

Team Leadership 17-8.01-P

LEAD a team through a project or process, presented in the E-PME Study Guide.

Leading a Project Team

Your job will eventually entail leading a team through a project or process.

Senior enlisted personnel are ideal candidates to serve as project leaders. Some members—particularly those who have achieved the level of Master Chief within their Rating-specialty—have accumulated over their careers the training, education, experiences, and accomplishments that define their Rating specialty.

However, the Coast Guard has determined through workforce analysis and mission requirements that ALL senior enlisted personnel, regardless of Rating-specialty, must be ready to manage and lead diverse teams. The diverse teams are made of all members of the Coast Guard family (A/D, Reserve, Civilian, Aux., etc.) to meet current and future unit and organization needs.

A project's success normally hinges on the strength of its leadership. A project is a planned but temporary team effort resulting in positive gain to the unit or organization.

A project leader has to be adept at project management... a set of principles, practices, and techniques used to successfully accomplish a defined goal:

- Lead teams
- Schedule tasks
- Control costs—Costs include necessary person hours, funding, materials, equipment, etc., from the beginning stages to the final report out to the command.

Leading a Project Team (continued)

- Manage risks—Risks involve the probability of a negative event occurring and the consequences of that negative event. Balancing such probability over and against the gain achieved by success of the project is crucial. Risks must be identified, assessed as to their probability, and finally have their impact assessed.
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Choosing the Right Project

The member should analyze his or her own unit's needs. Select a project that can be accomplished within a relatively short time.

Projects could involve such things as:

- Planning and implementing a Coast Guard Day picnic/celebration
- Designing a community project for unit member participation
- Improving the habitable environment of the unit
- Designing a unit-mentoring program

The project needs to be simple enough to complete successfully in a reasonable time, but challenging enough to demonstrate mastery of the project planning processes.

Choosing Team Members

For a project to be successful, the team leader should choose team members with a wide field of expertise, choosing from the natural diversity of personnel at their unit.

The total number of team members needs to be "a manageable few." Good project managers will, at times, have associate team members with specific expertise.

A person with graphic arts skills might be an associate team member if a special piece of artwork needs to be developed for a display that will be a part of a community project.

The artist doesn't need to be part of the planning phase, and wouldn't be a necessary part of the project implementation aspect, but does have an important but temporary role on the project.

First Team Meeting

The first team meeting is the most important meeting of all. At this first meeting, the team will need to create a:

- List of all necessary tasks that need to be accomplished
- List of all necessary resources (money, personnel, command support, etc.)
- Timeline for accomplishment, with several milestones set for evaluating effectiveness of the timeline
- List of all risks involved in the project

The project manager needs to build the team by presenting a clear vision and goal for the project.

The environment needs to be one where all members can speak in turn freely, sharing from their own ideas and experiences.

A good reference for both the project manager and team members to use is the Coast Guard's Process Improvement Guide (PIG) contained on the Leadership Development Center's website at:

<http://www.cga.edu/support/objects/processimprovementguide.pdf>.

The guide will assist the team in all aspects of the project, making its success more certain.

Submitting Project Plan to Command For Review

After determining each of the required items in the initial team meeting, the team needs to finalize the project's plan in writing for submission for review by the chain of command.

The plan must not only list all tasks to be accomplished, but also:

- Who will accomplish each, and by what date
 - All estimated costs
 - All necessary resources, including resources needing to be procured by command
 - Risks must be addressed
 - A timeline for accomplishing the project, including each step (milestones) so the schedule can be evaluated
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Future Team Meetings

Teams must meet regularly. At each meeting, the team should analyze the effectiveness of the project management plan up to that date, and make all changes as necessary to accomplish the approved project plan.

The project manager is required to keep the chain of command informed of project status after each successive team meeting.

Final Report

After completing the project, regardless of its outcome, the project manager should develop a final written report laying out:

- Final costs
- Accomplishments
- Personnel who assisted in the project

The report is sent through the chain of command.
