



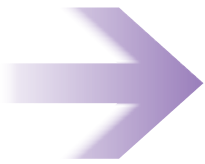
Leadership in Action

A Leadership Curriculum for College Students

➔ *Managing Projects*

Workshop Guide

Module 13



Managing Projects Workshop Guide

→ Objectives

Participants will be able to

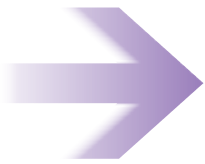
1. Develop useful strategies for project management;
2. Discuss their own strengths and weaknesses in the area of project management;
3. Identify the responsibilities of a project manager.

Materials Needed

- Flipchart & markers
- Pens or pencils
- Loaves of bread, jars or packets of peanut butter and of jelly or jam, and plastic knives, enough of each for two to four pairs of participants
- Copies of the following materials:
 - Case Study #1, #2, and #3, one case study per small group
 - “Reflection on Managing Projects,” enough for each participant

Workshop Outline

Minutes	Activity
10	Icebreaker – “Telephone”
5	Introduction
15	Topic Discussion
15	Activity – Making Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches
10	Topic Discussion
20	Activity – Case Studies
10	Reflection, Application, & Summary
1 Hour 25 minutes	Total Time



Note: Instructions to conduct this workshop are given in italics print. The “script” for a workshop facilitator is given in regular type.

Icebreaker – 10 Minutes – “Telephone”

This is an activity that many participants may have experienced in other settings. Although it may seem obvious, it makes an important point. I’m going to start a message.

Start a message with one participant. Whisper the message in his or her ear, and ask that it be passed along by whispering to the next person. The passing continues until everyone has received the message. Ask the last person to repeat the message out loud for the entire group.

How does the message the last person heard compare to the message that was given to the first person? If the message is different, where did the change occur?

Introduction – 5 Minutes

Although the message shared in “Telephone” was probably not highly significant, the point of the exercise is that information can often be misunderstood and/or shared incorrectly during the communication process. This occurs for a variety of reasons. It is important, then, that all participants are conscientious about clarifying, asking questions, and trying to make sure they understand. With project management, in particular, it is necessary to focus on making sure expectations, goals, and processes are clearly understood by everyone involved.

During this session, we will explore the role that communication plays in project management, reflect on some of our own experiences, and learn some useful strategies for project management. You will also have an opportunity, via case studies, to put some of what you have learned into practice.

Topic Discussion – 15 Minutes

In thinking about what it means to manage a project, I’d like you to reflect on times that you have been a project manager.

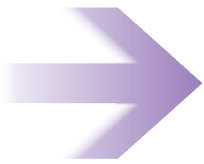
- What was the project?
- What was the goal?
- Who was involved?
- What went well?
- What didn’t go well?
- What did you learn from the experience?

Based on your experience, what are some important things to remember about project management?

Write participants’ responses on a flipchart.

Volumes have been written about how to manage projects. The information comes from a variety of disciplines, just as with the field of leadership. Project management entails a lot of responsibility, and sometimes those responsibilities might seem contradictory. For example, sometimes project managers have to be autocratic, and sometimes they need to delegate. Sometimes they need to be okay with ambiguity, and sometimes they need to be specific and pursue perfection in their work. Project managers also must be optimistic and realistic all at once.

The other balance to strike for project management is a balance of goals. Ultimately, project management is about both group and individual goals. In order for a project to be successful, both types of goals must be considered, pursued, and somehow satisfied. Can you provide an example of a group and an individual goal?



Allow time for responses. Draw upon the earlier discussion for examples. A group goal might be to develop various activities for Parent's Weekend. An individual goal might be to meet new people by working on this activity.

Sometimes, when given a project, we choose to dive in immediately and act. This is one of the biggest mistakes project teams can make. Of course, action is important. But acting without thoughtful planning can sometimes be disastrous. During the planning process and the implementation of the project, many decisions will have to be made. Here are some questions to ask when making decisions:

- What problem is at the core of the decision?
- What will be the impact of this decision?
- If we're wrong, what is the cost? What other decisions will be affected?
- What is the window of opportunity to . . . ?
- Have we made this kind of decision before?
- Who has the expert perspective?
- Whose feedback is important?
- Whose approval is needed?

Careful consideration of these questions at the beginning of the project may help save time and money in the long run and ensure that the project is successful.

Activity – 15 Minutes – “Making Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches”

Now, let's try a small “project.” Some of the above questions may not be as critical as others for this endeavor, but your communication skills will certainly be required.

Place a loaf of bread, plastic knife, and small jar or package of peanut butter and of jam or jelly on a table in front of the group. Ask for an even number of volunteers from the group. Organize the volunteers (probably four to eight) into pairs. Give the following instructions.

One partner will provide instructions, and the other partner will perform the task according to the instructions. The goal is to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich using the available materials of bread, peanut butter, jelly, and a plastic knife. The partner who will be making the sandwich should face the table where the supplies are located. The partner providing instructions should stand back-to-back with the partner who is making the sandwich. This means that the person giving instructions will not be able to see the sandwich supplies.

The partner giving instructions cannot look at the supply table at any time. The partner making the sandwich cannot communicate verbally with the person giving instructions. You should carry out instructions exactly as given.

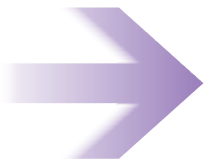
After the process is completed and all volunteers have had a chance to look at the end products, encourage a discussion about what happened.

Is the outcome what you expected? Why or why not? Volunteers, did you have any frustrations? What were they? Did you make assumptions?

Those of you who were observing this activity, what did you notice? What did you learn from this activity that relates to managing a project?

Topic Discussion – 10 Minutes

Although making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a minor task, this activity demonstrates the importance of clear directions, mutually understood expectations, and the impact on the end product if misunderstandings and confusion occur.



Communication

Communication problems are almost inevitable during the project management process. As illustrated by our attempts to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, we make assumptions, fail to be as clear as we should be, and perhaps don't even listen. Additionally, dictating orders, making personal attacks, ridiculing, or assigning blame are bad communication habits that can rear their ugly heads during group work and project management.

Getting Buy In and Results

In moving forward with any project, it is critical that those involved understand what is expected of them and agree to it willingly. All of the things we have to keep in mind when working with groups and teams apply here as well. Trust, commitment, respect, recognition, flexibility, and shared responsibility are key elements of working with project management teams or any teams at all.

In an effort to be successful, project managers need to get the best work out of others in the group. They do this by listening to others, following advice, clearing roadblocks, teaching, asking questions, and reminding people of roles and goals in the group. Chances are people in the group will respond less positively if they don't feel trusted, have their time wasted, or are disrespected.

Meetings

Project management usually involves meetings. As you may know from experience, these meetings may be useful and productive or tedious and pointless. If you are a project manager, you should have a good strategy in place for getting the most out of meetings. There are three basic types of project management meetings.

- Highly interactive discussion,
- Reporting or moderate discussion,
- Status and project review.

In order to make the most of meetings, make sure you are clear about the objective(s) of the meeting and therefore the best format. Ask yourself who needs to be in the room and who doesn't, be prepared, be on time, avoid distractions, and end with clear next steps—including determining ownership of those next steps.

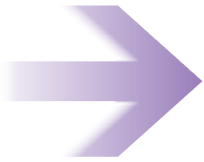
Activity – 20 Minutes – Case Studies

Divide participants into groups of approximately five people. Provide each group with copies of one of the case studies, flipchart paper, and markers.

Read your case study. I'd like you to consider this your first project meeting. In this meeting, you will answer the questions that follow. Record your responses on flipchart paper, and be prepared to share them with the larger group.

- What are the goals?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What kind of expertise is needed?
- What other resources are needed?
- How long will this project take?
- What might the timeline for this project look like?
- What are the first steps that should be taken?
- Who is ultimately responsible?
- What are some of the challenges that might arise?

Ask each group to share their case study, the answers to the questions posed, and observations made during their group conversations. Invite other participants to share their thoughts as well.



Reflection, Application, & Summary – 10 Minutes

Distribute a copy of the “Reflection on Managing Projects” activity sheet to each participant. Ask them to consider what they have learned in this workshop that they can use on projects in which they are involved. Allow a few minutes for reflection and writing. After about five minutes, ask if some would like to share what they’ve learned.

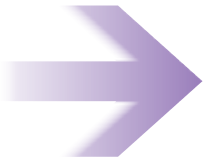
We have only scratched the surface of project management. Some of your most valuable knowledge on the subject comes from your own experience. Even so, it is important to treat every project as a unique situation and to take the time to become familiar with the needs of that situation. Use the lessons that have been learned from previous experience, and don’t be afraid to learn new ones.

In order to accomplish our goals, we need others. Project management, just like any other form of leadership, is not a solo performance.

References

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“Trust, commitment, respect, recognition, flexibility, and shared responsibility are key elements of working with project management teams or any teams at all.”



Case Study # 1 – Rejuvenating a Downtown Area

Your community would like to rejuvenate its downtown area. Some residents recall a time when the downtown was safe, attractive, and economically vibrant. In the last 10 to 15 years, that has been lost. Downtown now has abandoned buildings and littered sidewalks and is not an enjoyable place to spend time. Although this is a large task, reviving the downtown is something that seems beneficial in many ways. Therefore, it is a high priority for many in the community. What now?

What are the goals?

Who are the stakeholders?

What kind of expertise is needed?

What other resources are needed?

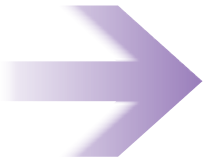
How long will this project take?

What is the timeline for the project?

What are the first steps that need to be taken?

Who is ultimately responsible?

What are some of the challenges that might arise?



Case Study # 2 – Creating a Residential Community for Retirees

The college in your town would like to create a residential community for retirees. It would be open to anyone who might like to live there but be specifically targeted toward the college’s alumni and retired faculty and staff. There are some concerns about how college students and senior citizens would co-exist, but the fact that other institutions have done it with some success is a helpful indicator. What now?

What are the goals?

Who are the stakeholders?

What kind of expertise is needed?

What other resources are needed?

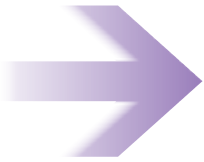
How long will this project take?

What is the timeline for the project?

What are the first steps that need to be taken?

Who is ultimately responsible?

What are some of the challenges that might arise?



Case Study # 3 – Establishing a Method to Collect Recyclables

Although your community has regular trash removal services, there is no consistent method for collecting recyclables. Residents seem interested in having greater ability to recycle, but there is concern over the cost of providing such a service. Central collection sites have been suggested, but they are not convenient to everyone. In order to get the community recycling their paper, plastic, aluminum, and glass, it seems that they must be able to do so in a convenient and inexpensive way. There is probably a solution to the problem, but it is not immediately apparent. Rather than let the issue fade into the background, a group of concerned citizens has determined that it will be addressed. What now?

What are the goals?

Who are the stakeholders?

What kind of expertise is needed?

What other resources are needed?

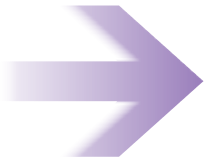
How long will this project take?

What is the timeline for the project?

What are the first steps that need to be taken?

Who is ultimately responsible?

What are some of the challenges that might arise?



Reflection on Managing Projects

Identify projects that you managed individually or as part of a team. Reflect on the following questions, and write your responses.

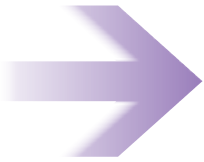
Identify projects that you, or a team, managed.

What are your strengths in managing a project?

What do you need to improve?

What did you learn today that will help you manage projects in the future?

How will you apply what you learned?



About Leadership in Action

Leadership in Action is a multi-state leadership development program for college-age students. It was funded in part by an USDA/CSREES HEP Challenge Grant, 2005-2009 to the University of Illinois, Purdue University, and the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Undergraduate students from those universities participated in a 21-month program during which the workshop modules were developed, used during the two cohort programs, reviewed, and revised.

We intend that students who have been trained in conducting effective workshops use these materials for leadership workshops with various student organizations. The materials can be used separately for individual workshop sessions, in any combination for a short-term program, or in their entirety for a long-term program.

Leadership in Action Curriculum Team

- Janet Ayres, Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University
- Lisa Burgoon, Student Leadership Program Coordinator, Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois
- Christina Klawitter, Assistant Dean, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin - Madison
- John Klatt, Associate Student Services Coordinator, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Marianne Lorensen, Visiting Leadership Program Coordinator, Human & Community Development, University of Illinois
- Charles Olson, Assistant Dean of Academic Programs, Agricultural Consumer & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois
- Robbie Ortega, Graduate Student, Youth Development and Agricultural Education, Purdue University

Managing Projects Development Team

- Lead Author: Marianne Lorensen, University of Illinois
- Editor: Laura Hoelscher, Purdue University
- Designer: Russell Merzdorf, Purdue University



Purdue University



University of Illinois



University of Wisconsin - Madison

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