# Experts Share Their #1 Tips for New Project Managers

Excerpts from a collection of advice gathered by Ashley Coolman of Wrike.

## 1. Listen to opinions from everyone, even if you reject them later

"Keep communication channels open for all stakeholders: the team, the sponsor, the customer, the end user, your boss, etc. I am not saying that you let yourself be manipulated by every party, just try to listen before making decisions."

Mehmet Degirmencioglu

## 2. Ask follow-up questions

"When someone makes a suggestion, I like to follow up with background questions: When and under what circumstances have you implemented that in the past? Why was that approach successful? What made it more efficient, cost effective, etc.? Then I broaden my scope of understanding."

Lori Galster

## 3. Understand the project needs

"Having a clear understanding of both the functional and technical definition/needs of the project upfront, with stakeholder buy-in, is extremely important."

Muqtader MBA

## 4. Hold one-on-one project alignment sessions

"Before kicking off the project, connect with all the key stakeholders in one-on-one sessions to get their input on the project, their goals, their level of support, etc. This will uncover hidden 'gotchas' and misalignment that may come up later if you don't do this."



Tom Treanor

## 5. To build a strong team, enable a culture of sharing and innovation

"Foster a culture where everyone's ideas are heard to allow more innovation to take place. The added bonus is that the project team itself becomes a lot stronger—team members are far more open to suggesting and working through ideas if they know they'll be heard, rather than thinking they'll be shouted down all the time."

Andrew Hudson



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### 6.  Turn mistakes into learning opportunities

"Don't be afraid of mistakes—learn from them. They are the building blocks for future success in this challenging and dynamic profession!"

Susan Kirkpatrick, PMP, CSSBB

### 7.  Keep your eye on the overall objectives

"No one on the business side cares about the Gantt chart or status reports or the PM deliverables. What they are looking for is the capabilities to achieve the business objectives your project will deliver."

Thomas J. Dickie, PMP

### 8.  Expose yourself to real-life situations early on

"Gain as much experience in project management as you can. Books, theory, and concepts are all fine, but real-life situations are much tougher. The more you face these situations, the smarter you become. There is no better way to learn project management than to expose yourself to real-life situations."

Mangal Pandya

### 9.  Help stakeholders believe in the goal, not just the budget

"Getting stakeholder buy-in on the outcome and benefit of completing the project is more important than stakeholder acceptance of the scope, schedule, and budget. If decision-makers believe in what the project will achieve, they will be more likely to accept changes to the scope and tolerances if you can show that it will lead to a better outcome. If all you've sold is a budget and a delivery date, you're doomed to failure."

Chris Cox

### 10. Rely on your people skills, and push for the success at the end of the project

"Don't give up. A project manager position is not a rewarding job every day. You have to work really hard to get things done (especially in a matrixed environment), so you have to rely on your people skills a lot. (Keep those sharp!) In the end, you will persevere, and when the project finishes successfully, you will love that feeling of success."

Bhawna Mundotia, PMP

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