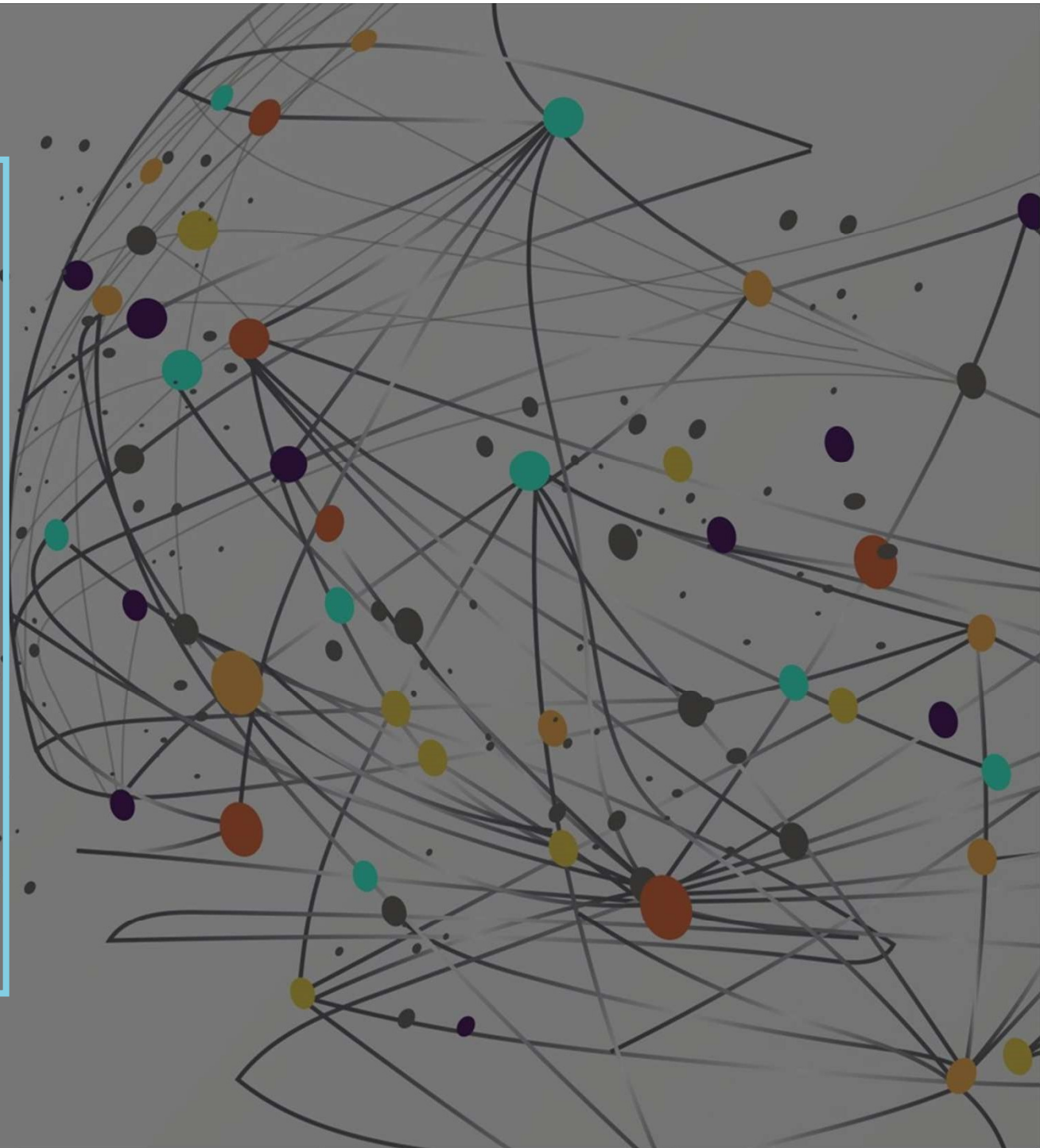# PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Tips and Tricks

TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

- Hire the right project manager. Must haves:

  - If it is a complex, ambitious, and risky project, you will need someone with deep experience in the same domain

  - Conviction, tenacity, and energy, with practical wisdom and common sense

  - Strong communication and influencing skills

- Get a talented project team

  - A great team can turn an average idea into a better one

  - Allow the project manager to pick the team

- Set up a phased and detailed project plan, with milestones, critical workstreams and a summary for presentation.

  - Identify dependencies and construct a dependency network. Include a Gantt chart.

  - I prefer to apply the RAID approach, but there are others such as BOSCAR

TOP TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

- The emperor Augustus said to make haste, slowly, or *"festina lente"* in Latin. Apply this principle to your project. I.e., do not be rash when making decisions.

- Planning and preparation are *the* most important phases, do not rush these.

- Once a decision has been made, stick to it and see it through. "Think slow, act fast".

- Your project is likely not unique: actively seek the opinions of many others and consider consulting with someone outside the project, who may be able to give you a different perspective, to prevent groupthink.

- Build your relationship bridges before you need them!

CONTROLLING THE RISKS

Most project management focuses on cost and the schedule of delivery, i.e. "when is the go-live date?" However, there is often a lack of focus on the technical risk (e.g. contract scope, unproven tech, over-optimism that it "will just work").

To deal with technical risk, consider the following actions:

Scope to be reviewed and agreed with all stakeholders, and line by line included in the detailed project plan; monitor progress against each line.

Test, test, test. Do not go live until *all* tests have been completed successfully, which may take many iterations. Avoid the "that'll do" attitude. Ensure you include tests designed to try and break it the processes.

Another risk is an unstable team: high turnover of team members is a red flag. Focus on team building and try and maintain the same team from design and planning, through to execution and completion.

The plan needs to be comprehensive. Assign roles and responsibilities, hold people accountable, and manage stakeholder expectations using the plan. The steering committee exists to ensure all workstreams are performing as planned.

Planning Tip: Incorporate a comprehensive risk register into the plan, including remote risks. Watch y[...] downside!

The risk management and reporting process needs to be rigorous and robust. Evaluate the impact of identified project risks. Reporting should include future insights and decisions soon to be made, rather than focusing solely history.

THE BIG SECRET

➢ What is the secret sauce - in my experience - that separates a successful project from a not-so successful project? **People!**

  ➢ Bring people with you. There is often initial resistance to a transformational project. This is natural because people are fearful of change. Therefore, the project manager should spend a lot of time during the preparation phase listening to all voices and alleviating any of their project-related concerns.

  ➢ Communication, with the team, and all stakeholders, at regular intervals. A project steering committee, with influential stakeholders, is critical. You can also include subject-specific sub-committees, that include other stakeholders, so no one feels left out.

  ➢ Stay out of internal politics, and any unwanted noise. Focus solely on getting the project done. Say no to anything that does not help achieve the goal