

PP01: Managing a team within the CRO Industry

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Quanticate

Introduction

Although I've worked within the pharmaceutical industry a number of years I have only recently started working as a manager for a CRO company. Management skills are fairly generic whichever company you work and you can attend numerous training courses which may help you to improve over time, but learning from each day is essential.

As part of this poster I will endeavour to cover the main topics which I consider important as a manager and highlight area's which are specific to working for a CRO.



The Manager

Achieving goals

- You need to ensure your team are able to achieve the goals within the defined timelines by identifying/resolving the issues you can influence along the way. Understand your influence limitations

Development

- Whilst the work is the main priority, growth/development of an individual is equally important and will enable them to succeed with confidence in all that they attempt

Management style

- It is important to be assertive in your management style, but equally important to empower others in their daily work as this is more rewarding to the individual
- Time management is crucial, although there will always many demands vying for your attention. If you're struggling with your workload prioritise your tasks to know which need immediate attention. i.e. the following 4 priority categories may help
 - Urgent: High and Low
 - Non-urgent: High and Low

The Team (including the client)

Building a team

- Arrange opportunities for the team to get to know each other and bond. Obviously this may not be possible with the client, but try to create a working relationship where you communicate well. During difficult times it's a bonded team who will pull together and deliver.

Team dynamics

- Understand your individual team personalities: What makes an individual tick?
- Relationships: How do the individual team members interact with each other? If there are issues how can these be resolved? Do certain combinations of team members bring out the best/worst in each other?
- Style preferences: We all have different personality traits and most of these can be classified under style preferences. You may not be fortunate enough to assess this formally, but identifying an individuals style up front may prevent issues later on. Also consider how this may vary depending on the potential stress levels.
A more formal way to assess this is to take an assessment such as the "Myer-Briggs Type Indicator" which looks at 4 different areas:

Myer-Briggs Type Indicator

- Where you focus your attention and energy
 - Extraversion or Introversion
- How you prefer to perceive information
 - Sensing or Intuition
- How you prefer to make decisions
 - Thinking or Feeling
- How you orient yourself to the outer world
 - Judging or Perceiving

Communication

- Be clear, concise, consistent and open in your form of communication.
- Hopefully an open communication style with your team and vice versa should minimise issues and everybody should feel encouraged to speak up.
- Communicate facts according to your audiences abilities

Organisation

- Lead by example
- Structure workload to ensure consistency

The Individual

Motivators

- Understand an individuals motivators e.g.
 - recognition of work,
 - financial,
 - desk location

Empower

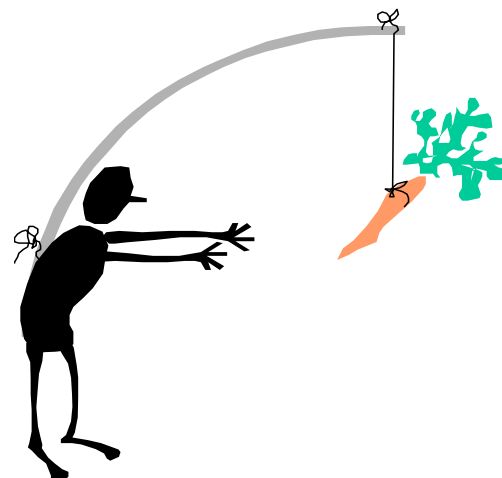
- By assigning an individual with a task to complete within a defined time window may challenge them but hopefully they will feel empowered by their responsibilities

Coaching

- Understanding motivations
- Seek opportunities, provide interesting work and understand strengths
- When less interesting work is available try to counter balance this with out opportunities where an individual is still able to develop, such as attending training courses.
- Identify areas of expertise
- Empower individuals for success (do not control)

Communication

- Provide and seek regular feedback not just at periodic reviews. This can be difficult especially during busy project periods
- Feedback should be provided throughout the year both good and bad
- Encourage an open communication style where individual would not hesitate to speak to you about anything which may be concerning them.
- Be respectful of others opinions
- Treat others as you'd expect to be treated



The Work

Understand the requirements

- Liaise with the client to understand the study
 - Therapeutic area
 - Nuances of the study
 - Obtain copies of relevant documentation e.g.
 - Time & events schedule
 - Protocol
 - RAP
 - eCRF
 - Expectations e.g.
 - Timelines
 - Workload
 - Client's estimated resources
 - Investigate similar studies (if possible) to glean information

Prioritise workload

- Plan workloads to meet all timelines and agree these in writing with the client
- Reassess timelines/workloads frequently to optimise time spent on tasks
- Breakdown the workload into smaller more manageable tasks

Resource management

- Fewer staff, tighter timelines and increasing numbers of deadlines is the increased expectation
- Flexible thinking to resourcing - utilise team members to minimise additional resource requirements
- Minimise stress levels by resourcing carefully and re-assessing frequently during peak times

Set clear expectations

- Identify a clear work plan with expectations for the team/client to agree upfront

Change management

- Ever changing requirements means reassessing, reprioritising the resource model.
- Only make changes which will have a significant impact otherwise the team/client may get confused.
- React calmly so as not to create waves

Consistency

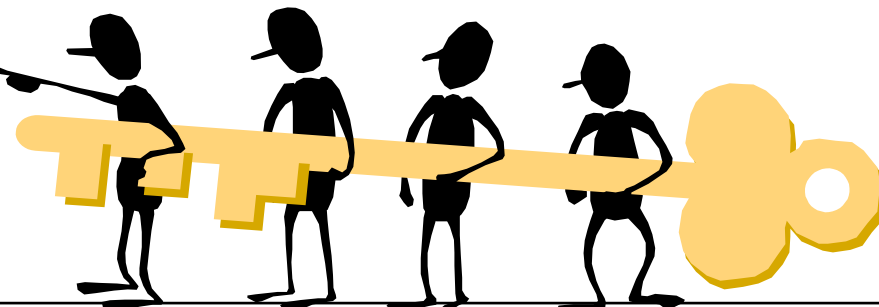
- Use standards where possible
- Re-use code, don't reinvent the wheel
- Be consistent across studies
- Be clear in the messages being shared with others



The Client

Understanding your Team, the Individuals and the Work will hopefully:

- = Successful deliveries
- = Happy client/team
- = Repeat business



In Summary

How easy is it to be a successful manager of a team?

It's not always straightforward as you cannot apply a "one model fit all" approach. It requires:

- An adaptive approach
- A clear understand of your individual team members and how they interact with each other.
- Understanding the workload and identifying a plan which will ensure you obtain the best from your team and meet all delivery timelines.
- Setting aside time to manage effectively

How easy is it to be a successful manager of a team within the CRO industry?

As well as the areas mentioned above you have to address the potential complexities of working with external clients to ensure the team are up to speed as quickly as possible, these are:

- Build a good working relationship (internally/externally)
- Working on client systems
- Client terminology about a familiar topic may differ from yours

Taking into consideration the content of this poster should help you identify what areas you need to consider when managing a team and hopefully succeed in your role.

And finally... am I successful as a manager in the CRO industry? I'd say it's work in progress. I really try to help my team and look for development opportunities but I find time the biggest restricting factor. If you can work out how to stop time please feel free to contact me

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