

A Guide for the Project Officer



Overview

The Project Officer is an important role, not only for the 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 Project Officers are the “go-to” volunteers for the Deputy Project Manager. As a Project Officer, you must be dedicated to the team and be willing to help with the tasks and initiatives. 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 the team and to dedicate yourself to the tasks and initiatives that are assigned to you. 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 Deputy Project Manager’s phone number(s).

Always remember that the team is there to help your project succeed – and they are there to work on and volunteer for what needs to get done. And if not, then maybe they should not be a team volunteer. If you see the Project Manager or the Deputy Project Manager becoming overwhelmed, volunteer to help take over some tasks. Be prepared to have things delegated to you and to help determine the best person for the task.

What volunteers do

For the 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 we go forth as a project: we need to have task-oriented volunteers rather than more titled volunteers. I think 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 a Project Officer, 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 say no to an assignment. Make sure all assignments and deadlines are very clear. 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 a Project Officer, you should make it a point to always attend the monthly calls. Help the Project Manager stir up conversation and interest in the topics being covered. If you can, 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, so this is much appreciated.

Send the minutes to the Project Manager after the meeting.

Documents

There are many important project documents that have been collected over the years. As a Project Officer, 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 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.

Scheduling

Before each SHARE conference, you work with the Project Manager and the team to arrange the schedule for 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. 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 project signup sheet, the project highlights flyer, the chairperson document, the volunteer award, the project opening, etc.

Plan your SHARE schedule. As a Project Officer, 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 project planning session, 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.

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 help set it up. Attend sessions. You did come to learn, right? But at the same time, try to keep an eye on your project's sessions and keep your ear open for any comments or feedback regarding the project or sessions. 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.

- 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 your tasks and initiatives slide through the cracks. 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 Project Officer 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 Project Officer, you must be willing to let the Project Manager know immediately.

Don't always wait to be asked to help. Communication is so critical, so please try to always be aware of the current project goals and deadlines. Help the Project Manager stay on top of initiatives – we all get busy, and that's why we work as a team.

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.

In Closing

Remember that it is a privilege not a right to be a Project Officer. You are a ribbon wearer for a reason and not only is the team lucky to have you on board, but you are lucky to play an important role on an amazing team. Every once in a while, let the other team members know how much their work and dedication is appreciated. A few kind words may go a long way as a token of appreciation