

## Defining the Basics for the Project Team

If you are lucky enough to have a dedicated project team, with very little moving around of resources, you probably don't need this information. On the other hand, if you are like 90% of project managers these days, you have a fluid project team subject to matrix management, shifting resources and virtual working conditions. Until you have time to develop detailed team guidelines, the best way to keep things flowing is **to define the basics**.

Define the Basics	When You Have More Time
<p>1. The buck stops here</p> <p><b>Team members need to know who will make final decisions about daily project activities. These may be requirement changes, schedule modifications, and issue resolution.</b></p> <p><b>Often this is the Project Manager who may then have to take it elsewhere; but sometimes this could be an architect or a senior team member. Sometimes it could be a shared responsibility.</b></p>	<p><b>Develop a RACI chart</b></p> <p>This defines who is responsible, accountable, to be consulted or informed for the major deliverables of the project.</p>
<p>2. How do we (the project team) decide things?</p> <p><b>It is important to let the team know your preference for making decisions. There are several decision making models: leaders are often unaware of their preferences and which is best used for their scenario.</b></p> <p><b>Here are the possible models from least to most participatory.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Decide and inform</li><li>- Gather input from team, then decide</li><li>- Consensus</li><li>- Consensus with fallback</li><li>- Set constraints and delegate decision</li></ul> <p><b>Often the Project Manager's approach to decision making is related to their leadership style. You should become familiar with your leadership style strengths and weaknesses.</b></p>	<p><b>Develop a Decision Grid</b></p> <p>Not every decision style is appropriate for every problem.</p> <p><b>Decide and inform</b> - good for time sensitive decisions where team probably already supports decision</p> <p><b>Gather input, then decide</b> - good when expert opinion is needed – team provides input for a difficult design decision</p> <p><b>Consensus</b> - means acceptance not necessarily agreement; takes longer than other styles</p> <p><b>Consensus with fallback</b> - preset course of action if no team decision is possible in reasonable period of time</p> <p><b>Set constraints and delegate decision</b> – helps to share responsibility</p>

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3. Addressing the individual not carrying their own weight

**This usually presents itself as poor performance and inadequate support for various project tasks. Encourage team members to raise the issue as soon as possible. Burying it will only make things worse. Provide some mentoring so the team member can try to address it themselves or refer it to the PM or senior team leader.**

### Feedback Guidelines

Develop and review giving and receiving feedback guidelines with the team with specific steps and recommendations.

4. Everyone knows every thing

**Share as much project information as possible with all team members. This could be in team meetings, emails, blogs, etc. There are always some things you may not be at liberty to share but keep them to the minimum. Address rumors as quickly as possible – even if all you can say is you can't say anything now but you will in the future. Rumors tend to get out of hand because in the absence of information, people will make up their own.**

### Guidelines for Open Communication Policies

Develop a statement of how you intend to maintain an open communication environment while adhering to organizational requirements.

5. Quick contact information

**These days there are multiple ways to communicate with team members – email, IM, cell phone, smartphone, skype, home/business numbers but not everyone monitors every device with the same frequency. Ask each team member to indicate their preferred method to be contacted for emergencies. Define what is considered an emergency and set a frequency time limit the team member will check the device.**

### Develop a Team/Project Communication Plan

Often part of the project communication plan, this focuses on defining how and when each project team member will use each communication channel.