

Staffing Your Dream Team

Question:

Samoht, I have recently been hired by a large company as a project manager. My new company expects me to create a document called a Staffing Management Plan. We did not use these in my old company, and I am a bit lost. Can you tell me what I should include in a Staffing Management Plan?

Hamish

Answer:

Hamish,

I remember when a manager could staff a project based purely on who would be the most fun at end-of-project party, with no explanation required. Those were the good old days! Now you have to put a bit more thought into things. But, ultimately a Staffing Management Plan does not have to be a cause for despair. You can still create your “Dream Team” – you just have to document it.

The following should be included in your Staffing Management Plan:

- **Overall staffing approach.** Describe the overall approach you will take for staffing the project. This is the easy part, and it is all up to you. Do you want to use the smartest people in the company for your project? Maybe you want to people your team with your best friends or, as I mentioned before, the most fun people in your organization. Or, maybe you would like to outsource some of the work to your brother Joe’s company. Just mention that here! There are no incorrect methods. No one really understands this section anyway.
- **Location.** Describe where the team will usually be located. Keep in mind this does not have to be at the company site! Sometimes you will have people on your team who are working from home, or from other branches. I usually list the break room or the local pub as my team’s location for projects – after all, that is where we usually are!
- **Staff acquisition.** This is probably a table that describes what types of resources are needed, when they are needed and where they are coming from. If you are anything like me, you don’t know this information. Take heed – chances are no one else in your organization knows either! The chart is necessary because people become bored when they see a document with strictly text, so just include some sort of chart with bright colors, and maybe some clipart – that should do the trick!
- **Training.** In many cases, the people you have chosen for your project team may not have the correct skills necessary for the project (I am talking to you Charley!). In those cases, training will be your best friend! In fact, perhaps you will actually be training your best friends.
- **Reassignment.** All projects come to an end. Describe the plan for reassigning the project team once their role on the project is completed. I sometimes like to use an auction format to assign my team members to other project managers when I am done with them, but you can do what you like.

- **Project rewards and consequences.** Everyone likes rewards! Good workers should always be rewarded. This could be simply non-monetary rewards such as formal “thanks” at weekly status meetings. Just so people don’t get too overconfident, you can always give compliments like “not bad”, “I’ve seen worse” and “close enough”. I, for one, like to be generous with my team! For example, if one of my team members has done a great job, I will sometimes take money out of the project’s budget and just give it to them! Other times I will give good team members a few days off and let the bad team members pick up their slack by working nights and weekends. Now that is incentive!

So you see you can still create your Dream Team. Just make sure it is not a nightmare of work for you.