

A Guide for the Deputy Project Manager



Overview

The Deputy Project Manager is a critical role, not only for your Project but for SHARE as a whole. Enterprise computing professionals are more important than ever for the survival of SHARE, and for the growth of the platform. SHARE is more than just the two major conferences each year – SHARE is a year-round community where enterprise IT professionals can gain industry knowledge, build up their skill set and network to find solutions to benefit their organization. The Deputy Project Manager is the “go-to” volunteer for the Project Manager. As Deputy Project Manager, you are responsible for helping to lead, represent and organize the Project. This is a year-round volunteer role, so make sure you are aware of the time commitment required ahead of time.

Roles and Responsibilities

What you do

Your main responsibility is to help manage the team volunteers and to dedicate yourself to the tasks and initiatives that are assigned to you. And when the Project Manager is unable to fulfill his/her duties, you will be needed to help organize the team(s), lead meetings, set up tasks and deadlines, etc. Communicating with the team and with the Project Manager is very critical. Make sure you have everyone’s email address, and at minimum the Project Manager’s and the co-Deputy Project Manager’s phone number(s).

Delegate

Do not learn the hard way that delegating is crucial in being a successful and happy volunteer. Always remember that the team is there to help the project succeed – and they are there to work on and volunteer for what needs to get done. You need to help the Project Manager realize when things are rough and when tough decisions need to be made – either regarding the team or as a project. Be prepared to help delegate and to have things delegated to you.

What volunteers do

For your project, the core team is a huge factor in the success of the project. A project requires year-round involvement and the volunteers need to be active throughout the year. Besides the titled volunteers, I think it is important that as you go forth as a project: you need to have task-oriented volunteers rather than more titled volunteers. This will help spread the work without involving too many people at the core team level that could possibly make things more difficult when making decisions. This will also help to grow a new generation of ribbon wearers for the future of the project.

As Deputy Project Manager, you may be asked to step in to any number of roles for the team. You should be aware of your personal and time limitations as a volunteer so that you know when to delegate an assignment to another volunteer. The typical project roles include the scheduler/lab coordinator, listserv manager, member list manager, communications forum leader, mentor program leader, committee leaders, web page monitor, and Session Chair people. There may be more or less depending on the current initiatives. Make sure these roles are clear and that the volunteers and yourself are dedicated to the assigned roles and tasks. Make sure you are honest and able to work towards the goals of the project – if you can’t step up to the plate, you need to let the Project Manager know as soon as possible.

Monthly Calls

As Deputy Project Manager, you should make it a point to always attend the project's monthly calls. And in the case where the Project Manager cannot lead the call, you should be prepared to do so. In this case, prepare ahead of time by going over the agenda and making sure you are all set up to be able to host the call. During the meeting, make sure there is a volunteer to take meeting minutes for the call. It can make for a hectic call if you have to host and take notes at the same time. The note taker will send you the minutes after the call.

Documents

There are many important documents that have been collected over the years. As Deputy Project Manager, make sure you have the ones that are important for completing your tasks and initiatives. Ask the Project Manager for any document that you may be missing. And if there's something you were wondering about what your project did or discussed at SHARE in xxxx, just ask and the Project Manager will probably have something archived.

Team Calls

You should try to be on all the team calls between SHAREs. There will be quite a few immediately following SHARE and many in the month before SHARE. Help the Project Manager keep the volunteer team honest and responsible for their tasks. Make sure goals, deadlines and tasks are clear, and bring up any questions or ideas that you have. In the case where you will suddenly have to host the team call, make sure you are clear about agenda details and what the Project Manager wants to accomplish on the call.

Scheduling

Before each SHARE conference, work with the Project Manager and the team to arrange the schedule for your project's sessions. The earlier you begin the initial planning, the better. Help to collect ideas and try to recommend speakers. When you are thinking of sessions, focus on new content presented by new mainframers. Don't be afraid to say no to ideas that you feel are not appropriate or are not interesting in the slightest! Help the Project Manager prioritize session ideas because there may not be enough slots for all of them. If someone has a session idea, ask them to flesh out a rough abstract for the session.

The Conference Event

Before the Conference

Among the core team, be sure you know who is attending. Know how to contact the other volunteers. Make sure they know how to contact you. Visit the Volunteer Resource Center web page for Conference related information: <http://www.share.org/Volunteers/VolunteerResourceCenter/tabid/400/Default.aspx>.

Help the Project Manager decide where the Project Dinner will be held. Project dinners are not required, but they are a great way to get to know project members, recruit volunteers, and to get a better idea of what your project goals should be. Be sure a volunteer is designated to take care of the details – and this could be you. Volunteer to help the Project Manager prepare the necessary project documents: the signup sheet, the project highlights flyer, the chairperson document, the volunteer award, the project opening, etc.

Plan your SHARE schedule. As Deputy Project Manager, it is very important that you know where and when you need to be. You should plan to be at all the SHARE receptions, Team Time, your project's sessions if possible, the general session, the project dinner, the Program opening session and the volunteer lunch.

At the Conference

Find out who is there. Sometimes a volunteer or speaker gets wrapped up in their own life and ignores telling you their plans changed and they are not attending. Sometimes weather is the unavoidable cause. Go to registration and collect your badge, ribbon(s), and Speaker pin. You should always be listed as a speaker, if not a full session of your own then at the Project Opening.

Attend Team Time along with your Project Manager. Offer to take notes, so that you can pass information to the volunteers who were unable to attend. Attend the Program Keynote to learn about any SHARE-generic information not presented at Team Time. This could be listed as an administrative session, a working session, a z/OS keynote, or even a Program Opening. Attend your project's planning session and working session. Volunteer to assist at the SHARE Receptions. Attend the Meet The Projects Reception.

Help to make sure the project banner and signup sheets are set up. Claim a table, and set it up. Better yet, delegate this important task to a volunteer! Attend sessions. You did come to learn, right? But at the same time, try to keep an eye on your project's sessions. Keep your ears open for comments, good or bad. Solicit topic ideas. Recruit for volunteers, for chair person, for speaker, for helpers, etc.

After the Conference

Discuss with the Project Manager any feedback you have or received regarding any session or volunteer at the conference.

In between Conference Events

Remember that SHARE is more than just the two major conferences each year – SHARE is a year-round community. Help the Project Manager to keep the momentum going on the important to-do items, plus the momentum for the whole project.

- Help with recruiting volunteers – you never know when a volunteer will decide to fall off the planet and you will need to do something to make sure the tasks he/she was responsible for are taken care of.
- Keep trolling for topics.
- Keep trolling for speakers.

Don't let the team volunteers get lazy. Help the Project Manager stay on top of initiatives and goals – we all get busy, and that's why we work as a team. Sometimes delegating is hard because in order to pass off a task, there may be a lot of training and explaining involved, so it seems easier to just do it yourself. So be prepared to do some training, but also be prepared for the volunteer to put his/her own spin on the initiative/task. It may come out better than you initially thought. I know we are all busy, but you need to remember that you play an important role on an important project. You were selected to be a Deputy Project Manager for a reason and you need to be able to fulfill your volunteer duties throughout the year.

If there is a period of time where you will be out of town or swamped at work, remember to communicate this to the core team. If there is a task or initiative that you do not feel confident that you can complete or take on any longer, you need to let the Project Manager know. If there is a new initiative that you would like to lead, or if you would like to volunteer for a current initiative, let the Project Manager know. Or if you feel you are no longer able to fulfill the role as Deputy Project Manager, you must be willing to let the Project Manager know immediately. When in doubt, ask for help. And be prepared to come to the realization that sometimes, things just won't get done. Things will go on and it's important to realize that you did your best.