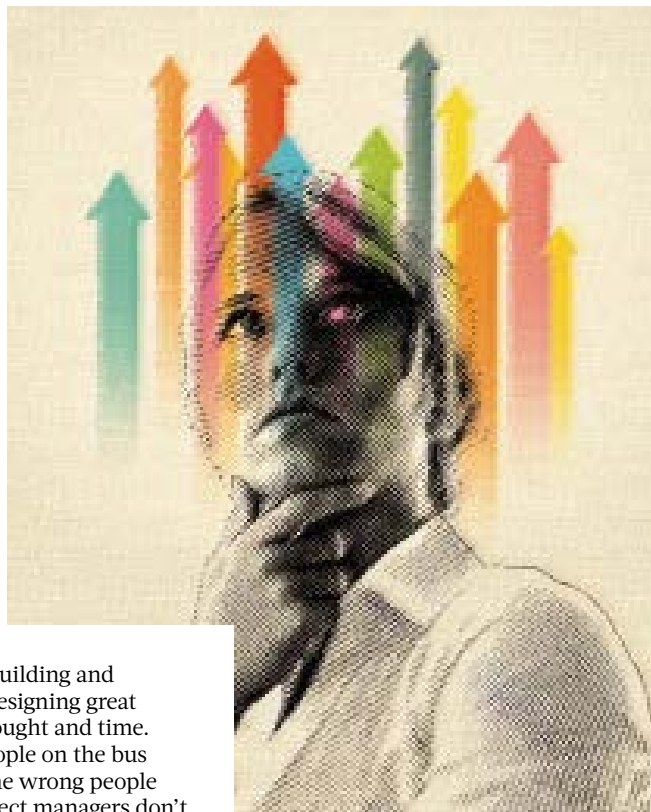


# Becoming great

From managing stakeholders to building a top-class team, **LYNDA BOURNE** looks at how you can become a great project manager



## Projects are done by people, for people.

Successful project managers know this and use it to their advantage to create a team that is focused on working with other stakeholders to create success.

Project managers know when they get this right because their project team will challenge, follow and support them, and each other, in order to get the job done. Not only that, but word spreads and other people inside the organisation will also want to join the team or be associated with its success. This is good for the people involved, and great for the organisation, too.

Developing the skills and personal characteristics needed to evolve and lead a committed team needs more than technical training. Experience, reflection, coaching and mentoring all help the project manager to grow and develop. It's a process that never stops.

How can you determine that you are on a path to becoming a great team leader?

Be well liked. Great leaders make people feel good about themselves; they speak to people in a way that they like and are clear about what needs to be achieved. They will always start the day with a 'good morning', end it with a 'good night' and every question or interaction will be met with courtesy. When the team picks up on this, the project area will be filled with good humour and great productivity.

Put the effort into building and maintaining teams. Designing great teams takes lots of thought and time. You need the right people on the bus and you need to get the wrong people off the bus. Great project managers don't accept the people who are 'free' or 'on the bench', unless they're the right people, and they will negotiate intensely for the people that they really need, going to great lengths to recruit people into their vision. Once the team is in place, great project managers never stop leading it, building it, encouraging it, performance-managing it and celebrating it.

Involve everyone in planning. Or at least everyone that matters. Great

project managers identify the team members and other stakeholders that need to be involved, create a productive, enjoyable environment and lead the process.


They want to ensure that they get the most out of the time and at the end have a plan that the team has built and believes in.

Take the blame and share the credit. Great project managers are like umbrellas. When the criticism is pouring down, they ensure that the team is protected from it. They then ensure that the message passed down is presented as an opportunity to improve, not a problem to be fixed. Similarly, when the sun is out and praise is beaming down, they ensure that the people who do the real work bask

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in it and are rewarded for it. When they talk about how successful a project has been, they talk about the strengths of the team and the qualities they have shown, never about themselves.

Manage up well. Stakeholder engagement, particularly senior stakeholder engagement, is the key to project success. Great project managers know they need senior executive support to help clear roadblocks and deliver resources and know how to tap into the organisation's power lines for the support they need.

Be a good technical manager. While you should have an adequate understanding of the technology involved in a project, you should also be confident about delegating to technologists and administrative experts within your team. Great project managers know that, if the team is fully committed to achieving project success, these experts will probably do a better job than they would themselves anyway. 



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