

Finding the Right Project Manager

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In an ideal world, we are all great PMs and there should be no skill involved in picking the right PM for a project. But in the real world, there are PMs with many different skill sets and strengths (and of course weaknesses). Below are just a few things to consider when selecting a PM for a particular project:

1. **Leadership ability**

First and foremost, a PM needs to have strong leadership abilities. This means the ability to motivate, lead by example, act with integrity, handle crisis and stick to deadlines. There are not many things that will cause a project to fall off of the rails faster than a PM who does not inspire the team to strive for success. Look for someone who has consistently proven that they can successfully lead teams, or someone who is begging for the opportunity to lead.

2. **Fit with the project and the team**

Although PM skills are fully transferable across industries and projects, there does need to be a good fit with the team and project. Sometimes the right PM can get more out of the team than was thought possible and the wrong PM can cause a perceived excellent team to under-perform. Look for a PM who can recognize different personality types and knows how to leverage their strengths. It wouldn't hurt if they can also focus on having fun and getting the work done.

3. **Discipline**

I have written about this before, but the one thing that PMs need to have that others do not is discipline. Discipline to track the budget and the project plan; discipline to follow-up on assigned tasks; discipline to track down suppliers for payment or required work products. Discipline is what can set a good PM apart from a bad one, so look for those PMs who are disciplined in their work and require that in those with whom they work.

4. **Creativity and flexibility**

As important as it is to be disciplined, it is always important for PMs to be creative and flexible. Things are not always going to go as planned, so you need a PM that can adapt to change and be creative in finding solutions. Look for PMs who work well under pressure and are able to come up with creative solutions when the pressure is on and deadlines are approaching.

Of course, there are other important characteristics in finding the right project manager and I welcome your comments about any I may have missed (or on those that I have provided above).