



/employee interview

Winifred Roggekamp

*brainstorming with the customer

As a project manager, Winifred Roggekamp sets the boundaries of a project. For example in a workshop, together with the future users. His technical background remains indispensable for his role as project manager. "You need to know what you are talking about."

"I started out as an embedded software programmer, but I pretty soon moved up to project leader. That involves managing a project team, handling daily affairs and contributing ideas on content. I recently became a project manager, which means I have final responsibility for the project. I now deal with overarching matters, finances and contacts with the customer. Together with the project leaders, I make sure that projects run smoothly. Beside management skills, you also need technical know-how in order to do the job well. Customers appreciate it if you can talk to them at the relevant level and also have answers to technical questions.

Dredgers

I am currently working on a system for monitoring dredgers. Rijkswaterstaat (the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management) has a monitoring system that records where the ships have pumped up silt, how much and where it has been dumped. But this system is old. We are currently designing a new system that is faster and more flexible. A specific issue for dredgers is how you determine the volume of slurry. Slurry is soil plus water, but you are interested in the quantity of soil that comes on board. Shipping is new territory for us. In order to get a picture of that new world, we organised a number of workshops. We made prototypes and models and presented them to the users. Together we spent a whole day talking about our ideas. New questions, tips and ideas emerged and by the end of the day, we had grown much closer together. Workshops like

these are very important to help you get up to speed. They help you to learn a lot about the customer's domain. And you involve the customer in the project team's thought processes.

Collaboration

I helped to write the quotation for the dredgers. We always do that in a quotation team, certainly on larger projects. We look at the technology together. And in terms of finances, we always make an evaluation with at least two people: do the figures add up and if not, why not? From the moment we got the project, I took responsibility for the project management. For me, the key parts of a project are the beginning and the end. I initiated the project; put together the team and I maintain contacts with the customer. This is a big project, so I work together with the project leader a lot. It is also why I attend the workshops. I review the designs: does what I am reading in the design tally with what the customer told me? After everything has been properly laid down at the start, my role diminishes. Then it is above all the project leader who keeps the project moving while I look on from the sidelines. At the end comes the testing and delivery phase. Then I go to see the customer to make sure everything has been delivered to his satisfaction. Are there still things that he wants to change? Does our solution properly match his requirements? What does he want for the future?

Organic growth

Becoming a project manager was a gradual process. In a project team, you get the responsibility that suits you and that you choose to take on. As such, I have performed all kinds of project management tasks over the years. Until at last I got so close to being a project manager that I could finally say "now I am a project manager". Personally I think that's a nice way for it to happen, growing within your role and acquiring ever more responsibility; naturally finding a place where you perform well.

/colophon

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