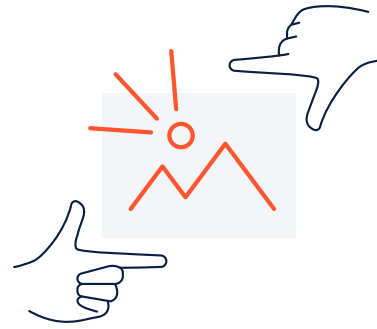


3.1 TECHNIQUE - COMMON VOCABULARY OVER COMMON TOOLING

Define your project's what, why & how



Oftentimes the “what, why and how” of a project lives in a few people’s minds. These questions are crucial context for every team member, stakeholder and anyone you ask for feedback.

How to set it up

Step 1. Gather a group of people who oversee, contribute to and lead projects across the organization. Make sure to get a diversity of tenures, roles and departments represented. Ask everyone to come with an example of the best project they’ve been on/observed and the worst.

Step 2. Using a digital whiteboard tool (like Trello, Mural or Miro), setup two columns to record the “Commonalities of the best projects” and the “commonalities of the worst projects.”

Step 3. Give every participant 2 minutes to share the details of the “best” project example. While they are sharing, write down qualities of that project that stand out to you. Focus on operations/processes over subject matter and talent.

Step 4. Spend 10 minutes as a group proposing common operational qualities of the “best” projects. Use your digital whiteboard to record your collective list. It’s okay to be exhaustive, you’ll cull this list later.

Step 5. Repeat Step 3 discussing and note-taking on the qualities of the “worst” project example.

Step 6. Repeat Step 4 summarizing the operational commonalities of “worst” project examples.

Step 7. Give everyone 3 votes in each category, best and worst, and ask everyone to vote for the most salient qualities of each category of project.

Step 8. Use the results of the voting in Step 7, brainstorm what questions every project should answer before kicking off. For bonus points, create a digital repository of all project kick-off docs so that they are discoverable across the organization.

Variation

If you're keen to skip the creation process, try the [Project Poster all Atlassian teams use in Confluence](#) or in wherever you document your projects [via the Project Poster template](#).

Anti-pattern

Don't make the pre-project checklist so long it's burdensome for teams. They won't use it if it's more than 10 questions, trust us.