

Working With Your Project Sponsor: 10 Tips for Success

When it comes to project management, having the support and guidance of a project sponsor can make all the difference. A project sponsor is a senior executive who acts as a champion for a project, providing resources, support, and direction to ensure its success. Building a strong working relationship with your project sponsor is essential for achieving your project goals and overcoming any obstacles that may arise along the way.

In this article, we will provide you with 10 tips for working effectively with your project sponsor. Whether you are a seasoned project manager or just starting out, these strategies will help you establish a productive partnership and ensure the success of your project.

1. Establish Clear Expectations

From the very beginning, it is crucial to have a candid conversation with your project sponsor about their expectations for the project. Clearly define the goals, deliverables, and timeline, ensuring that both parties are on the same page. This will prevent any misunderstandings or surprises down the line.



Working with Your Project Sponsor: How to build a great working relationship with your Project Sponsor, for the good of your project.
(OnlinePMCourses: Project Management Book 15)

by Mike Clayton (Kindle Edition)

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When discussing expectations, make sure to also establish the frequency and format of project updates and meetings. Regular communication with your project sponsor is key to keeping them engaged and informed throughout the project's lifecycle.

2. Understand Your Sponsor's Motives

Take the time to understand what motivates your project sponsor and what they hope to achieve through this project. Are they looking to boost revenue, improve customer satisfaction, or streamline operations? Understanding their motives will help you align your actions and decisions with their goals, making it easier to gain their support.

Additionally, understanding your sponsor's motives will allow you to anticipate their reactions to different situations and tailor your communication accordingly. For example, if your sponsor is motivated by cost savings, make sure to highlight any budget-related achievements or potential savings throughout the project.

3. Build Trust and Confidence

Trust is a fundamental aspect of any successful working relationship. To build trust with your project sponsor, it is important to demonstrate your expertise,

integrity, and commitment to delivering results. Be transparent about the project's progress, challenges, and risks. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for them.

Creating an atmosphere of trust will not only strengthen your partnership with your sponsor but also encourage open and honest communication. This enables you to seek guidance, ask for resources, or escalate issues without fear of negative repercussions.

4. Communicate Effectively

When working with your project sponsor, it is essential to communicate clearly and concisely. Tailor your communication style to their preferences. Some sponsors prefer brief, high-level updates, while others may prefer more detailed reports.

In addition to regular project updates, make sure to provide timely and accurate information when requested. Be proactive in sharing both good news and bad news. If the project encounters challenges or risks, communicate them promptly to your sponsor, along with potential mitigation strategies.

5. Involve Your Sponsor in Decision-Making

To maintain the buy-in and support of your project sponsor, involve them in decision-making processes whenever possible. Consult them on key decisions or seek their input on critical matters. This not only empowers your sponsor to shape the project's direction but also makes them feel valued and invested in its success.

When involving your sponsor in decision-making, present them with well-researched options and articulate the potential benefits and drawbacks of each

alternative. This allows them to make informed decisions that align with their goals and the project's objectives.

6. Be Solution-Oriented

When faced with challenges or setbacks, it is important to approach them with a solution-oriented mindset. Present your project sponsor with well-thought-out solutions and recommendations, rather than just highlighting the problems. This demonstrates your ability to navigate obstacles and maintain momentum in the project.

However, if you encounter a problem without an immediate solution, be honest about it. Communicate the issue to your sponsor, outline the potential impacts, and request their guidance or support in finding a resolution. Being proactive and transparent in such situations will help you maintain credibility and trust.

7. Manage Expectations and Scope Changes

During the course of a project, it is common for scope changes or additional requirements to arise. When this happens, it is important to manage your sponsor's expectations effectively. Clearly communicate the impact of scope changes on the project's timeline, budget, and resources.

Before accepting any scope changes, assess their feasibility and potential consequences. Discuss any trade-offs or compromises that may be necessary to accommodate new requirements. This ensures that both you and your sponsor have a realistic understanding of the project's capabilities and limitations.

8. Celebrate Milestones and Achievements

Recognize and celebrate project milestones, major achievements, and key deliverables with your project sponsor. Publicly acknowledge their support and

involvement in these successes. This not only shows your appreciation but also reinforces their commitment to the project's success.

Celebrating milestones also helps to maintain enthusiasm and momentum throughout the project. It creates a sense of accomplishment and motivates team members to continue delivering high-quality work.

9. Anticipate and Address Risks

Identify potential risks and issues early on and discuss them with your project sponsor. Be proactive in developing risk mitigation strategies and communicate them prior to any adverse event occurring.

Involve your sponsor in risk management discussions and decisions. This ensures they are aware of potential threats to the project's success and allows them to offer insights or guidance based on their experience and expertise.

10. Learn From the Experience

After the project is complete, take the time to reflect on the experience of working with your project sponsor. Evaluate what worked well and what could be improved in your collaboration.

Seek feedback from your sponsor on their perception of your performance as a project manager. This enables you to identify areas for growth and development, ensuring that future projects benefit from your enhanced skills and knowledge.

Working effectively with your project sponsor is crucial for achieving project success. By establishing clear expectations, building trust, and involving your sponsor in decision-making, you can create a collaborative partnership that leads to positive outcomes.

Remember to communicate effectively, manage scope changes, and celebrate milestones along the way. Anticipate and address risks, and always seek to learn and grow from your experiences.

By following these 10 tips, you can maximize the potential of your project sponsor's support and guidance, making your project journey smoother and more successful.



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Your relationship with your project sponsor is one of the most important of your professional relationships. A lot depends on it.

Because, you sponsor has a lot of roles that are all important to you in carrying out your role as project manager. Not only do they have the project governance

roles of:

- Direction-setting
- Decision-making
- Oversight

But they also have a crucial role in stakeholder engagement. Yet we are still not at the core of your relationship with your Project Sponsor...

Your Project Sponsor is like Your Line Manager, within the Project Context
Project life differs from day-to-day operational life. And often, we either don't have a permanent line manager or we do, but don't spend a lot of time with them. But we spend a lot of time with our Project Sponsor. It is your Project Sponsor who provides you with a lot of what other employees would normally get from their line manager:

- Guidance
- Support
- Coaching
- Mentorship
- Feedback

So, there is no doubt about it: this is a critical relationship to get right.

The Trouble with Sponsors

There's a 'but...'

Few people in a project sponsorship role have training for how to discharge their responsibilities. Worse still, many didn't seek the role, or have other things that, to them, appear to take priority. Your relationship with your sponsor can be problematic in many ways.

So, getting it right is what this eBook is all about:

- We'll start with the basics, and investigate what a Project Sponsor wants
- Then, we'll look at how to keep them happy
- Next, we'll consider a sponsor who has other things on their mind, and see how you can engage them in your project
- Ramping up the challenge, our next chapter discovers how to handle a difficult Project Sponsor
- Finally, we have the biggest challenge of all: a Project Sponsor who goes rogue. What do you do if your sponsor turns to the 'dark side'?

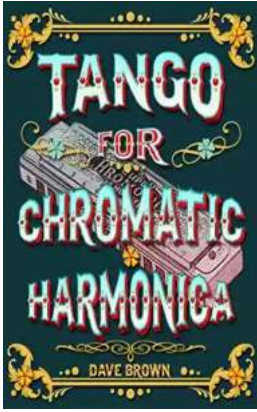
Summary

The five chapters (and one appendix) of this eBook will guide you in rising to the challenge of building a strong and positive working relationship with your Project Sponsor. Arguably, this is not solely your responsibility.

But, one thing we learn, as project managers, is that when we want something, it pays to go out and get it. If you want this relationship to thrive, you need to take on the challenge yourself.

And, the truth is, you are a project manager: a professional. You have training, expertise, and a commitment to your profession. Project sponsorship isn't like that. So, your sponsor will likely not have thought about this, nor deliberately learned the skills. So, project manager, it's down to you!

This is a topic that demands its time in the spotlight. And here is that spotlight: this eBook.



Tango For Chromatic Harmonica Dave Brown: Unleashing the Soulful Melodies

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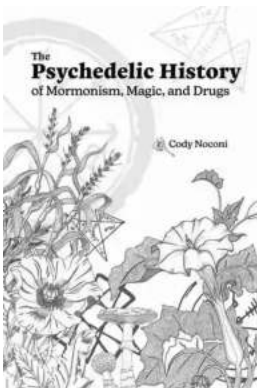
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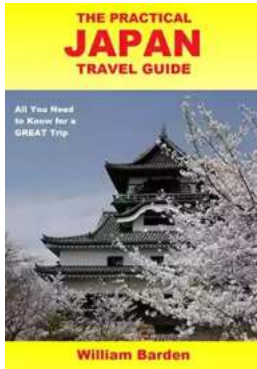
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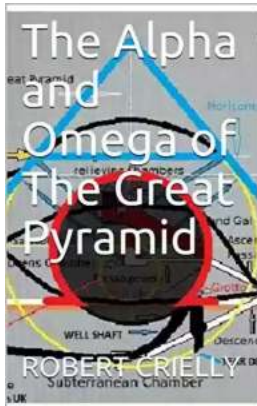
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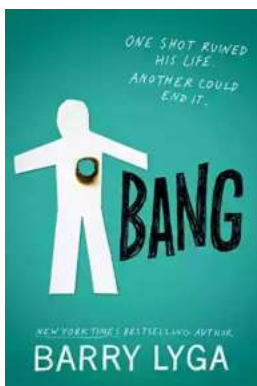
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