

## Ten Rules for Project Managers

### Project e-Tip 033 by Hal Macomber, Project Reformer

10. **Adopt practices for exploring a variety of perspectives.**  
We think we see what we see, but we don't. We really see what we think. Remember the blind men and the elephant. Make it your habit to inquire what others see. You'll see more together.
9. **Stay close to your customer.**  
Clients' concerns evolve over the life of a project. Take advantage of that to over-deliver. Stay in a conversation with your client to adjust what you are doing.
8. **Take care of your project team.**  
We've come to accept that the customer comes first...the customer is always right. We can't take care of the customer if we first aren't taking care of our project team. It's a challenge. While there are some things we can do for the whole team, it comes down to taking care of each team member as the individual that he or she is. And to make it more difficult, then we must bring their various interests into coherence.
7. **Keep your eye on the overall project promises.**  
Project work can be difficult. It is easy to lose sight of what we are doing and why we are doing it. Remind your team and yourself of the overall promises and how you are doing fulfilling those promises.
6. **Build relationships intentionally.**  
Project teams come together as strangers. To do great work...innovation, learning, and collaboration...all take people who like and care for each other. Don't leave that to chance. Start your projects by building relationships among team members.
5. **Tightly couple learning with action.**  
Projects are wonderful opportunities to learn. Don't put that off for the after project lessons learned. Make it your habit to incorporate learning loops in all your project activities. Your team will appreciate it. Your customer will benefit from it. And best of all, it will make your job easier.
4. **Coordinate meticulously.**  
A project is an ever-evolving network of commitment. Keep that network activated by tending to the critical conversations. See that people are making clear requests, promises that have completion dates, and share opinions that advance the purposes of the project. Without attention to those critical conversations the project will drift.
3. **Collaborate. Really collaborate.**  
Make it your rule to plan with those people who will be the performers of the plan. Don't wait 'til the project has gone south to get their help. Start out that way. Continue collaborating as the usual way you work through the project.
2. **Listen generously.**  
People are able to say what they can in the moment. For the most part, people are well-intended. Give them the benefit of the doubt. Take the time to listen. Ask questions. Seek others' opinions. And while you're at it, don't be so harsh on yourself.
1. **Embrace uncertainty.**  
Expect the unexpected. There is far more that we don't know and can't know than what we can anticipate. Be resilient to what life throws at you. Anticipate that your team will learn something along the way that can and should change what you have promised and how you can deliver on your promises. And when you take a set-back -- we all do sometime or another -- review the other nine rules for how you can work your way out of it.

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