including you!) are held accountable for their actions, trust and respect between staff members will grow and projects will get done on time and on budget more consistently.

Communication

Communication is crucial to the success of any project. If you don't communicate effectively with key stakeholders in your company, it will be hard to get approval for necessary projects. And if you fail to communicate well with your team, they won't understand the jobs they're supposed

to complete, leading to costly mistakes and increased roadblocks.

Fortunately, communicating with others in your organization isn't that difficult:

Prioritize Communication: The first thing you must do to communicate effectively with your team is prioritize the practice. When communication is emphasized, everyone will naturally talk more, leading to **better collaborations** and more innovation.

Use Communication Tools: Chat apps like Slack and visual collaboration software like CloudApp make it easy to stay in touch with colleagues. We'll talk more about investing in the right tools for project management in a later section.

Learn to Listen: True communication is a two-way street. If all you ever do is give orders, your staff won't feel like valued members of the team, become less engaged, and won't be as productive as they could be.

Emotional Intelligence

According to Howard Gardner, a Harvard theorist, emotional intelligence (EQ) is "your ability to understand other people, what motivates them, and how to work cooperatively with them."

This skill is incredibly important in project management! When you understand how each member of your team ticks, you'll be able to assign them tasks that correlate best with their natural abilities. You'll also be able to tell when specific staffers become overwhelmed and need a helping hand to complete their work.

Lastly, emotional intelligence can help you better motivate and inspire the folks who work for you, which we already determined is a key ability that all great leaders share.

Tip to improve your EQ:

Analyze Yourself: Why do you do the things that you do? By analyzing yourself, you'll gain valuable insight into the minds of others as well. In all likelihood, you're not the only one who reacts to certain happenings in specific ways.

Practice: While some people are born with more emotional intelligence than others, it is a skill that can be learned and developed. By observing others and asking them how they feel about certain subjects, you can improve your EQ.



Problem Solving

Unfortunately, few projects ever go completely to plan. If you've been in the project management game for a while, you know this to be true. When problems arise, you need to be able to handle them efficiently. Otherwise, you'll lag behind schedule and/or exceed budget. Here's how to **become a better problem solver:**

Change Your Perspective: Don't think of problems as obstacles, but learning opportunities. This is important because most humans are hardwired to avoid difficult situations. When project-related issues are seen as a chance to improve, they become exciting rather than burdensome.

Let Your Creativity Run Rampant: Sometimes tough problems require outside-the-box solutions. But you won't be able to think of these solutions if you continually stifle your creativity. So give yourself license to think of wild ideas. One of them might be the perfect answer to the challenge you're facing.

Change Your Scenery: It seems simple, but a change of scenery can spark amazing new ideas. If you simply can't think of a suitable solution to the challenge you face, go for a walk, workout at the gym, or eat a delicious meal in a new restaurant. Your time away from the issue will allow your subconscious mind to solve it for you.



If you're able to develop these four skills, you'll undoubtedly become a better project manager. But don't make the mistake of thinking your personal abilities are the only thing you need to excel in project management! You also need to invest in the right tools.

3. Invest in the Right Tools ~~~~~

Effective project management in the digital age requires (surprise!) digital tools. The software solutions you choose to use will have a large impact on how efficient your processes can be. As such, we wanted to take a moment to suggest three unique apps to add to your company's technology stack: Slack, Asana, and CloudApp. Let's take a quick look at each:

Slack

This incredibly popular communication tool allows team members to contact each other via text chat, voice calls, and video conferences. Conversations can be organized into different channels based on project, team, etc., and users can both leave and rejoin conversations at any time — something you can't do with traditional email chains.

One Slack feature that we absolutely love is its searchable history. Everything that's been posted inside a channel can easily be found again via a convenient search bar inside the app. This allows users to quickly recall past details regarding important projects.

All in all, Slack is a valuable communication tool that will better enable you to communicate with your team, share progress updates, and adjust plans when needed.

Asana

Asana is a software solution that's specifically designed for project management. As its website says, the tool helps teams "stay focused on the goals, projects, and daily tasks that grow business." In other words, exactly what project managers need!

All of your projects inside Asana can be viewed in a variety of different ways:

Boards View: This view allows users to organize their projects in a very visual way. Every task that needs to be completed is given a card. Cards are then distributed into different columns based on their level of completion. When a task is finished, it can be dragged and dropped into the next column of the board.

List View: The list view organizes every project task into a tidy to-do list that allows users to quickly view which duties still need to be accomplished, in the order that they need to be accomplished in.

Create and Share Instantly

CloudApp brings screen recording, screenshots, and GIF creation to the cloud, in an easy-to-use enterprise-level app. Just capture, share, and accelerate your workflow.

[Get Started For Free](#)

Timeline View: This view is perfect for complex undertakings because it enables users to map out their entire project on one screen and clearly see the relationship between every task, which means project managers have a much better chance of keeping their projects on track — even when changes occur.

Calendar View: The calendar view is exactly what it sounds like: a weekly or monthly calendar that shows every task that must be completed on the day it needs to be completed on. This view makes it easy to spot holes and overlaps in a schedule.

No matter which view you choose to use, Asana will allow you to assign every task a due date, owner, and attachments. Users can also chat in-app and discuss project ideas.

CloudApp

Communication is absolutely essential to effective project management. As it turns out, CloudApp is the ultimate communication tool because it includes screen and

webcam recording, GIF creation, and image annotation features into one convenient app.

Imagine how much faster you'll be able to get your points across when you can simply record your screen to illustrate a process, rather than typing out a long email. Or annotate a screenshot to pinpoint revision requests instead of wasting time going back and forth on the phone. CloudApp makes collaboration between team members a breeze.

But all these capabilities won't cost you an arm and a leg. CloudApp can be used for free! We encourage you to [get started today](#) and experience the power of CloudApp for yourself.

4. Develop Your Plan of Attack

Once you understand your role as a project manager, taken time to hone your project management skills, and chosen the right tools for your team, you can begin to formulate a plan of attack for the various projects you'll be asked to complete.



Now, every project will be different, of course, and require a unique set of steps to complete successfully. But by having a few standard processes in place, you'll save yourself time and ensure each project is finished as efficiently as possible.

Here is a [rock-solid four-step project management process](#) for you to adopt:

Cast a Vision: You can't start planning a project until you know what you're trying to accomplish and why. It's important to really think through this first step and make sure that the project you're about to undertake has a clear purpose and end goal. When it does, you can share your vision with other team members.

Create a Plan: Once you know what you're trying to achieve and why the objective is important to your organization, you can get into the nitty gritty of planning. You'll want to map out each individual task that needs to be completed, who's in charge of completing them, and when they need to have them completed by.

Carry Out Tasks: Now that each of your team members has their marching orders, work can begin. This is exciting! But don't get too far ahead of yourself. We suggest working in one to two week sprints, tracking your progress along the way, and gleaning feedback from your team. Again, make sure you and your team are in constant communication. Deliver a Product: BOOM! You did it, you completed the project! Before you open a bottle of champagne to celebrate, you need to close out the budget and conduct a team-wide retrospective, which we'll talk more about in the next section.

And that's it. If you follow this simple four-step plan for all of your projects, you'll put yourself in a position to succeed more often than not.

5. Evaluate Your Results

The final piece of the project management puzzle is the evaluation stage. It's important to ask yourself (and your

team!) what went right and what went wrong during your last project. That way you can double down on successes and try to avoid failures in the future.

We recommend doing this fairly quickly after the completion of every project because the ups and downs of it will still be fresh in everyone's mind.

During your after-project evaluation meeting, often called a post-mortem, make sure that everyone is constructive, even when talking about challenges encountered; and no one feels attacked or singled out.



REMOTE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

How do you properly manage a project when you and your team don't work in the same location? While many of the tips we've already outlined apply, you'll also want to consider the following to ensure your remote team can complete projects as efficiently as possible:

1. Hire the Right Team Members

Not every PM will have control of this. But for those who do, it's essential to hire team members who will excel in remote situations. What does a successful remote worker look like? They are:

Self-Motivated: Remote workers generally work in isolation, which means they won't be able to rely on others to motivate them to get their work done. A remote worker that can't inspire themselves to work on their tasks won't be successful.

Great Communicator: We'll say it one more time, projects can only be completed successfully when everyone on the team communicates effectively. If you hire an employee that doesn't communicate well, you're in for a world of frustration.

Highly Skilled: It should go without saying, but any remote worker that you hire should be excellent at their job. Since they won't be in-office with your team, they won't be able to rely on the expertise of others, making their own knowledge even more valuable.

2. Prioritize the Planning Phase

Obviously, remote teams are less accessible than in-office ones. You might be working with a variety of different characters from all over the globe. Because of this, it's imperative that you have a solid, thoroughly vetted plan in place before you begin working on a project.

By making sure that everyone on your staff understands their jobs, you'll protect your team from making major mistakes and derailing your project in a serious way.

3. Check in Regularly

Finally, as a project manager, you need to be in constant contact with your team. That way they can ask questions, inform you of progress, and seek your counsel regarding roadblocks. So take another look at the "tools" section above and make sure that you've invested in a solution or two that will allow your team to contact you (and vice versa) in a convenient way.

Wrapping Up

Project management is an incredibly important job and integral to the success of most modern organizations. Fortunately, after reading this ebook, you now have a firm understanding of exactly what you need to possess, both internally and externally, to succeed as a project manager. Good luck!





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