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## The Project Reformer's e-Tip of the Week

**013: Help Your Team Unfold the Project**

So, I admit it; the title is a bit clumsy. Unfold the Project? What could that mean? All too often project plans are developed early in the life of a project without the input of those executing the project. While there may be great value in doing that early planning, continuing to operate to that one (right) plan misses the opportunities afforded by both the experience acquired while implementing AND the perspectives, talents, and intentions of the project participants.

When we try to operate to the *baseline* plan we work against nature. Life happens. People bring unexpected talents and challenges to the project. Instead of working to get reality to conform to the plan, try adjusting the plan to conform to reality! This is what I call *unfolding the project*.

Start by inviting people to share their ambitions for being on the project. Then inquire into the unique talents and strengths that each participant brings. Finally, invite team members to continuously offer their perspectives, assessments, recommendations, and needs to adjust the plan as you go. Sure this is more planning work than managing to the baseline plan. But it is not likely to be more work overall. When you help people unfold the project they will help you stay on target. That's help every project manager can appreciate.

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