MANAGE PROJECTS SUCCESSFULLY

LEVEL 4 PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

The path to managing a successful project begins with the enthusiasm, knowledge, and leadership of a project manager. Project managers take responsibility for the accomplishment of an idea, plan, or assignment, and guide a team through each task while working to meet deadlines. Though every project is unique, project management skills apply in every setting.

In this project, you will learn how to recognize your strengths as a project manager. During the process of completing your assignment, you will recognize the importance of developing rapport with stakeholders, cultivating appropriate relationships with your team, and managing time to meet deadlines. You will develop the skills to delegate tasks, manage resources, and set a precedent for behavior.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to practice developing a plan, building a team, and fulfilling the plan with the help of your team.

Overview: Form a team of three to four people and choose a project to begin. Create a plan for your project and present the plan to your club in a 2- to 3-minute speech. Then, complete your project with your team. Finally, present a 5- to 7-minute speech about the experience. This speech may be humorous, informational, or any type of speech that appeals to you. It should not be a report about the content of this project, but a reflection of your experience applying what you learned.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 13.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.

Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.

Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.

Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.

Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

5	4	3	2	1
EXEMPLARY	EXCEL	ACCOMPLISHED	EMERGING	DEVELOPING

Pre-Project	Statement	Post-Project
5 4 3 2 1	I recognize my strengths as a project manager.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I cultivate appropriate, authoritative relationships with members of my team.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I manage time to meet deadlines and milestones.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I feel comfortable delegating tasks to team members.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I can assess the project's needs and manage resources accordingly.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I am able to set a precedent for behavior for my team.	5 4 3 2 1
5 4 3 2 1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5 4 3 2 1

COMPETENCIES

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Recognize your strengths and areas for growth as a project manager.
- Develop rapport with stakeholders.
- Cultivate an appropriate relationship with your team.
- Manage time to meet deadlines and milestones.
- Recognize and communicate what is required to accomplish tasks.
- Delegate to a team of people to complete tasks.
- Assess your project's needs.
- Manage resources for the project.

UNDERSTANDING PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management is the process of planning, organizing, and controlling resources. A project manager spends time focused on procedures, protocols, and the motivation of team members in order to achieve specific goals. Project management encompasses many different facets of management and leadership and requires the effective use of both.

The leadership duties filled by the project manager include:

- Identifying the scope of the project.
- Preparing and adhering to a schedule.
- Delegating tasks to team members.
- Establishing a budget (if applicable).
- Managing resources.
- Communicating progress.

ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGER

Each project manager has her own way of organizing tasks and staying on schedule. Though a project manager will have a unique style, there are a few important, identifiable skills that contribute to success.

You may have completed the Discover Your Leadership Style questionnaire if the "Understanding Your Leadership Style" project was a part of your path. Take a moment to review your results. Your personal leadership style will affect how you function as a project manager and the strengths you bring to the job.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

One of your most important responsibilities when you manage a project is to communicate with your team and all stakeholders. Through effective communication, project managers aim to explicitly outline the plans, goals, objectives, and strategies of a given project.

Some of your communications may be quick, in-person meetings to check progress, while others may require written responses to questions or concerns from either your team or an outside stakeholder. Keep your communications concise and as brief as possible while still answering questions and sharing necessary information. Maintain a record of your communication to help you confirm that points of action are completed.

STRONG ORGANIZATION

Remaining organized throughout a project's lifespan is integral to its success. Make a point of keeping project details current and under control. This can help you to effectively prioritize tasks to meet deadlines. Organization includes managing your team's time appropriately.

OPTIMISM AND ENTHUSIASM

Your attitude toward a project can greatly influence the way your team approaches and performs tasks. When you communicate a sense of optimism and enthusiasm for the project and the tasks involved, you set the tone for your team.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Adopting a positive attitude is just one way a project manager can affect his team's success by setting an example. Other places where a project manager leads by example include setting the level of professionalism expected from each team member, demonstrating integrity when facing challenges, and showing gratitude for work done well. Show your team exactly what is expected of them by demonstrating it yourself.

Cultivate a clear, appropriate, authoritative relationship with your team. Striking a balance between friend and authority figure can be a challenge when serving as a project manager, especially in a volunteer organization. Make sure you set a tone that will return the results you desire.

A short-term project that affects few people may allow you to take a casual approach to leadership. When completing a project with a larger scope, you may need to set a more professional tone to gain the support you need.

Manage Strengths

When working with a team, determine the best way to leverage each member's strengths. If you have the opportunity to build your own team, consider skills and abilities when choosing members. Personality and work ethic can affect the success of your team. Look for members who complement each other and will create a well-rounded group.

Learn About Your Team

When you are assigned a team, assess the skills and talents of each member. If possible, take time to learn about each person before the project begins. Look for common ground among members and focus on creating a supportive environment.

Build a Cohesive Unit

Whether you build your own team or are assigned a group of people to work with, one of your most important goals is to build a cohesive unit. This involves managing strengths, maintaining open lines of communication, and allowing the group to find processes and methods that work well for the team as a whole.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The first step in understanding how to succeed at project management is recognizing what it means to be an effective project manager. There are several factors that can help you accomplish your goals.

Know Your Stakeholders

A stakeholder is a person affected by your project. You may have a few or you may have a large group of people who have an interest in the outcome. It is important to cultivate positive relationships with your stakeholders whether they are people you will work with daily or individuals who are removed from the details of your project.

Build Positive Rapport

The most important method for building a positive rapport is communication. When working with a large group, plan your communications in advance so stakeholders know when to expect to hear from you. Make yourself available for questions and provide the most thorough answers possible.

Maintain Communication

When your stakeholder group is smaller, communication is no less important. Depending on the project, you may be able to maintain an "open door" policy that allows for questions and discussions on a less formal basis, or you may choose to set and maintain a communication schedule.

PLAN MEETINGS

Meetings give you the opportunity to check on your team's progress and communicate any changes to the plan. It gives your team an opportunity to voice questions or concerns, and share updates.

A scheduled meeting time each day or week can help establish a sense of uniformity in your team's process. Make sure the meeting time and frequency are practical for all parties to ensure the highest level of attendance.

Set aside time in each meeting to address progress in the project. It is normal to make adjustments to your timeline and process to reflect changes. Changes can occur when milestones are reached ahead of schedule or if milestones are missed. There may be times when extra flexibility is required. Keep the goals of the project in view.

Make Meetings Matter

Set an agenda and follow it as closely as possible. Encourage professional behavior during every meeting, including those that involve discussions. Staying on task and on topic will move your meeting through the agenda more efficiently and help you accomplish more.

Make sure you receive the desired information or feedback for each item on your agenda. Conversations are fruitful only if you receive productive feedback that can be implemented in the project. Use your scheduled time to plan and forecast upcoming meetings. Planning ahead allows you to manage your time effectively.

Keep meetings focused on the agenda. Use your best judgment when faced with an off-topic discussion. There are times when unrelated discussions yield positive results and other times when a meeting is wasted on a topic that has little or no potential to contribute to the current project.

If an off-topic discussion is important, but not productive, make a note to schedule a new meeting with an agenda based on that discussion and return to your scheduled agenda.

ASK QUESTIONS

An open-ended question is designed to prompt more than a one word answer. For example, "Do you like the rain?" will result in an answer, but it will not start a discussion. "How do you feel about rainy days?" is a question that encourages discussion.

During your meetings, ask open-ended questions to engage your team. To generate feedback and the information you seek, ask questions that focus the team members' responses. You can begin with a broad question such as "What are you working on today?" and lead into questions with a narrower scope. Asking questions in this manner will give you the information you want and may answer questions you did not think to ask.

CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS

Communicate with key stakeholders to define the outcomes they want to see from the project, from you, and from your team. As you work through the steps of your project, pay attention to the outcomes your stakeholders expect to see met. If you find your project deviating from those outcomes, communicate with your stakeholders as soon as possible.

Even in a perfect project in which every milestone is reached without an issue, each deadline is met, and the concluding result is exactly what was hoped for, you need to communicate with the stakeholders. Make a habit of updating stakeholders as different versions and milestones of the project are completed.

THE ABILITY TO BE FLEXIBLE

Flexibility is a key component in leadership and in project management. No one, no matter how organized or capable, can anticipate and plan for every contingency. Elements of your initial plan may need to be adjusted.

When you must make changes in your plan, remember the initial objectives of the project. Remain open to new ways of accomplishing your goals. When facing an unexpected problem, it is important to consider all solutions.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS

A project management tool can help you organize, manage, and keep track of a project. Any tool or resource that helps you stay organized is worth researching. These tools can be software or template documents, such as the Project Plan on page 21. You can use a project management tool when sharing updates or schedules with team members.

Project management tools can be found online among other places. When choosing a tool, consider:

Aesthetic Elements

Make sure they are appropriate for your team and simple to navigate.

Accessibility

The information must be easily located and accessible to meet the organizational needs of your team.

Access

Identify tools that are useful to each member of your team. Be sure that anyone who could benefit from the tools you choose can access the tools' functionalities.

Knowing and understanding the way your team reacts to communication and deadlines may influence your choice of project management tools. Regardless of your decision, a tool can be an efficient, time-saving resource.

REVIEW AND APPLY

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What do you think are your strongest skill areas as a project manager?
- How can you develop rapport with stakeholders?
- What steps can you take to build an appropriate relationship with your team?
- How can managing your time affect the outcome of your project?
- What role does communication play in the completion of a successful project?
- List some strategies for delegating tasks to your team.
- What is the value of asking open-ended questions?

COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report.

Review: Return to page 3 to review your assignment.

Organize: Use the Project Checklist on page 13 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.

Schedule: Work with the vice president education to schedule your speeches.

Prepare: Prepare for your evaluations. Review the evaluation resources on pages 16–20 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.

PROJECT CHECKLIST

Manage Projects Successfully

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to practice developing a plan, building a team, and fulfilling the plan with the help of your team.

Overview: Form a team of three to four people and choose a project. Create a plan for your project and present the plan to your club in a 2- to 3-minute speech. Work with your team to complete your project. Present a 5- to 7-minute speech about your experience. This speech may be humorous, informational, or any type of speech that appeals to you. It should not be a report about the content of this project, but a reflection of your experience applying what you learned.

Note: When considering projects to complete, refer to future projects on your path. You may be able to use the assignment in this project to help you prepare for the completion of an upcoming project.

This project includes:

- Building a team
- Creating a project plan
- The Project Plan resource
- A 2- to 3-minute speech about your plan
- Completing the plan with your team
- A 5- to 7-minute speech about your experience

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

☐ Invite two to three people to be on your project team.

☐ With your team, select a project to complete.

☐ Schedule your first speech with the vice president education. If you need more time to share your plan with your club, you may schedule a 5- to 7-minute speech with the approval of the vice president education.

- [ ] Using the Project Plan resource, formulate a plan for your project.

- [ ] Write a 2- to 3-minute speech about the project to share with your club.

- [ ] Rehearse your first speech.

- [ ] Present your first speech.

- [ ] Work with your team to complete your chosen project.

- [ ] Schedule your second speech with the vice president education.

- [ ] Write a 5- to 7-minute speech about the experience of managing your project.

- [ ] Rehearse your second speech.

- [ ] After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speeches, return to page 4 to rate your skills in the post-project section.

Additional Notes

EVALUATION FORM

Manage Projects Successfully—First Speech

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ **Speech Length:** 2 – 3 minutes

Speech Title	

Purpose Statements

- The purpose of this project is for the member to practice developing a plan, building a team, and fulfilling the plan with the help of his or her team.
- The purpose of the **first speech** is for the member to give a short overview of the plan for his or her project.

Notes for the Evaluator

The member completing this project has committed a great deal of time to building a team and developing a project plan.

This is a 2- to 3-minute report on the member's plan. Listen for:

- An explanation of what the member intends to accomplish
- Information about the team the member has built to help him or her accomplish the plan
- A well-organized informational speech

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5	4	3	2	1
EXEMPLARY	EXCELS	ACCOMPLISHED	EMERGING	DEVELOPING

Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Topic: Shares some aspect of his or her plan, team, or project	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:

EVALUATION FORM

Manage Projects Successfully—Second Speech

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ **Speech Length:** 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title	

Purpose Statements

- The purpose of this project is for the member to practice developing a plan, building a team, and fulfilling the plan with the help of his or her team.
- The purpose of the **second speech** is for the member to share some aspect of his or her experience managing a project.

Notes for the Evaluator

The member completing this project has committed a great deal of time to developing a project plan, building a team, and fulfilling the plan.

This is a 5- to 7-minute speech about the member's experience managing a project. This speech can be humorous, informational, or any type the member feels is appropriate. Listen for:

- Information about what the member learned from planning, building a team, and leading that team through the completion of their project
- The speech should NOT be a report on the content of the "Manage Projects Successfully" project.

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5	4	3	2	1
EXEMPLARY	EXCELS	ACCOMPLISHED	EMERGING	DEVELOPING

Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:
Learning: Speech includes information about some aspect of what the member learned or gained from completing the project	5	4	3	2	1	Comment:

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Manage Projects Successfully

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

Clarity

5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Topic – First Speech

5 – Delivers an exemplary speech about some aspect of his or her plan, team, or project
4 – Delivers a compelling speech about some aspect of his or her plan, team, or project
3 – Shares some aspect of his or her plan, team, or project
2 – Mentions some aspect of his or her plan, team, or project but does not fully address
1 – Speaks on a topic other than his or her plan, team, or project

Learning – Second Speech

5 – Exemplary speech gives value to some aspect of what the member gained from completing the project
4 – Well-organized speech focuses entirely on some aspect of what the member gained from completing the project
3 – Speech includes information about some aspect of what the member gained from completing the project
2 – Speech includes limited information about some aspect of what the member gained from the project
1 – Speech includes little or no information about some aspect of what the member gained completing the project

Project Plan

Project	
Purpose	
Resources	
Budget	
Key Deliverables	
Milestones	
Notes	

Project Team

Project Manager	

Team Member	
Delegated Task	
Milestones	
Deadline	
Contact Information	

Team Member	
Delegated Task	
Milestones	
Deadline	
Contact Information	

Team Member	
Delegated Task	
Milestones	
Deadline	
Contact Information	

Team Member	
Delegated Task	
Milestones	
Deadline	
Contact Information	

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