

# THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GREAT PROJECT LEADER

What makes a great project leader or project manager? It's not the process or a plan—it's the behaviors that show they're truly invested in the role. Those behaviors are rooted in a project manager's ability to navigate rough and still waters with the same level of effort and ease. It's 1 part technical expertise and 3 parts emotional intelligence. Keep these characteristics in mind when performing your daily tasks, and you're sure to be everyone's favorite project lead.

THE  
*Art & Science*  
OF LEADING PROJECTS

 teamgantt

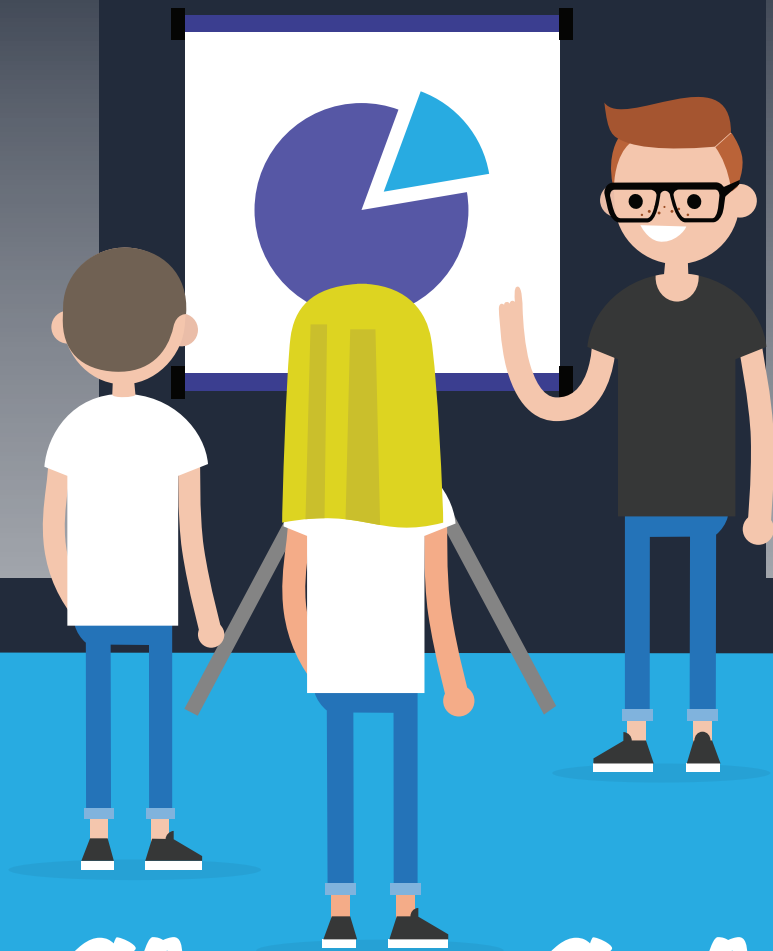




# *Eagle Eye*

## FOR PROJECT ISSUES

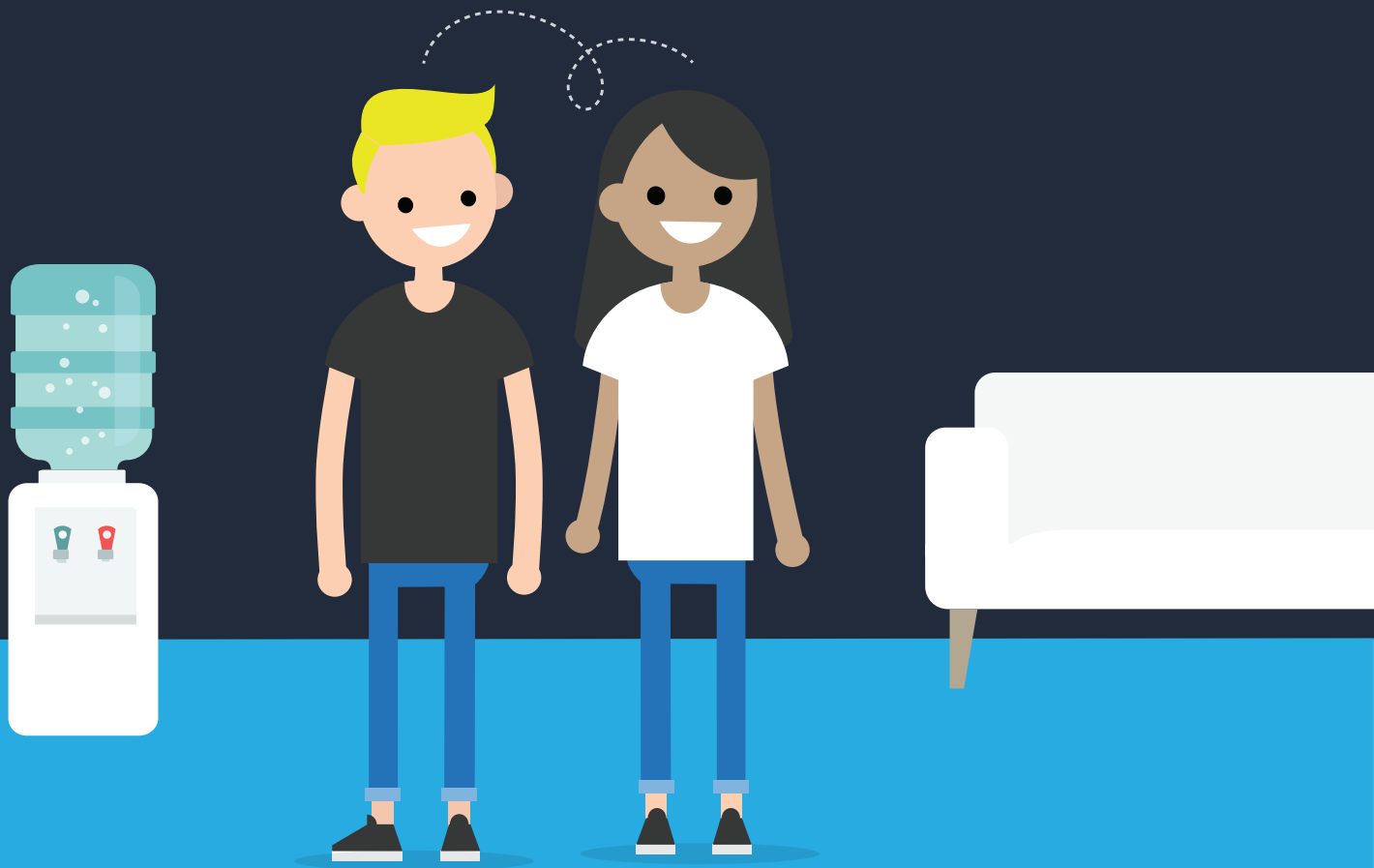
As the project manager, you're dropped right in the middle of project goals, challenges, stakeholders, team members, ideas, conflicts, budgets, and, of course, deadlines. You have your finger on the pulse of everything: the well-being of the project and the team, the happiness of stakeholders, and everything in-between. Chances are, there's going to be a speed bump or two, and it'll be up to you to get your team and stakeholders over them at a reasonable speed. If you're good at what you do, you'll spot those issues before they become big problems and handle them with ease.



# *Clear, Calm*

## COMMUNICATOR

Communication is a huge part of project management. Being transparent, direct, and very clear about important project information will make any detail or situation easier to handle. It's also important to let your own style and personality shine through in your communications when the time is right. The best project managers are true chameleons when it comes to communication. They have go-to methods and tools to help facilitate project communications. But when it comes to one-on-one conversations, they adapt to what will help them encourage the team, build relationships, prevent and solve issues, and even share difficult news.



# *Empathetic*

Conflict happens, and as a project manager, you have to set your emotions aside and do what's best for your project. This means putting yourself in the shoes of the people you're dealing with—whether it's a team member or client—to understand intent, motivations, and possible outcomes. To truly grasp an issue, you have to dissect it. You can't do that without talking to those involved with the sole intent of solving the problem.



# *Curious*

## ABOUT ALL THINGS HAPPENING ON PROJECTS

No matter where you work, ideas are flowing, and everything from business goals to technology is changing. It's an exciting place to be, and you're constantly challenged with innovative discussions and new ideas. Take advantage of the people and resources around you to grow your industry knowledge and deepen your understanding of how you can leverage your team's skills to meet your stakeholders' needs. You might do this by reading blogs and books, attending meetups and conferences, asking your colleagues questions, or sharing ideas yourself. No matter what you're doing, be open to learning (and teaching) to keep your skills sharp.



# *Invested*

## IN THE WORK

The best project managers get out from behind their spreadsheets and play an active role in their projects. Don't just attend meetings and take notes. Participate in them. Share your ideas. Share conversations you've had with the team and clients. Shape the path of the project, and be the project manager who not only cares about what happens internally on the project, but also how your project will succeed when it launches. And, if you're a part-time project manager, embrace the role, and give it just as much attention as your other work. Know that project management doesn't just mean checking items off a to-do list. It's about thinking critically about the path of the project, its people, and potential outcomes.



# *Adaptable & Flexible*

When you truly embrace change and innovation, you naturally adapt to what's needed, not only of your projects, but of you. The best project managers steer projects in the right direction and know that means doing what's best for your project, team, stakeholders, scope, and deadline—not sticking to a rigid process. They're not afraid of change, or even pivoting when necessary, and clean up messes for the sake of progress.