The Four Essential Traits of Today's Project Manager

Project managers are the linchpin to successful capital work across campus, whether it's the construction of new buildings or renovation of existing spaces. However, higher education's project management function has not kept pace with changing industry standards and evolving institutional needs. As projects grow in complexity, cost, and importance to institutional success, senior leaders need to rethink project manager roles and responsibilities to best support campus development.

This infographic showcases the four traits that project managers need to succeed on today's higher ed construction and renewal projects. It also highlights the EAB research that can support project management offices in growing that trait.

Project Manager

Communicate Consistently with Project Stakeholders

Project managers struggle to work with stakeholders who maintain impossible expectations or disruptive misconceptions about the project process, reducing customer satisfaction.

Communication is the **#1 requested skill set by directors** for their project managers

Project managers **use standardized communication methods**, such as project charters and funding cheat sheets, to educate stakeholders without requiring time-consuming training.

➔ **EAB RESOURCE:** *Capital Project Planning Toolkit*

Use Project Resources Efficiently

Project managers waste limited time and energy on projects that are nonstarters, extensive processing of forms and approvals, and elongated handoffs.

Project process manuals are often **10+ years out of date**

Project managers **address pervasive project delivery pain points** by using process improvement methods to establish triage protocols, eliminate unnecessary sign-off, and consolidate project closeout documents and warranties.

➔ **EAB RESOURCE:** *Process Improvement Resource Center*

Optimize Time Spent on Strategic Activities

Project managers cannot focus on high-value tasks because they are bogged down by high-volume, lower-skill activities, such as form digitization, construction management, and database administration.

69% of institutions have most or all project managers spend time completing basic forms.

Project managers **selectively off-load tasks to dedicated specialists**, such as rescoped supporting staff or students.

➔ **EAB RESOURCE:** *How to Transfer Non-critical Project Management Tasks to Dedicated Specialists*

Develop Specialized Knowledge of Systems and Sponsors

Project managers lack the specialized knowledge or strong relationships with project sponsors to deliver increasingly complex and high-risk projects.

81% of institutions assign at least some projects to project managers without considering staff expertise or relationships with project sponsors.

Project managers **deploy targeted project allocation rotations** to align teams with projects where specialization reduces risks, including research labs, utilities, and medical facilities.

➔ **EAB RESOURCE:** *Three Ways to Improve Project Assignment in Facilities*

EAB | Facilities Forum

Learn more about changes in the project management function by **downloading our benchmarking report**
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