

HalMacomber

The Project Reformer's e-Tip of the Week

027: **Projects Are Single-Purpose Networks of Commitment**

A project is a single-purpose network of commitment performed by a temporary social system. Unlike recurring business processes, the network of commitment on a project emerges rather than is designed and refined as performers have experience in the network. Performers in a project get one shot through the network. To complicate this project performers come together as strangers. They often lack experience with each others' reliability to perform within the network. Without the experience with each other, project performers will hold out on making their best commitments.

Your role as project leader is to *activate the network of commitment* on your project. Here are four actions you can take:

- Set an example of making offers (promises) that take care of the concerns and needs of project performers. People will follow your example.
- Encourage project performers to make offers and promises that they can reliably deliver. Help them as needed to improve on reliability.
- Be a good customer for the promises made on your project by offering your help to performers and announcing your anticipation of completion.
- Be quick to show your appreciation for the completion of promises including being notified at completion rather than at the next project team meeting.

These actions begin to bring project performers together as team members who are taking care of each other while they take care of the project. Doing this publicly provides the basis for people to develop trust in each others' competence and reliability to perform. And it is just the beginning. Your role as project leader requires continued attention on the functioning of the network of commitment.

The Project Leaders' Studio™

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