

CHAPTER 1 – ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Project Management

This chapter presents knowledge and skills required to be a successful Project Manager (PM). A new PM should use this information to guide his professional development. An experienced PM should use it to strengthen his skills.

What is a Project? What differentiates it from a program? A *project* is an activity that has clear objectives, a definite schedule or ending date and resources devoted to its completion. A *program* is an on-going activity that does not have a defined end, examples of which are right of way mowing and payroll processing. Projects can be undertaken by consultants and/or contractors or with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) resources alone.

Projects that are considered FDOT core services include planning studies, roadway design, right of way acquisition, construction and maintenance. They are the focus of this manual. However, FDOT undertakes other important projects including building construction, landscaping and research. Managers for these projects will find useful information in this chapter and throughout this Project Management Handbook.

What is a Project Manager? In this handbook the term PM is used to identify the individual responsible for the execution and completion of a project. Consultant firms perform many of FDOT's planning, Project Development and Environment (PD&E), design, right of way and construction engineering and inspection projects. Therefore, this handbook addresses Project Management from the perspective of both the FDOT PM and the consultant PM. Throughout this handbook, specific recommendations are made for either the FDOT PM or the consultant PM. If "FDOT" or "consultant" is not specified, the recommendation applies to both. Refer to Appendix D for related information.

Why Is Project Management Important? Projects are the means by which the FDOT delivers its core services to the traveling public. Successful management of projects is important to the success of the FDOT. Therefore, a PM is a key member of the transportation team. FDOT operates according to the Sterling Management Model. A basic tenet of Sterling is the concept of customer service. A Customer can be either internal or external. Certainly, the ultimate customer of FDOT is the public. Since the public is served through the successful execution of projects, in a very real sense PMs are also customers for many employees of FDOT who support PMs.

This concept is even more important for consultant firms since all their business is accomplished through projects. Successful firms understand that PMs determine their firms' success. These firms have a corporate culture that honors PMs and emphasizes that the efforts of the whole firm—including top management—must be focused on helping them succeed. When the client is satisfied, the firm will be competitive for future work with FDOT.

What Is a Successful Project? The following criteria define a successful project:

- Objectives are fulfilled.
- Budget is not exceeded.
- Schedule is met.
- Quality meets or exceeds the standards of the Department and the profession.
- Customer is satisfied.

Leadership and Management

A PM must exercise good leadership and management skills. There is a difference between these terms. Management involves organizing and performing or directing administrative activities; leadership involves motivating others to work toward a common goal. Some of the tools that a successful PM needs in his PM “Tool Box” include:

- **LEADERSHIP**
- **MANAGEMENT**
- **COMMUNICATION**
- **EXPERIENCE and TRAINING**

Management ensures that all the elements of a project plan, as described in the next chapter, are in place. Management skills can be learned. Technical people frequently become very good managers because managing requires a logical way of thinking and is detail oriented. Leadership, on the other hand, is not so easily learned. It is a “people” skill that is sometimes difficult for technical personnel to develop. A summary of valuable traits and skills are shown in **Figure 1.1**, Leadership and Management Qualities.

Leadership Concepts- Although this handbook is largely devoted to the management of projects, leadership is a very important trait of good PMs. The following can be said of good leaders:

- They lead by example. They never ask team members to do something that they are not willing to do themselves.
- They are flexible. They constantly reassess progress on the project and are willing to make changes if necessary.
- They build and maintain relationships.

- They understand that people are motivated differently. They take time to know their people, understand what is important to them and use that information to achieve project goals.
- They recognize the efforts of team members.
- They empower team member to make decisions.
- They take the blame when things do not go well and share the credit when the team is successful.

Figure 1 - Leadership and Management Qualities

Management	Leadership
Involves organizing and performing or directing administrative activities.	Involves motivating others to work toward a common goal.
◆ Understands Authority	◆ Team Builder
◆ Responsible	◆ Trustworthy
◆ Delegates	◆ Empowering
◆ Accountable	◆ Integrity
◆ Prioritizes	◆ Flexible
◆ Planner	◆ Open Minded
◆ Goal Oriented	◆ Motivator

Major General Perry M. Smith, of the National Defense University, listed 20 fundamentals of leadership in his 1986 book, ***Taking Charge, A Practical Guide for Leaders***. These are listed below, paraphrased to better fit the Project Management environment:

1. **Trust is vital.** You must trust the people on your team. In the words of Frank Crane, "You may be deceived if you trust too much, but you will live in torment if you do not trust enough."
2. **A leader must be a good teacher.** The leader must be willing to teach skills, to share insights and experiences, and to work closely with people to help them mature and be creative.
3. **A leader should let subordinates solve most problems.** General George Patton advised: "Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."
4. **A leader must be a communicator.** Leaders must be good writers, editors, speakers and listeners. A dynamic communicator can motivate people to want to go to work committed to doing an even better job than in the past.
5. **A leader must manage time well and use it effectively.** Leaders must work smarter, not harder. Allow open time every day for thinking and dealing with crises and problems of your team members. Learn to say "no" to time wasters.
6. **Leaders should trust their intuition.** To quote Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The essence of genius is spontaneity and instinct. Trust thyself." Part of intuition is having your "antennae" out and keeping your hand on the pulse of the team.
7. **Leaders must be willing to remove people for cause.** You owe it to the team and to the success of the project to remove those who stand in the way.
8. **Leaders must take care of their people.** Be concerned about your team members' personal and professional objectives and thank them for their efforts.
9. **Leaders must provide vision.** Leaders plan, set goals and provide a vision of the completed project; then they communicate the vision to the team.
10. **Leaders must subordinate their ambitions and egos to the goals of the team that they lead.** The selfless leader gains the respect of subordinates and the support of superiors.
11. **Leaders must know how to run meetings.** Much of a leader's time is spent in meetings. Fight the cultural tendency to hold long, undisciplined meetings with little useful output.
12. **Leaders must understand the decision-making and implementation process.** How are decisions made? What decisions do leaders want made by team members? What decisions should be made by higher authority? Decisions are of little value if they are not implemented, so leaders must have an implementation and follow-up strategy.
13. **Leaders must be visible and approachable.** Leaders should be with their team, not stuck behind a desk all the time. When dealing with a team member, make that person feel that nothing else matters except what is on that person's mind.
14. **Leaders must have a sense of humor.** Leaders should let people know that life is not so important that you can't sit back occasionally and be amused by what's

happening. Humor can be a great reliever of tension; a story or joke at a time of crisis or difficulty can be very therapeutic.

15. **Leaders must be decisive, but patiently decisive.** Leaders should listen to all sides before deciding. On occasion they may postpone an important decision until additional information is available. Look for contrasting views. But remember that a non-decision is itself a decision. Risk taking is frequently an essential and healthy aspect of decision-making.

16. **Leaders should be introspective.** Leaders should be able to look at themselves objectively and analyze where they have made mistakes and learn from them.

17. **Leaders should be reliable.** A leader should be careful about what commitments are made; but once commitments are firm, nothing short of major health problems or a very serious crisis should alter them.

18. **Leaders should be open-minded.** The best leaders are the ones whose minds are never closed, who are interested in hearing new points of view and who are eager to deal with new issues.

19. **Leaders should establish and maintain high standards of dignity.** When standards of dignity are established, everyone can take pride in both the accomplishments and the style of the operation. A happy combination of substance and style leads to high performance and morale.

20. **Leaders should exude integrity.** Leaders should not only talk about it, they must operate at a high level of integrity. Of all the qualities a leader must have, integrity is the most important.

A PM should work continuously to develop and fine-tune their leadership skills. There are many different approaches to leadership that are effective. A PM must find the style that matches his personality. Because leadership involves interrelationships with other people, it is a behavioral attribute. Changing behavior is very difficult. It can be done, but it takes practice as well as reading, training and spending time with a mentor.

Management Concepts - A PM must understand the basic concepts of good management. These include:

Authority - Authority is the power to act within an organization. Project Managers must clearly understand the limits of their authority. What decisions can they make and what must be deferred to others in higher authority? What actions must be reviewed by others before beginning?

Responsibility - Responsibility is the obligation to perform assigned duties to the best of one's ability. Problems will arise when someone has been given the responsibility but not the authority to act. A basic concept of management is that authority must match responsibility.

Delegation - Delegation is the sharing of authority to take actions and make decisions. Complex projects cannot be accomplished without effective delegation. Delegation should be done deliberately, taking into account the ability of the person to whom authority and responsibility will be delegated. Clearly outline to him the limits of his authority, ensure that

responsibility and authority are in balance, and explain the reporting and oversight that goes with the delegation. The amount of oversight should vary with the individual. The manager should develop a delegation plan that is unique to the experience and abilities of each individual. Many people who otherwise have all the traits of a good PM are reluctant to delegate. It is difficult to give up a degree of control. However, a good PM can multiply his performance through the effective use of others.

Accountability - Accountability means that one is judged by the manner in which authority is exercised and the way assigned responsibility is carried out. Accountability is accepting the consequences, good or bad, for the outcome of a situation for which one is responsible. A PM is accountable for the choices he makes and the resulting consequences. This accountability cannot be shared—the PM has the “ultimate responsibility.” However, the PM must hold team members accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities as well. Leadership and management cannot be exercised effectively without holding people accountable for their actions. A PM should reward high performance and correct low performance. Although holding team members accountable is sometimes unpleasant, it is necessary. The success of the project may well depend on it.

Team Building - The project team, for purposes of this discussion, is the internal group of people working on a project, either employees of FDOT or a consultant firm, or people provided through contract. By definition, the PM has authority over these people. However, project staffing is usually a matrix organization where the project staff is assigned to a PM only for purposes of a particular project. These people may normally report to someone else, and they may be working on other projects at the same time. Further complicating the challenge is the use of contractors and subcontractors to supplement the staff. Consequently, various corporate entities may be involved. The official authority of the PM over his staff may be limited. The challenge is to mold a group of people who may be temporarily assigned from other organizations for the duration of the project and who probably are working only part-time on it, into a team that will produce a successful project. The following are some suggestions:

- **Starting Off Right** - Meet with the whole team at the start of the project. Go over all the primary elements of the project plan with them so that they all know the objectives, schedule, budget and operating procedures (see Chapter 3). Ensure that everyone understands his role in the project.
- **Clarifying the Schedule and Budget** - Talk with the supervisors of the team members and clarify all schedule and budget issues. Ideally, each group in the team was involved in developing staff hours and negotiating the budget. Nonetheless, ensure that each group knows the staff-hour

budget for its share of the work. Avoid unpleasant surprises at the end of the job by making each group responsible for its own portion of the budget. The PM should not keep all of the budget data confidential.

Communicate - Keep team members informed as the project progresses. Good communication is particularly important for sub-consultants who may not be currently involved in the project. They will need to know what to expect when they do become involved. Hold regular team meetings.

- **Know Your Team** - Recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the team members and have a plan to compensate for their weaknesses and to use their strengths.
- **Lead** - Exercise the fundamentals of leadership discussed earlier in this chapter.

Partnering - Partnering is externally focused. The objective is to have organizations not directly under the control of the FDOT work toward common goals. Partnering involves bringing people from interested organizations together to agree on common objectives related to a project and to agree on how to resolve disputes. Formal partnering agreements are widely used by the FDOT in construction when several organizations with a stake in a project may have differing objectives and expectations.

Although it may not be practical to formalize a partnering agreement to the extent done in construction, the concept may be applicable on any FDOT project. A large number of state, local and federal agencies, environmental organizations, homeowners groups, utilities, developers and private companies have legitimate stakes in the outcome of projects such as PD&E studies and roadway designs.

Informal partnering is frequently used by the FDOT in planning to help ensure general agreement in later phases of project development and implementation. Formal partnering is used regularly in FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process which closely links planning and environmental management in Florida.

Although partnering can be a very useful technique to help the PM achieve project goals, partnering agreements do not take precedence over procedures, policies, rules and laws. FDOT's [Partnering Facilitator's Manual](#), explains the basics of partnering and some techniques to use in developing a formal partnering agreement.

Time Management - Time is the one resource that will always be in short supply for the PM. Here are a number of very good time-management references and training opportunities that the PM should take advantage of:

- Understand that time cannot be managed; one can only manage how time is used.
- Delegate effectively.

- Stay focused on the project goals and objectives.
- Know how to prioritize. Many time-consuming activities contribute nothing to project success yet extend schedule and deplete the budget. Refuse to do them, delegate them or spend as little time as possible on them. Remember what is important, and use your time accordingly. Importance and urgency are not the same.
- Plan. Set aside time each day to plan future activities. Prepare and follow a daily action plan, with priorities.
- Be realistic in your planning. Allow time for the unforeseen.
- Snap decisions are not necessarily good time management. On important issues use available time to identify and analyze alternatives and reach deliberate and sound decisions.
- Know what is important to your boss, because in the final analysis that will determine your priorities.

A Drive to Succeed - The one common characteristic of the successful PM is an uncompromising drive to succeed. The PM understands what will make his projects successful, and works tirelessly to that end. The PM accepts personal ownership of projects. The nature of public works is that one's efforts will be scrutinized and criticized by a great many people. The best PM accepts valid criticism and suggestions and does not let disagreements become personal. The PM stays focused on the goals of the project and does not get sidetracked by unimportant issues.

Communication

Effective communication skill is one of the most important traits of a successful PM. Communication is a two-way exchange of information. Information must be clearly and concisely given, and it must be clearly understood by the receiving party. The PM must communicate with his counterparts, with the team members and with organizations and individuals external to the project team. Communication processes include person-to-person and telephone conversations, meetings, e-mail, letters and reports. Listening is a critical and often-ignored communication skill.

Levels of Communication - Many FDOT projects have two PMs—one from the FDOT and one from a consultant firm. Both have important roles and responsibilities (see Chapter 7). It is critical that these two individuals communicate effectively and often. Good communication is a shared responsibility. At the beginning of a project there should be a clear understanding of the preferred methods of communicating and the frequency. Primary (normally the PM's) and alternate points of contact for both sides should be identified. It is probably a good idea to “over-communicate” at the beginning of a project until the FDOT PM and the consultant PM develop an understanding of each other and mutual trust. Each must keep the other informed of key issues. The consultant PM must let the FDOT PM know about the current status of the project, current and anticipated problems, and anything that may affect the project scope, budget and schedule. Budget issues include the projected construction costs for design projects as well as the cost of the project itself. The FDOT PM should inform the consultant PM of anything that may affect the schedule or scope of the project and her/his concerns about project performance. The best way to foster communications with one's counterpart is to develop a professional relationship built on mutual trust and respect for each other's responsibilities and capabilities.

Effective communication is the basis of team building. The PM must work to keep his team informed of the important aspects of the project. Good communication with the team will reveal issues before they become problems. Team communications include meetings, memos, copies of reports and other deliverables, and much face-to-face interaction.

Communicating with external agencies and organizations must follow established protocol. The FDOT PM must understand the district policies related to communication with local agencies, other state agencies and other organizations. The PM must be aware of political sensitivities that may exist. For certain, external communication should be more formal than internal communication. It is very important that the FDOT PM and consultant PM establish the rules that apply to external communication. Unless specifically agreed otherwise, the FDOT PM should be responsible for all formal communication with external agencies.

The FDOT PM and the consultant PM should be the conduit for the flow of project-related communication between their organizations. However, at times technical issues can be resolved more effectively by direct communication among team members. Although the PM may not have to be directly involved in this communication, he must be kept abreast of the issues and receive copies of key correspondence. The PM is personally responsible for the success of the project. Therefore, delegation of communication responsibilities should be done carefully, with appropriate oversight and control.

Personal Communication - Of the various methods of communicating, face-to-face conversation is usually the most effective. In addition to the verbal message, nuances and other non-verbal messages are exchanged. It is also easier for the sender to get confirmation that the correct message has been received and to clarify misunderstandings in person.

Telephone Communication - Even though the telephone is a commonly used communication tool, much thought should be put into making effective telephone calls. Here are some useful tips:

- Have a plan for what you want to say before making the call.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Pay complete attention to the call – don't do other things that will distract your attention.
- Try standing during a call; you will speak more clearly and emphatically.
- If you initiate the call, be sensitive to the fact that you may have interrupted something important at the other end.
- Schedule the call ahead of time, if possible.
- Do not waste the receiver's time with idle chatter. Make your points, listen to the other person and get off the phone.
- Plan your message in case you get a voice mailbox instead of the person you called. Voice mail can be a real time-saver, but the lack of two-way communication, even with traded messages, cuts effectiveness dramatically. Request verbal or e-mail confirmation to ensure receipt of your message.
- It is very important to speak clearly and slowly when recording a voice-mail message. Nothing is more irritating than a voice-mail message from someone who rushes through his/her name and phone number incoherently. Repeat this information at a deliberately slow speed.
- When you are out of the office for a day or more, change your voice mail message to let callers know when you will be back and an alternate number for immediate attention.

Meetings - Meetings are held for the purpose of communicating. A meeting can be a very efficient method of communication since a number of people are involved.

A PM typically must attend meetings called and controlled by someone else. Prepare for such meetings beforehand and actively participate. Use the time well, by learning as much as possible, contributing to the achievement of the meeting objectives and sharing knowledge and concerns.

A PM is also in a position to call and control their own meetings. First, avoid the impulse to call a meeting. When a meeting is proposed always ask, "Is this meeting necessary?" Impromptu meetings often accomplish very little. There are different purposes for meetings. Some meetings are purely informative, some are problem solving; others are to coordinate or arrive at a decision. Know the purpose of the meeting and tailor the meeting approach accordingly.

Group communication skills are important for the manager of a meeting. Actively judge both the verbal and non-verbal reactions of participants during the meeting. Be sensitive to both positive and negative reactions. Do not allow personal antagonism or hostility to sidetrack the meeting. Control the meeting with tact and diplomacy. Remember that everyone is very sensitive to the leader, so avoid sending verbal and non-verbal messages that can be misinterpreted. Under no circumstance should the leader argue or get defensive..

The following suggestions will help a PM lead an effective meeting:

- A Meeting should have specific objectives, a published agenda, and a set time limit. Distribute this information to participants prior to the meeting so that they can come prepared.
- Tailor the invited participants to the objective of the meeting. Do not waste people's time if their attendance is not necessary.
- Arrange for a moderator (usually the PM) responsible for maintaining focus on the objectives, staying on the agenda, ensuring that everyone participates and keeping to the time schedule.
- Start the meeting on time, even though some participants are late.
- When the objectives are met, end the meeting. There is nothing wrong with ending early. When the scheduled time limit is reached, the meeting should end even though the agenda is not completed. Once participants learn that time limits will be enforced, they will start coming on time and limiting discussions to what is important.
- The moderator should not allow one individual to dominate the discussion. It is equally important to draw out quiet or reserved participants.
- Arrange for someone other than the moderator to take minutes. It is a good idea to allow the moderator to review a draft of the minutes before final publication and distribution to all participants.

Written Communication - The best PMs are skilled writers. Most of what they do must eventually be communicated in writing. E-mail, letters and reports are all very important to good project management. A good writer will make these documents meaningful, concise and clear so they will have impact. The following tips may be helpful:

- Sometimes letters should be very formal, such as letters of transmittal. Keep these short and to the point.
- When appropriate, make letters personal in tone. Keep the message focused on your objective, make your case, summarize and clearly state your conclusion or recommendation.
- If the purpose of your letter is to get a decision, make that very obvious.
- Avoid writing letters more than two pages in length. The recipient will lose interest and your letter will be ineffective.
- Memoranda are usually more informal than letters and are intended for internal use.
- Although it may be therapeutic to write a letter or memo when you are angry, it is not a good idea to send it until you have had time to reflect on the situation. Correspondence written in a negative frame of mind will often later be regretted.
- All project correspondence is a public record, so do not put anything in writing that you would not want to see in the local newspaper.
- E-mail is perhaps the most frequently used method for communicating about routine day-to-day business. It may be misused, however, because of its simplicity and convenience. It is just as appropriate to use good grammar and spelling, and to avoid slang, non-standard acronyms and abbreviations in e-mail as it is with other forms of written communication.
- Remember that e-mail is an official communication and a public record; so do not send inappropriate or non-business-related messages. E-mail is not private.
- E-mail is part of the official record of a project. Information that you would not wish to defend in court should not be put in writing, e-mail or otherwise.
- Generally, the same considerations that apply to any written communication should also apply to e-mail.
- PMs should avoid using memos or group e-mails as their primary means of communicating with team members. Although these are necessary sometimes, face-to-face meetings are much better.
- Reports should be carefully planned and follow a logical outline. Every conclusion and recommendation should be supported by the report content.

- Lengthy reports should include an executive summary and a table of contents.

Poor sentence structure, poor grammar, misspellings and inconsistencies in style are examples of sloppy writing. Such errors send a very negative message about the quality of one's work. Ways to improve writing skills include attending a business-writing seminar and seeking assistance with editing work.

Requests for Public Records - As an agency of the State of Florida, FDOT must make public records available to any person requesting to view them. Section 4 of ***Procedure No. 050-020-025, [Records Management and Distribution](#)***, explains how such requests are to be handled. The following records are exempt from this procedure:

- Financial statements from contractors received in response to invitations to bid or requests for proposals
- Social Security Numbers
- Personal information of Motor Carrier Compliance law enforcement officers
- Information about family members of specified officials
- Information concerning ongoing legal proceedings may be exempt. The district counsel should be consulted before fulfilling such requests.

Procedure No. 050-020-026, [Distribution of Exempt Public Documents Concerning Department Structures and Security System Plans](#), exempts records related to structural plans of Florida's infrastructure from requests for public records. The procedure recognizes that many non-FDOT employees such as consultants, local governments and utilities need access to these records. Records custodians must use discretion in these cases and maintain a record of the individuals who received copies of such information.

Detailed information on public records can be found in Appendix A, Public Records, of this handbook.

Listening - Of all of the communications skills, listening is perhaps the least mastered. Whatever the situation, the good listener forces himself to concentrate.

If you are framing your response while the other person is speaking, then you are not listening effectively. Try to understand the speaker's feelings and the content of his/her message. Test listening skills by paraphrasing the speaker's main points before making a response. Doing so does not necessarily imply agreement with the speaker, but it will demonstrate that the listener is paying attention, and it may clear up misunderstandings. Be perceptive enough to note what is not being said, such as evasion of relevant points, the truth, or some fact that the speaker wishes to avoid.

Most managers need a great deal of practice and self-awareness before they can be truly effective listeners. Effective listening calls for a sharp change in the usual pace of conversation and requires both self-discipline and humility, because the focus is on others rather than oneself.

Media Relations - District policies vary, so the PM must know the local policies concerning dealing with the media. The district Public Information Office (PIO) should be informed about any requests from the media, and the PM should coordinate any media communications with that office.

On projects that are likely to have media attention, the FDOT PM should meet with the PIO at the outset to understand clearly how this issue should be handled. It is likely that the PIO will be involved throughout the life of a project. The Consultant PM should not respond to any media requests before clearing them with the FDOT PM. When the media interviews a PM, he should use it as an opportunity to inform the public about the project and to support FDOT goals. **Figure 1.2**, Media Dos and Don'ts, offers some guidelines for dealing with the media.

Media DOs...	Media DON'Ts...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Find out what the press wants ◆ Understand ground rules ◆ Have an agenda ◆ Stay on message ◆ Be sensitive to deadlines ◆ Expect to have your answers misconstrued ◆ Expect to be quoted ◆ Be respectful ◆ Ask to review manuscript or video before it goes final ◆ Suggest a better question if a poor question is asked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Speak off the record ◆ View the press as the enemy ◆ Lie (it's OK to say "I don't know") ◆ Try to "snow" the press ◆ Use technical terms ◆ Get caught up in your own brilliance ◆ Act arrogantly

Figure 1.2, Media Dos and Don'ts

Involvement of the General Public and Transportation Partners -

Involvement of the general public and transportation partners is an important aspect of all FDOT activities, as expressed in **Policy No. 000-525-050, Public Involvement**. Keeping transportation partners and the general public informed and involved is a continuing challenge. One of the most common fatal flaws with delayed or abandoned projects is the lack of understanding and support by the public and other groups and agencies. Partner and public involvement is part of every step in the development of transportation improvements. Public involvement is not just about holding meetings or issuing press releases. It is about planning and implementing a comprehensive, integrated program to involve the public in transportation decisions.

In addition to the training, the FDOT Environmental Management Office (EMO) has published the Department's [Public Involvement Handbook](#). This handbook provides proven techniques and methods to encourage meaningful public participation in the development of a transportation system that will meet the needs of Florida residents and visitors. It provides clear guidance for developing and implementing effective activities designed to get the public involved in the transportation decision-making process. It also includes a variety of methods and techniques to involve the public in the development of specific plans, programs or projects for those affected by the proposed transportation action.

The PM must understand the importance of including others in the process and support FDOT public involvement programs. The emphasis of these efforts is slightly different at each phase of a project:

Planning - In the planning stages of a project, the emphasis is on determining what the public wants and needs and then building a consensus among transportation partners to meet the needs. The PM must work closely with local planning organizations and local agencies in this process. The challenge in planning is to interest the others in a process that involves a very long-term view.

PD&E - PD&E projects have perhaps the most intensive public involvement. They typically have a specific public involvement plan. The objective is to include the public and representative organizations in addressing very basic questions: Should this improvement be built at all? If so, what is the best alternative? PD&E public involvement is usually very effective in allowing people who are directly affected by the project to be heard. Usually the challenge is to get those who may benefit from the project but will not be directly impacted to participate.

Design - Districts have public involvement processes that frequently require specific Community Awareness Plans for specific design projects. The emphasis in design is to inform the public of the project and to solicit timely input into design details. This process usually involves close coordination with local governments.

Right of Way - By their very nature, right of way projects always involve dealing with the public. Understanding the needs of property owners, residents and businesses impacted is critical to the success of right of way projects.

Construction - Public involvement issues during construction include traffic interference, business access, noise control and duration of the work.

Whenever dealing with the public, the PM must be respectful, professional, patient and willing to take the time to explain technical issues. Keep an open mind. The public frequently identifies issues and makes excellent suggestions that may be of significant help to the project. Do not argue or get defensive.

Experience and Training

A great deal of knowledge and skill must be developed and maintained by a PM. Required skills can be grouped in three broad categories:

1. “Soft” skills, dealing with such topics as leadership, communication and ethics. Many of the topics discussed in this chapter deal with soft skills.
2. “Hard” skills, including planning, scheduling and quality control. The remainder of Part 1 of this handbook is largely devoted to hard skills. Other hard skills are implied, but not specifically covered in this handbook. For instance, the PM must have computer skills to be effective in today’s environment.
3. Phase-specific skills. Material in Part 2 of this handbook details how to manage specific project phases, such as design or construction.

The PM should develop a personalized professional development program in cooperation with his or her supervisor. It can consist of FDOT self-study training courses, professional society seminars and university-level courses. The PM should aggressively seek training and other opportunities for professional development. Perhaps the most effective way to gain knowledge and skills is through experience. This handbook can be a guide, and its users should not be afraid to ask questions.

The PM will want to learn who the key individuals are in all the support offices of a district. The information in Chapter 5 of this handbook can help in this regard. Usually there are key staff-level people who will have more time to spend sharing knowledge than the office head. Spending some time with these people and learning from them will enhance professional growth. The PM can also develop a personal network of help and information. Because there is constant turnover in any organization, the experienced PM as well as the new PM must work at developing and maintaining their networks. The Consultant PM should develop similar networks of people within their firms, business associates and FDOT. The FDOT and the consultant PM should take advantage of associations and learn from the knowledge and experience of each other.

The best source of knowledge and help for both new FDOT PM and consultant PM is an experienced PM. Find one and develop an informal mentoring relationship.