

How to Project Manage with Empathy

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An empathetic project manager or leader is one who can understand and share the feelings and experiences of team members, stakeholders, and customers. This means that they have the ability to put themselves in the shoes of others, to see things from their perspective, and to respond with sensitivity and understanding. Empathy is a crucial skill for any project manager and those leading others because it helps them to build strong relationships with those around them, to communicate effectively, and to make better decisions.

One of the key benefits of being an empathetic project manager is that it fosters a positive and collaborative working environment. When team members feel that their manager understands and cares about their needs, they are more likely to feel valued and motivated. This, in turn, leads to greater engagement and productivity, as well as improved team morale. An empathetic project manager can also help to reduce conflicts and misunderstandings by listening carefully to all sides of an issue and working to find a solution that works for everyone involved.

Another important aspect of empathy in both project management and leadership is the ability to communicate effectively. By understanding the emotions and motivations of team members and stakeholders, an empathetic project manager can tailor their communication style to meet their needs. This may involve using different language, tone, or body language depending on the situation. For example, when a team member is feeling stressed or overwhelmed, an empathetic project manager may use a calming tone and offer reassurance and support. By doing so, they can help to reduce the person's anxiety and increase their confidence in their ability to complete the task at hand.

Empathy is also crucial when it comes to decision-making. A project manager who is able to see things from multiple perspectives is more likely to make informed and fair decisions. This is because they can consider the impact of their decisions on all stakeholders, not just those who are directly involved in the

project. They can also take into account the emotional and cultural factors that may influence how people respond to different decisions. For example, if a project manager is working on a project that involves a diverse group of stakeholders, they may need to consider the cultural norms and values of each group when making decisions that will affect them.

In addition, an empathetic project manager is able to build strong relationships with customers and stakeholders. This is because they are able to understand and respond to their needs and concerns. They can also anticipate potential issues and take steps to address them before they become major problems. For example, if a customer expresses concerns about the timeline for a project, an empathetic project manager may offer regular updates and provide reassurance about the progress being made.

An empathetic leader is an invaluable asset to any team. By understanding the emotions and motivations of others, they can build strong relationships, communicate effectively, make informed decisions, and create a positive and collaborative working environment.

To cultivate empathy, project managers can take steps such as actively listening to team members, asking questions, and seeking feedback. They can also work to develop their emotional intelligence by practicing self-awareness and self-reflection. With these skills, they can lead their teams to success and build a culture of empathy and understanding.

Consider implementing the following into your standard daily routines. Interacting with your team, stakeholders and clients.

- **Listen actively:** Pay attention to your team members when they speak and demonstrate genuine interest in what they are saying.
- **Be open-minded:** Be willing to consider different perspectives and ideas, even if they are different from your own.
- **Put yourself in their shoes:** Try to see the situation from your team member's point of view and understand their concerns.
- **Show compassion:** Display empathy by acknowledging your team member's emotions and offering support when necessary.
- **Encourage feedback:** Create a culture where team members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas with you.
- **Demonstrate trust:** Trust your team members to do their job and empower them to make decisions.
- **Create a positive environment:** Foster a supportive and encouraging environment for your team members to thrive in.
- **Recognize achievements:** Celebrate your team member's accomplishments and show appreciation for their hard work.
- **Be patient:** Understand that everyone works at their own pace and be patient with your team members.
- **Practice self-reflection:** Take time to reflect on your own actions and behaviors as a project manager and assess how you can improve your empathy skill

If you are interested in reading more about how you can cultivate empathetic behaviours in your project management, leadership and design activities, check out this practical workshop tool for [Empathy Mapping](#).

Wishing you a great week of Growth!



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