Digitization Project Management

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Why focus on project management?

• Some key challenges with scientific, research, and digitization projects...
  – Scientists want to do less administration and more research
  – Project administration can be time consuming
    • Distracts the scientist from his/her main interest
  – Funding agencies desire accurate cost estimates and predictable outcomes
Why focus on project management?

- Scientific, research, and digitization projects can get into trouble...
  - Objectives are not well defined
  - Communication is inadequate
  - Trouble is diagnosed at vulnerable times
    - Cost overruns
  - The “near death” syndrome
There has to be a better way!

• Impart experience of scientists/managers to those in emerging projects
• Educate emerging scientists/managers in the basics of project management
• Emphasize value of leadership and teamwork
What is project management, anyway?

• The essence of project management:
  – Predictably meeting project requirements within established constraints

• It is a set of skills, methods, and processes to plan, organize, and manage a project from inception to successful completion
  – Provides structure that promotes success
  – Focuses on goals and outcomes
  – Promotes effective communication
The project management cycle has its roots in the scientific method...

Walter Shewhart / W. Edwards Deming / PMI
Project managers strive for balance…

• We live in a world of limited resources and never enough time…
• Humans are always part of the equation…
Successful project managers must be...

- **Visionary**
  - See the big picture
  - See both the forest and the trees
  - But, don’t attempt to be omniscient

- **Reliable**
  - Get things done
  - Say what you mean; mean what you say
  - Be pragmatic – what is essential vs. not?

- **Organized**
  - Seek alternatives
  - Keep the ball rolling

- **Flexible**
  - Adapt, overcome, improvise
  - Wear the right hat at the right time
What are the secrets to success?

• **Initiation** is where you establish your scope of work. Lack of agreement or understanding will cause *scope creep*.

• **Planning** is where you gain a better understanding of what needs to get done and then communicate it to the team and stakeholders.

• **Closing** is when you have agreement from all stakeholders that the project is finished.
Planning is vital!

• Create a **workplan** as guide and map for your team:
  – **What** needs to be done?
  – **Who** is doing the work?
  – How much will the work cost (**budget**)?
  – When will the work be done (**schedule/milestones**)?
  – **How** the work will be done?
  – How will you manage **communications**?
  – How will you manage **risk**?
  – How will you manage **change**?
  – What **metrics** will you use to track **progress**, **quality**, and **scope**? How will you measure them?
  – What are the internal and external **dependencies**?
In summary…

• **Project management** focuses the team on goals and outcomes and provides a structure for success

• **Leadership** is always important

• The key is **flexibility**

• **Plan**, plan, plan

• Seek **balance**
Resources

• iDigBio’s Project Management Resources: https://www.idigbio.org/wiki/index.php/Project_Management_Resources

• Project Management Institute: www.pmi.org

• DoIT Project Management Advisor: www.pma.doit.wisc.edu

• Improving the User Experience: www.usability.gov

• Project Science: www.projectscience.org
Thank you!  

www.idigbio.org

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