

PROJECT MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICE - 10 TOP TIPS

Through our many years of design, project management and construction experience within the food and drink manufacturing industries we have developed a wide range of best practices when approaching a project. In compiling this article we spoke with a number of the senior project delivery team members within Taylor Rose and got their thoughts on best practice approaches to engineering project management. Although our experience is predominantly drawn from high care food and drink production environments a number of these best practices can be applied to project management in general.



1. Define the project team and structure

The composition of project team may seem obvious but it can vary from business to business depending on resources and personnel. The key, regardless of how large or small your team, is to outline the project team structure and reporting procedures from day 1. Every member of the team must be clear on who to report to for queries relating to budget, design, H&S etc.

“Tell the client what they need to hear, not what they want to hear.”

2. Assign stakeholder liaisons

Every project will have its key stakeholders. It can be your board of directors if the project is internal or it can be your client if you are a contractor. Either way it is important to set the liaisons between your project team and the stakeholders early and make sure this reporting structure is consistent. Consistent lines of communication will give stakeholders added confidence.

3. Planning and Design

Whether its a large factory extension or the introduction of a single piece of process equipment, planning and design are crucial. They must also be carried out in conjunction with one another, when designing a new production line or layout, you must also plan the access issues and potential risks that may arise during installation. This should then feedback into the design as a part of a decision making loop. This will inevitably save

time and money in the long run even if compromises have to be made.

4. Link your programme and budget

Try to link your programme and budget milestones together. This will act as a prompt to review budget spend and prompt any necessary value engineering exercises as the project goes through it's major completion points. It will also act as a prompt to update the project stakeholders, because funnily enough they like to know how their budget is being spent.

5. Tell them what they need to hear

“Tell the client what they need to hear, not what they want to hear” is a phrase you will hear repeated around the Taylor Rose Offices. Perhaps not meant to be taken as literally as it sounds, the sentiment relates to the fact that delivering bad news to a client/stakeholder is as important a delivering your success stories. In our experience, whether it is a budget or programme related issue, the stake



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holders want to be able to manage risk. They can only do that if they have all the facts and it is your job as project manager to deliver them.

6. Set your standards early

In a slightly different context, point 5 also applies to any sub-contractors you utilise on a project. It is important to set your stall out early on in relation to standards or workmanship and approaches to health and safety. Draw up clear and concise guidelines and makes sure all contractors sign-up to these guidelines before work commences.

7. Quality comes first

We all know how pressurised it can get when a programme deadline is approaching or a production area needs to be handed over; but never sacrifice workmanship for the sake of a programme deadline. It is always the hope that good planning will stop this ever being an issue but the truth is life isn't perfect and neither is a project. What you can be sure of is that sub standard work will always come back to haunt you so always insist on the best.

8. Hold regular meetings

This is an obvious one but again the results can be invaluable. Regular site meetings that involve all engineering disciplines and receive input from each equally will help to build a team environment. Often there will be a number of different contractors and companies working in close proximity and building a sense of combined ownership through these group meetings will eventually pay dividends.

9. Value Engineering

From day one of a project one of the key elements to both programme and budget management is a central procurement system. Specification may well need to be handled by different engineering disciplines or specialists but ensuring that all procurement initiation goes through a central hub will maintain high visibility of the budget and potential value engineering opportunities.

10. Take pride in your work

Simple, but extremely important.

