# 5 subtle signs your project may be headed for disaster

Did you ever get the feeling that something on your project wasn't right, even when your schedule and budget seemed to be on track? Have you noticed that team members seem frustrated or out of touch, or that you need to make seemingly simple requests multiple times before anyone bothers to act on them?

Experienced project managers know that signs like these can indicate problems with their approach to the project, problems that will grow into widespread issues if they aren't resolved early on. If you're new to project management, or are wondering what's going on with your current project, look for the signs listed here. They might help you identify your project management mistakes before they escalate into serious problems with quality, budget or timelines.

**1  Team members don't seem interested in the project**

Team member engagement is a difficult concept to measure, especially when you're dealing with people you haven't worked with before. Employees who are very quiet may simply have reserved natures, or they may be unhappy with their assignment and unwilling to talk about it. When you can't get a read on your team, try asking questions to gauge their interest in their work. If their responses are less than enthusiastic, it may be time to revisit your task assignments or communication plan.

**2  You're having problems with resource allocation**

Many enterprise project managers build overtime, contractor hours and other additional resources into their project plans, either as a contingency measure or because the project requirements and schedule make it necessary. However, if you're using those resources earlier than expected, or on unexpected tasks, it's a sure sign that something else is amiss.

**3  Team members aren't collaborating the way you expect**

By now, most project managers know that online collaboration is essential for project success. If you've incorporated an enterprise collaboration system in the workplace, but your team isn't using it, it's time to make a change. The problem may simply be that team members aren't sure how to use the tools, in which case a little training should do the trick. In other cases, you may need to coach your team through the trust or control issues that are keeping them in their silos.

**4  You have to schedule extra meetings**

A quick look at your calendar can sometimes let you know that you're running into some common project management pitfalls. Have you felt the need to schedule additional meetings to follow up on task assignments, or to resolve communication issues that the team is experiencing? If so, you might need to look for a more fundamental problem with your team structure, communication plan or your approach to task assignments.

**5  Senior stakeholders seem concerned**

It's always a good idea to watch for signs of unease among your senior stakeholders, even when you think a project is running well. Executives may not know as much as you about how to run a project, but they are your project partners. If you walk away from your weekly status update meetings feeling that things didn't go as well as you'd hoped, take a look at your scope documents, project requirements and other materials to ensure that you haven't missed anything important in your project plan.

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