

What are some things to keep in mind when working with other individuals and groups of people? How are you able to create trust and accountability among team members when leading a project?

In our own projects, and I think every project I've ever done whether corporate, government, or academic clients, I find that one of the real challenges, the greater challenge, is to work with my team, because I'm working so closely with them than I am even working with a client. With the client, we can go back and forth, we can usually negotiate stuff and find things everybody's in. In most cases, we haven't had things go awry with projects and the client. With my own project teams, I think I've got a particular role as a project manager. I think that, for one thing, I'd better have some credibility with them. And that comes with reputation, with working with them over time, getting to know people, getting that trust level built up. But some of the things that I do within the project itself is I concentrate specifically and deliberately on intensity. I like to create a level of intensity around every project we do. The importance of the project, why it's important, the client, what the impact of the product is going to be. The project is going to make a difference, and here's why. And I need to be a drone hovering over the team, who can sometimes get lost in that and be reminding them, this thing's important! It matters what we do. And if it doesn't matter, I wouldn't be doing the project in the first place. So, I believe that and in that authenticity. Your team is constantly checking you for whether or not you're an authentic person. You know (they say), "Do you really believe that, Rick?" Yes, I do. I do believe that this is an important project. And here's why. And reminding them of that a bit. Cheerleading, I mean, but targeted, intentionally, not just "Wee isn't everybody great and you're all doing wonderful things." But intentionally looking for successes or cause for celebration within the team during the running of the project, because projects are wearing. They're soul destroying at some level some parts of them are. And so, need to be encouraged along the way too, but targeted, that means the project manager needs to get close to what you're doing and know what it is well enough to be able to say, "That's good. That's really, that was a good decision. do more of that." That kind of thing goes a long way, I think, because people then know that it's real. Look for stress points and fractures. When you're talking about intensity, you don't always just ratchet up the intensity. Because there's a lot of psychological investment and just work ethic that goes into doing good instructional design. Some of it's just plain work. And so, looking for stress points around that and trying to find ways to relieve it. One of the things that I've done several times with projects is that I'll take on a role inside of a team. Yes, my job is to make sure that the whole project is moving, and the teams are moving, but sometimes let's say, go back to the database example. Tagging 10,000 photos was an impossible job to do it appropriately. Because they don't get tagged once, they get tagged with maybe 10 different descriptors, right. So, if people are searching for a particular kind of photo, it'll come up. So, anticipating what those tags are and then tagging all those photos was a huge manual job, but an important one. And so, I jumped in with my team, we did it together. And every spare minute I had every evening I could spare an hour or two, I would go into that database and be tagging like mad. And we would then connect with each other on Twitter, and be talking about the tags that we were using or laughing about stuff. I mean, really, how many ways can you say cow? Cow, cows, cow herd, cattle, bovine. How many different tags can you have for a picture of a cow? Right? So anyway, we would negotiate those kinds of things together in real time as we were doing it together. And I think that goes a long way with teams. And also, we would have delivered rounds of appreciation every week getting together, but then we would do critiques together. Okay, so studio work, we

would do critiques, "Show us what you did in the last week, team!" The team would talk about what they did, people would question them, they'd push them, they'd nudge them, they'd celebrate them. But then we would have a specific round of appreciation saying, "Here's what I liked, here's one thing that I liked that I heard tonight," And everybody in the class would go around, or everybody on the team would go around and add their item, their factotum of appreciation at that point. And I think that goes a long way to keep everybody involved and everybody as critics of each other's work