

A project management meeting

Listen to a project management meeting to practise and improve your listening skills.

Before listening

Do the preparation task first. Then listen to the audio and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–f) with the vocabulary (1–6).

Vocabulary

1. to collaborate
2. a value proposition
3. to work cross-functionally
4. a deliverable
5. a timeline
6. a stakeholder

Definition

- a. a benefit that a company's products or services provide to customers
- b. something that a person has agreed to have ready by a specific time
- c. someone who has an interest in the success or failure of a project or product
- d. to work together with others in order to achieve something
- e. a project schedule
- f. to work with people from different divisions or departments

Tasks

Task 1

Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

1. The project is important because ...
 - a. it will improve what the company is offering the customer.
 - b. it involves working with people from other departments.
 - c. the head office is closely following its progress.
2. Matteo is concerned about ...
 - a. communication in the team.
 - b. taking on work that they have little experience of.
 - c. not having time to work on the project.
3. Akiko is the best person to do the customer survey questionnaire because ...
 - a. she normally handles the company's marketing initiatives.
 - b. she has worked with John on similar tasks.
 - c. she has studied the subject.

4. Matteo initially asks for ...
 - a. paid overtime.
 - b. an assistant.
 - c. a reduction in his targets.
5. John's immediate response to Barbara's offer to help Matteo is ...
 - a. enthusiastic.
 - b. not entirely positive.
 - c. a definite no.
6. It's important that Matteo does the designs because ...
 - a. a client has asked specifically for him.
 - b. no one else knows how to do them.
 - c. he has the software to do them at home.

Task 2

Put the words and phrases in the correct order to make longer phrases.

1. get good clear to It's this
2. up It's to you
3. all have a lot you I know on
4. this your help appreciate on I really
5. to do So, the need first thing we is the questionnaire
6. to but I'm already I'd love up tied
7. moment I'm at overloaded the
8. OK. We'll out it It's work

Discussion

Do you have any tips for effective meetings?

Transcript

John: Thanks, everyone, for coming to this project meeting. I know we're all working cross-functionally on this project, but so far the key stakeholders are really pleased with how it's going. This project will really benefit our overall value proposition and the company as a whole.

Akiko: Thanks, John. It's an important project. It's good to be collaborating on this together.

Matteo: Yes, it's important, but we're all so busy with our regular jobs. It'll be difficult to fit things in.

John: It's OK, Matteo. We'll work it out. I know that you all have a lot on at the moment, combining this project with your regular jobs.

Barbara: So, what do we need to do, and by when?

John: Good questions, Barbara. We have a number of key deliverables to discuss so it's essential we're all in agreement about roles and responsibilities and also the timelines we're working to.

Akiko: Great.

Matteo: Yes, it's good to get this clear.

John: So, the first thing we need to do is design the customer survey questionnaire. In my experience, this is best done through an online survey tool.

Akiko: That sounds like a great idea. I'm glad you have experience with this.

John: Yeah, we've done something similar on previous projects.

Matteo: So will you do that, John?

John: I'd love to but I'm already tied up managing this project, and my line manager, Kate, has agreed that I should focus on the timelines, reporting and financial management. I'd like Akiko to lead on the questionnaire. You learned about this on your marketing and PR course, didn't you?

Akiko: Yeah, happy to take it on.

John: Thanks, Akiko. Next thing is we need the new designs finalised. Matteo, you said you could do this in a couple of weeks, right?

Matteo: Yeah, I know, but that was last month, and then nothing happened. I'm overloaded at the moment and my line manager won't be happy if I don't hit my targets. Sorry, but this project has to take lower priority.

John: Hmm. I see. I can understand the challenge you're facing. I've been in that situation before. So, what can we do to help you hit those targets and free up some time?

Matteo: That's a good question. If I could get a slight reduction in my targets, I could use the extra time that would create to finish the designs for this project.

John: OK. We might not be able to get your targets reduced, but I'll see what we can do.

Barbara: How about if I support Matteo there? I know his job well and I have some capacity at the moment. I can help him meet his targets so he can free up some time to finish the designs for this project.

Matteo: Could you, Barbara?

John: Hmm. I'm not sure if it's fair to ask Barbara to be supporting Matteo in his regular job so he can work on this project.

Barbara: It's up to you, but I'm happy to support Matteo with his regular work, just for a couple of weeks so he can create the designs. He's the only one with the expertise.

John: Yeah, you're right. OK, thanks a lot, Barbara. I appreciate it. Matteo, would that work for you?

Matteo: Yes, that would work. Thanks. OK, you've made it easy for me to say yes.

John: OK, then that's settled. Thanks, both. I really appreciate your help in this. So, can you get them done by the end of the month?

Matteo: Yes, that should be no problem.

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. a
3. f
4. b
5. e
6. c

Task 1

1. a
2. c
3. c
4. c
5. b
6. b

Task 2

1. It's good to get this clear
2. It's up to you
3. I know you all have a lot on
4. I really appreciate your help on this
5. So, the first thing we need to do is the questionnaire
6. I'd love to but I'm already tied up
7. I'm overloaded at the moment
8. It's OK. We'll work it out