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Projects move through an ebb and flow of issues and risks. [Project managers](), customers, and task executors tend to prevent minor issues and mitigate major derailments. When issues hit red status, though, your executive sponsors need to come in from above and help. Rather than keeping them out of the weeds, pull them in to balance conflicting priorities and settle issues that can't be resolved by the PM and team. Executive Steering
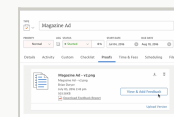
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The Necessity of Executive Sponsorship

July 15, 2016

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Committees are a perfect way to properly engage and leverage your projects executive sponsors.

With that in mind, here are the two key ways to utilize your executive steering committee to help your projects.

1. At the start, they get buy in

People are naturally resistant to change (unless they are driving it). By having executive sponsorship from the start, you can lessen the effect. Executive buy-in helps you get widespread buy-in among all project stakeholders. Your committee has the power to get people excited about a project. Use that to get the momentum you need behind your project kickoff.

"Your committee has the power to get people excited about a project." — Tom Ault, Mavenlink Enterp. AE

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2. They make

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executive decisions

Projects encounter technical, user, political, and other issues. Whatever the PM can handle falls within his/her scope to handle it. How well he/she manages issues reflects his/her capabilities. But when a project manager can't resolve an issue, and risks the project derailing, it's time to escalate the project to the executives.

By that time, your executive steering committee has been steadily involved. They've met periodically to keep the project on track, both amongst themselves and with the PMs. The frequency of the meetings should vary depending on the project size, scope, and duration. Your ideal meeting is at least once a quarter but no more than twice a month. These meetings can

be easy to avoid – but don't! Prioritize, formalize, and facilitate engagement to overcome serious issues and ensure project progress, outcomes, and success.

How we structure our own committees

At Mavenlink, we keep an executive steering committee on projects with a lot of moving pieces. A typical executive committee includes our SVP of Services, SVP of Global Sales, VP of finance, and the project manager. Client-side representation includes the CIO, two line-of-business VPs, and the client's PM. Key partner(s) and an end user committee may have a seat on the committee as appropriate.

With

"Your ideal meeting is at least once a quarter but no more

Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API

than twice a month." — Tom

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everyone represented, you're set up for swift, effective project steering to keep your individual projects and portfolios on budget and on schedule.

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POSTED BY   6:00 AM | Jul 15, 2016

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Management

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Software?

What is Resource

Planning Software?

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