

# IF A CRISIS IS THREATENING YOUR PROJECT, KNOWING THE 7 MAIN CAUSES CAN HELP YOU PREVENT IT.

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## 1. Deficient project planning and imprecise specifications

Every team member is responsible for identifying and reporting deficiencies or ambiguities. This is especially important in the early stage of the project. Deficient project planning and imprecise specifications at this stage inevitably put all project participants under stress later on in the project.

**Tip!** The project manager should ask experienced team members for their gut feelings at the end of the planning phase. Sometimes, gut feeling helps us to identify mistakes that we fail to notice when we're very busy.

## 2. Project objectives that are communicated ambiguously or not at all

To achieve the best possible work results, objectives have to be clearly defined and realistic. The project manager should ensure that all members of the team are able to work in a cooperative environment and feel comfortable about requesting clarification on both issues.

**Tip!** The project manager shouldn't hesitate to use the following tried-and-tested method in every project. Take a flip chart and write OBJECTIVES at the top. Then use the rest of the sheet to fill in the details. Present and discuss the result at the next team meeting.

## 3. Project management mistakes

Nobody's perfect! This is something that everyone should accept, rather than trying to hide their mistakes. At the same time, project managers have to reckon with mistakes being made, encourage his team to be honest about them and set an example to them. Perfectionism isn't a project management objective. In fact, it can be downright dangerous.

**Tip!** Be generous to team members who openly admit having made a mistake. Console them with a bag of sweets - and get them to pass them round to the other team members! This will create the team atmosphere that you need.

## 4. An incompetent or weak project manager

The wrong personnel decisions can cause a crisis to escalate. The HR manager has to be aware that even the best team can't compensate for bad management.

**Tip!** As project or department manager, you have to comment on incorrect HR decisions. If you don't the consequences of these decisions may affect third parties - and perhaps even you. Always request a detailed written description of your responsibilities so that you can clarify your position.

## 5. Lack of checks

You can implement checks to assess a project's economic performance at any time and make adjustments if necessary. Checks that are implemented too late can lead to surprises - which in most cases aren't positive.

**Tip!** If no checks are being implemented, the project manager should request them. Schedule checks in the project start-up phase and pass them on to the management as an agenda.

## 6. Lack of project orientation in the organisation's culture

The status that an organisation accords to a project has an impact on the project's potential viability. Any disparity generally also means that management mistakes have been made.

**Tip!** Take the task of basing your plans on realistic values and forecasts very seriously. Only then can you request the exact resources from the management that you need to ensure your project is a success.

## 7. Conflicts between the line organisation and the project organisation

Communication prevents complications. If you don't have appropriate communication structures, it's high time that you created them.

**Tip!** A lack of communication structures is often an historical heritage as the result of people simply not being able to agree with each other. In such cases, it's a good idea to call in an external mediator. In the long term, the costs of calling in a mediator are generally far lower than the costs of latent conflicts.

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