Download this list: The ten commandments of project management
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Michelle Cavanaugh
E-Mail

So you think your project is difficult to manage? Perhaps you don't
remember one of the world's first and most effective project
managers—Moses. He led thousands of people out of slavery and across
a desert with Egyptian soldiers on his heels. And to make matters worse,
he had to contend with his people worshipping pagans. Try to deal with all
of that while delivering on time and under budget!

Luckily for Moses, he received an effective set of guidelines carved on
stone tablets. The Ten Commandments have been translated many times
throughout the centuries, so we thought one more translation wouldn't hurt.
This time, we have found a set of rules to live by for today's project
manager. This list was created by SkillPath Seminars, based in Mission,
KS, and it's used as a learning tool during workshops that are held
nationwide for project managers.

To keep your projects on the right path, download the ten commandments
of project management now. This TechRepublic download features a
useful checklist so that you can be sure you have the fundamentals
covered. We've also included an artistic recreation of the project
management ten commandments on faux stone tablets. You might want to
hang it up on your bulletin board or hand out copies at your next meeting.

Here's an explanation for each commandment:

I. Thou shalt have a project with goals
Set a goal. It's a basic task that too many people overlook. But we've
interviewed countless project managers who insist that if you write down
your project goal, you increase your chances for successful management.
How many times have you completed internal projects only to learn that
what was done did not satisfy each stakeholder? You can create better
communication from the start with a written goal statement.

II. Honor thy project objectives
Determine project objectives. Objectives and scope describe how the goal
will be accomplished. In a recent article, TechRepublic columnist Andy
Weeks explained how to define objectives and scope. Your goal statement
might say, "provide connectivity to the network," while the objectives

might say, "provide connectivity to the network," while the objectives statement might state, "build a LAN/MAN that connects two buildings."

III.Thou shalt commit to the schedule that management hath given thee
Establish time estimates with your stakeholders. Weeks points out that you should also know the budget implications of the project deadline. For example, with an internal project, management may be forgiving with a deadline if there is a cost benefit to missing it. More likely, if meeting the deadline is imperative, the stakeholders may be willing to increase the cost of the project to meet that goal.

IV.Remember thy checkpoints
Create checkpoints. Develop mini-deadlines for completing tasks throughout the project. It gives the project manager a chance to ensure that team members are staying on track.

V.Thou shalt delegate tasks to thy manservant or maidservant or staff
Assign tasks. Within clearly stated parameters, provide team members with the power to make decisions within their areas of responsibility.

VI.Thou shalt create a picture of thy project schedule
Draw a picture/flowchart of the project schedule. If you and your team have a way to visualize the project schedule, it will help everyone stay focused and track progress. There should be a beginning, middle, and end. Weeks recommends a low-tech method such as drawing a flowchart on a whiteboard that is updated when tasks are completed.

VII.Honor thy team members
Direct people not only as a team but also individually. According to a SkillPath Seminars instructor, Steve Zahner, a good rule of thumb is that you should spend 85 percent of your time meeting with people on an individual basis. That means only a fraction of your time—15 percent—should be spent conducting group meetings.

VIII.Thou shalt commit thyself and thy team to the project
Reinforce commitment by asking team members to add value to their task. According to Zahner, when people are not motivated, you need to find ways to help your team take ownership of the task.

"Logically, they know they should do it, but emotionally they're not fueled to do it," said Zahner.

He advised IT managers to ask their team members this question: What do you have to think, say, or do to add value to this task?

It's a question the team members must answer for themselves. The more reasons they list, the faster they'll complete the task. For example, if a project needs to be completed on budget—ask them to think of their financial stake in the company. Or, ask them to treat the project budget as if it were their own personal budget. Zahner said that adding value is a tremendous motivator.

IX.Thou shalt document extensively and keep thy team informed
Document progress and keep your team informed. Documentation leaves a paper trail when questions are asked later or problems occur. Or, in the best-case scenario, your documentation leaves a successful blueprint for the next time the project is duplicated. In addition, your project can use documentation as a reliable system to update team members and

stakeholders. Project management software or regularly scheduled e-mail and meetings can help accomplish this task.

X. Thou shalt encourage creativity

Encourage creativity. Give your ego a rest. Your team members will develop better solutions and approaches if you empower them to make decisions and think creatively. Consider a reward system for those who develop innovative ideas.