IBM GLOBAL SERVICES

Session G55

How to Lead a Team

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Agenda

- This session will help you be a better Team Leader (Building leadership skills is a life long pursuit)
- Agenda:
  - The goal
  - How to get there
    - Planning
    - Running the project
      - In trouble?
    - Finishing
  - Continue to grow
  - References

The Goal

- What is your job?
  - Get your task done.
    - It is OK to finish early
  - Make team members efficient
  - Reduce risks, in fact, handle the risks
  - Help other teams
    - It doesn't matter if your end of the ship isn't sinking
- What do you get credit for?
  - Doing your job.
  - Growing your people
  - Reducing the managers' load

The Goal

- Their Goal
  - Keep out of trouble
  - Meet Expectations:
    - On time (original or adjusted date)
    - Promised content (original or adjusted content)
  - Other Expectations:
    - Quality (real and opinion)
    - Tracked Checkpoints
      - dates
      - entry/exit criteria (examples: design, code-unit test, component test, & system test)

Planning

- The Rules:
  - If you don't know where you are going, anyplace will do.
  - If you don't tell others what you are going to do, they will expect everything NOW.
    - Be Specific
  - Everyone remembers the dates.
  - Nobody remembers the dependencies.
  - Dates are harder to change than content.
  - It is easier to add content than to remove it.
  - Risks are bigger than you originally thought
  - There will be problems that nobody can see now.
  - Creativity cannot be scheduled.

Planning

- Keep Records
  - Project justification
  - Plan details
  - Assumptions
  - How it turned out, with details
- Topics:
  - How to make a plan
  - Risks
  - How to estimate better
  - Staffing considerations

Planning

- How to make a plan
  - Pick a date to be finish the plan
  - List the parts
    - Do while there is time
      - Both directions
        - Front - What needs to be done next?
        - Back - What do I need to do this?
      - Generate Ideas
        - Write down any ideas you get
        - Talk to everyone when fishing for ideas
      - Identify
        - What you don't you know?

Planning

- For each part:
  - Determine how long will each part will take
    - Effort
    - Elapsed time
  - Skills
  - Risks
  - Record where it fits in your plan
    - What does it depend on?
    - What depends on it?
  - Identify flexibility
    - Necessary/unnecessary content
    - Possible additional content
    - Plan your "wiggle room"
- Now lay out your plan and critical path

Planning

- Risks
  - Complicated interface
    - define and test just the interface
  - Complicated Algorithm
    - Small program to test
    - Make close to real
    - Move into real code
  - Quantity of code to write
    - Break into pieces, measure and assign
  - Unknown risks
    - Who knows what
    - Study first
- Leave time for things you cannot see or imagine

Planning

- How to estimate better
  - Estimate and Measure everything
  - Track Details and Costs
    - printer details
      - number of parts
      - tightest tolerance
      - printing speed
    - program details (possible)
      - number of parts (source files)
      - number of routines
      - interfaces
      - structures (DSECTs)
      - performance/space constraints

Planning

- Staffing considerations
  - ► Break work into person sized pieces
    - – Well defined interfaces between people
    - – The fewer the internal dependencies, the better
  - ► Assign work closest to what each person wants to do
    - – Ask their manager about planned growth
    - – Ask each person
    - – Determine their skills
    - – Determine what they need to learn
  - ► Work out internal dates for every person
  - ► Share the work nobody wants.
    - – "If it is a bad sandwich, everyone takes a bite."

Running the Project

- Topics
  - ► Know where you stand
  - ► Track where you have been
  - ► Constantly REDUCE risks
  - ► Solidify parts
  - ► Test
  - ► In trouble?
  - ► People Problems?
  - ► Miscellaneous hints

Running the Project

- Know where you stand
  - Report what needs to be reported
    - Not too much
    - Not too little
  - Refine your intermediate schedule
    - Set more checkpoints for yourself and your team
  - Keep on track - don't change your schedule lightly
    - Have the answer to: "What is the new news?"

Running the Project

- Track where you have been
  - What to keep?
    - Unexpected Problems
    - Late Dependencies
    - Missed internal dates
    - Effort required
    - Amount of code written
  - Why?
    - Will help you figure out where you are
    - Will be needed if you get in trouble
    - Will help with next project

Running the Project

- Constantly REDUCE risks
  - Focus on your highest risks first
  - Don't accept additions that add risk
  - Use your network
  - Don't make 'casual' or 'nice to have' changes, late

Running the Project

- Solidify parts
  - When there is something useful, put its parts in the library and compile them with the library compiler.
  - Finish up parts
    - Don't get into the situation where a lot of parts are 'almost done'
  - Don't undo test results
    - If a part is tested, don't change it.
  - Finished parts in the library are money in the bank

Running the Project

- Testing
  - Rules:
    - Testing takes a different mind set
    - No body tests their own code
  - Developers make sure their code works
  - Others do the testing
    - Build test plans from design documents
    - Make sure all functions work using the externals
    - Test the code as a whole
    - Limit developer contamination
  - Only fix problems testers find.

Running the Project

- Are you in trouble?
  - This is like surfing
    - Your Goal: Stay ahead of the crashing wave
  - Know first.
    - Listen to others on your project
    - Status meetings tell you what the managers are focused on. (Just like "Whack a Mole")
    - Ask others without asking
      - Project managers
      - Managers
      - Other team leaders
      - Testers

Running the Project

- Are you in trouble?
  - How to ask others without directly asking.
    - Open communication and listen
      - Approach people that are "in the know."
      - Start a short conversation on something else.
      - If they are thinking about your project, they will say something.
      - You can say "We spoke and you didn't mention..."
  - Don't let your manager find out from others
    - They will always find out, just be first
    - Know all -
      - How bad is it
      - Have a plan to catch up

Running the Project

- How to get out of trouble
  - Plan to get back on schedule
    - add resources (OT and/or folks)
      - Adding OT is easier for a short time
      - If adding people, training is a problem
    - change content
    - change date (usually painful)
    - change quality (not good, the default)
  - Find Excuses
    - New News?
    - Dependency Problems?
    - Unexpected Problems?
    - Unexpected effort?

Running the Project

- People Problems?
  - Problems you can see
    - load unbalanced?
    - Too many interrupts?
      - Do they need protection from interrupts?
    - big effort, no result
      - work not defined well enough?
      - overlap of responsibilities?
      - person doing work in too much detail?
      - bad time estimate?
    - arguments between team members?
      - define boundaries

Running the Project

- People Problems?
  - Problems you cannot see
    - Other projects they are working on
      - Speak to other team leaders
    - Family problems
      - Stay away from these
      - Person may need some slack
  - Bad news to deliver?
    - Be helpful
    - Always know your audience.
    - Deliver bad news in private
    - Be careful with their reputation

Running the Project

- Miscellaneous hints
  - Take care of the team and they will take care of you
    - build team
    - grow members
    - advertise members
  - Write code to do common tasks
    - Compiles
    - ftp
    - Converting code

Finishing

- It is OK to finish early
- Topics
  - Know when your are done.
  - Accounting
  - Rewards (+/-)
  - Reply to - Requests for Recommendations

Finishing

- Know when your are done.
  - Everything is in the library, tested, and books done
  - Avoid "The Trap"
- The Trap
  - "I'm almost done. Just one more change."
- Solution
  - Know what your customer wants
  - Focus on your end result and justification
  - Use a "get done" plan
    - Don't fix everything
      - Closer to end, Greater the severity of the problem needs to be to be fixed.
      - Record things to do in future releases

Finishing

- Keep an accounting for yourself
  - What went well and what didn't
  - Who did what well
  - How long did it take
    - effort
    - elapsed time
- Start looking for and planning the next project

Finishing

- Give out rewards (+/-)
  - Inform management
    - Why inform management?
      - To prevent bad promotions and awards
      - To vote on who gets promotions and awards
      - Provide management details that they can't observe
  - Brag to other team leaders and managers
  - Reply to "Requests for Recommendations"

Finishing

- How to inform management
  - Just provide your data, not your judgment
  - Be specific
    - Difficulty
    - Risk
    - Quantity
    - Quality
    - Helping others
  - For your best team members
    - Suggest promotions and/or awards
    - Writing is more powerful than words
  - For you worst team members
    - Managers will do the math, but they might ask

Finishing

- Example:
  - "Pete did the most difficult part and he wrote the most code (3K)."
  - If asked "How did John do on the code?"
    - "It looked very nice and it did the job."
    - "He wrote about 1K."

Finishing

- How to do a recommendation
  - Focus on positive points
    - Don't say anything negative
    - Let the reader do the math
  - It is better to give data than judgment
    - Data - what was done and can be measured
    - Judgment - your opinion
  - Be ready with the answer to:
    - "Would you hire them again?"

Continue to Grow

- The Road to Learning
  - Make your own successes/mistakes
    - Painful
    - Not enough time
  - Learn from other's successes/mistakes
    - This session
    - Watch others
    - Status meetings
  - Figure it out
    - Time and Effort Estimates
    - Critical Path
    - Finding room to recover

Continue to Grow

- Pay attention to other leaders
  - What did they do and how did it work?
- Attend Status Meetings
  - Who is in charge?
  - What are others getting away with?
- Study Behavior Modification
- Find out how well you are doing.
  - Make adjustments

References

- "The One Minute Manager"
  - ►Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson
- "Putting the One Minute Manager to Work"
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- "Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment"
  - ►William Byham and Jeff Cox
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