

Team Work Makes the Dream Work

Last Modified on 02/26/2025 10:58 am EST

Assembling the right team is a large factor in ensuring a successful project. Here are a few roles and responsibilities you want to think through as you begin to get your team ready for the project.

Executive Sponsor

Identify an active executive sponsor who will ensure that your project goals are aligned with the overall organization strategy and that you have access to resources and support from the senior executive. The Executive Sponsor does not need to be involved in all the meetings but a key to success is ensuring they are provided updates throughout the project's lifecycle.

An all too common problem we see is Executive Sponsors not being updated regularly and we find out too late in the project that the Sponsor and Lead's decisions are not aligned. We then need to go back to the start of the project to make new changes which results in more dedicated time from the business team to retest and retrain as well as leading to a poor customer experience.

We recommend:

- ✓ **Include Executive Sponsor on the project kick-off meeting.** This ensures the project team is aligned on their goals and priorities for the project and what success looks like.
- ✓ **Update Executive Sponsor regularly.** The Project Lead should book dedicated time with the Executive Sponsor. The objective of the meeting is to align on key decisions and project updates like budget, schedule, and resourcing. Is the Project still on track? Is it still on budget? Do we have the right resources and SME's? Is there anything internally stopping the team from meeting the project schedule?

Project Lead

The Project Lead acts as a single point of contact to manage and coordinate internal resources for the day-to-day project execution and decisions. We find the most successful projects are lead by more of a functional lead, someone who has dedicated capacity to work on the project and ideally has experience in leading projects before. For larger projects, it can be common to see projects lead by a Project Manager from your IT department.

One of the most common mistakes we see is when a Project Lead has too many projects on their plate and they cannot dedicate the time to ensuring the team has what they need to keep the project moving. This means the project risks being put on hold and we end up repeating application overviews for new team members which eats into the budget and causes schedule delays.

We recommend:

- ✓ **Dedicated Project Lead.** Ensure the Lead has time to work on the project and isn't already overloaded with Projects.
- ✓ **Communicate with the Executive Sponsor early.** If a Lead feels the project is slipping because their time is limited, let the Sponsor know early so they can help deprioritize other projects or responsibilities internally or can quickly allocate a new lead to the project if

necessary.

Business Subject Matter Experts

The Business SME's role is to have intimate knowledge of use case requirements to provide critical input in making decisions and validate project deliverables. This team will be on the project from start to finish and will be the people actually using the application after go live. They will be responsible for testing the application and ensuring it meets their organization's goals as well as ensuring user adoption after go live. They will be the go-to team helping answer questions when the application is live within the organization.

We recommend:

✓ **3-5 Subject Matter Experts.** When we have too few SMEs there is a risk of a single point of failure. That expert becomes inundated with business priorities and can't dedicate time to keep the project moving. As a result, new experts are brought in too late and a lot of the work needs to be repeated. Any more than 5, there is a risk of too many cooks in the kitchen. We have too many opinions and the project calls become unproductive and results in many takeaways and the project stalls waiting on decisions.

✓ **Differing expertise and experience.** We see success when we have a broad range of expertise. Newer team members bring a differing perspective to existing processes and can help simplify and challenge the status quo.