

77 Project Management Proverbs

Seventy seven pearls of humor and wisdom which are collected from different sources. Just read and enjoy!
(If there is a copyright on any of these proverbs that the author is not aware of, please contact: oliver@oliverlehmann.com)

1. A project manager should not be praised for starting a project but for finishing it.
2. To estimate a project, work out how long it would take one person to do it then multiply that by the number of people on the project.
3. The first 90% of a project takes 90% of the time. The last 10% takes the other 90%.
4. The person who says it will take the longest and cost the most is the only one with a clue how to do the job.
5. The faintest ink is more powerful than the strongest memory.
6. The project manager is the lightning rod for all problems.
7. Fast - cheap - good: you can have any two.
8. The more ridiculous the deadline the more money will be wasted trying to meet it.
9. Too few people on a project and they can't solve the problems - too many, and they create more problems than they solve.
10. Any project can be estimated accurately (once it's complete).
11. The project would not have been started if the truth had been told about the cost and timescale.
12. If an IT project works the first time, it is wrong.
13. Managing IT people is like herding cats.
14. A badly planned project will take three times longer than expected - a well planned project only twice as long as expected.
15. If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.
16. A problem shared is a buck passed.



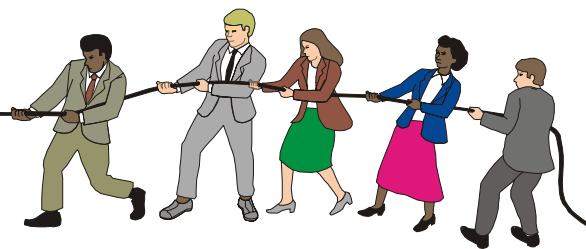
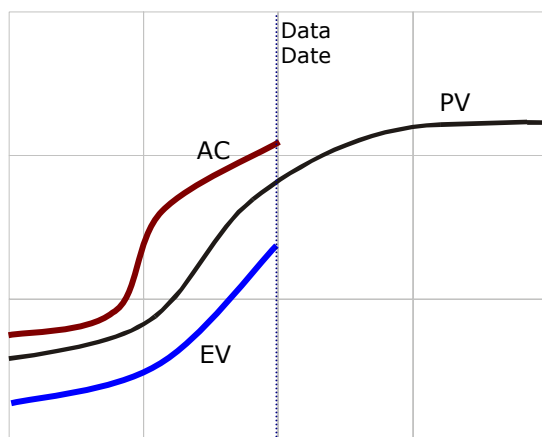
17. A good project manager adheres to schedule. A project champion meets the targets.

18. You should cut down the tree that you are able to.



19. The optimist says: We do our very best for the project. The pessimist is afraid this might be true.
20. It is human to make a mistake; it is stupid to persist in it.
21. If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.
22. If you don't attack the risks, the risks will attack you.
23. Planning without action is futile, action without planning is fatal.
24. Managers apply pressure when they are at their wits' end.
25. If it wasn't for the 'last minute', nothing would get done.
26. If you don't know how to do a task, start it, then ten people who know less than you will tell you how to do it.
27. If everything is going exactly to plan, something somewhere is going massively wrong.
28. If there were no problem people there'd be no need for people who solve problems.
29. For a project manager overruns are as certain as death and taxes.
30. When the weight of the project paperwork equals the weight of the project itself, the project can be considered complete.
31. A project manager should not look where he fell, but where he slipped.
32. You can build a reputation on what you're going to do.
33. The sooner you get behind schedule, the more time you have to make it up.
34. Everyone asks for a strong project manager - when they get him they don't want him.
35. Good estimators aren't modest: if it's huge, they say so.
36. Metrics are learned men's excuses.
37. If you can interpret project status data in several different ways, only the most painful interpretation will be correct.
38. Activity is not achievement.

39. Never underestimate the ability of senior management to buy a bad idea and fail to buy a good idea.
40. The nice thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression.
41. It's not the hours that count; it's what you do in those hours.
42. Good control reveals a problem early - which only means you'll have longer to worry about it.
43. No project has ever finished on time, within budget, to requirement - yours won't be the first to.
44. Warning: Dates in the calendar are closer than you think.
45. There is no such thing as scope creep, only scope gallop.
46. Anything that can be changed will be changed until there is no time left to change anything.
47. If project content is allowed to change freely the rate of change will exceed the rate of progress.
48. The same work under the same conditions will be estimated differently by ten different estimators or by one estimator at ten different times.
49. If there are no more problems in your project, your boss will reduce your time and budget.
50. If you're 6 months late on a milestone due next week but really believe you can make it, you're a project manager.
51. A project gets a year late one day at a time.
52. Quality is free.
53. You can con a sucker into committing to an impossible deadline, but you cannot con him into meeting it.
54. Nothing gets done till nothing gets done.
55. The project manager's most important organ is the nose. He must smell a stink bomb before it goes off.
56. It takes one woman nine months to have a baby. It cannot be done in one month by impregnating nine women (although it may be more fun trying).
57. A minute saved at the start is just as effective as one saved at the end.
58. There's never enough time to do it right first time, but there's always enough time to go back and do it again.
59. If you have time to do it over again, you'll never get away with doing it right the first time.
60. Good project managers know when not to manage a project.
61. Good project management is not so much knowing what to do and when, as knowing what excuses people give and when.
62. Projects happen in two ways: a) Planned and then executed or b) Executed, stopped, planned and then executed.
63. Clever project managers pass problems to others; smart project managers build a reputation as problem solvers.
64. A lump sum contract puts the buyer in the strong position - until the first change request is made.
65. If at first you don't succeed, remove all evidence you ever tried.
66. Quantitative project management is for predicting cost and schedule overruns well in advance.
67. All project managers face problems on Monday mornings - good project managers are working on next Monday's.
68. Nothing is impossible for the person who doesn't have to do it.
69. People under pressure do not think faster.
70. The conditions attached to a promise are forgotten - only the promise is remembered.
71. Of several possible interpretations of a communication, the least convenient is always the correct one.



72. If you are not fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm.
73. The good project manager looks after his team; the perfect project manager takes care of his customer.
74. The most valuable and least created document in project management is "Plan B".
75. The most valuable and least used phrase in a project manager's vocabulary is "I don't know".
76. The most valuable and least said word in a project manager's vocabulary is "NO".
77. When all's said and done a lot more is said than done.