

## Project Management Confidence

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If you have been doing project management for a while, your confidence has probably gotten an occasional shaking. And the resulting lack of confidence hurts you, but it also hurts your team members who need you to be confident and not self-conscious. You're their leader after all, and they want you to have a strong plan, vision, self-esteem and the confidence to lead.

Obsessing over our personal and organizational shortcomings traps us. We may think it is for our own good – to help us truly learn from our past mistakes. But it can spiral downward into embarrassment and shame. And if you find this happening to you, the best advice is to turn it around early. Take the lessons learned with you, but shed the excess baggage of self-doubt. Sounds easy. But there certainly is not a quick fix. I have seen many project managers leave this challenging career path for non-management jobs for this reason. The fix requires having a consecutive series of successful projects to eventually construct a pillar of success.

Often it is an accumulation of shame-inducing situations that results in the loss of confidence. Maybe you have had a series of death-march projects. Set yourself up for success by getting all of these easy things down first, and then you will be in a better place to handle the harder project problems:

- Keep your word. It feels good to be considered reliable. So be careful about what you commit to, but then take your commitment (even the really small ones) very seriously. A promise is a promise.
- Be on time. Show your self-discipline to yourself and others. It's a healthy habit that keeps you calm. Start on your way early and break the habit of always trying to squeeze in "*one more thing*" before leaving. It will be there when you get back and aren't hurried.
- Be honest, even when it hurts. Stick to the facts. Lying ends up being a bother and you also can get caught, leaving you again with the feeling of shame. Step up to the critical conversations to say the things that are hard to tell.
- Cut the gossip. If you have ever walked up to hear comments made behind your back, you know that can be hard to forgive and forget. Don't do it to others. It give you shame even if you aren't caught. Focus on meaningful talk which will help you accomplish an aim.
- Fall on the sword early. If you have bad news to tell, the receiver usually appreciates hearing it sooner (when they have time to help) rather than later.

If the damage is already done and you find yourself in an embarrassing situation, you can still maintain your confidence if you find a way to recover gracefully. Sometimes this takes real creativity, but there is almost always a way.

And finally, don't avoid the people you made a mishap in front of – avoidance will leave you feeling further ashamed. The shame will wear off with faster with quick re-exposure to the people involved. So seek these people back out and re-open the communication.