Do's and Dont's in volunteer projects from an Austrian point of view

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Interactive exercise: a short guide to project management fails

A smooth project with no hiccups or bumps along the road is - let's face it - boring. What you are looking for is some stupid home-made mistakes (that could be avoided but were not) which generate a little challenge here and there to solve.

Everything is running too smoothly? Your team is bored? You are just about to organize an impeccable project? Not to worry! Here comes a digest of mistakes for you to chose from!

Just follow the few simple instructions in this guide and and you don't have to worry about running the perfect project ever again. Pick the mistakes that seem most sexy and challenging for you and your team!

- **Let the project take care of itself**

  Everybody loves the idea but not enough to be responsible for it and take ownership. No problem - good ideas will fly whether you have designated project managers or not!

- **Ignore hidden costs in the budget**

  Perfect to enhance your stress level especially when the budgetary item for unforeseen expenses is too tightly planned or non-existent.

- **Start too late**

  A classic but it never gets old as it bears so many possibilities for severe problems. It also supports your decision making process, as you usually have fewer options when planning last minute.

Project plan example "Wiki Takes Northern Tyrol" - Basics

"I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I know)
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who." - Rudyard Kipling, in "The Elephant's Child"

- What - what are your goals with this project?
- Why - why are you trying to achieve the goals?
- Who - who is taking part in this project?
- Where - where is this project supposed to happen (if applicable)
- When - when do you want to do this project
- How - how are you going to achieve the goals? What do you need to succeed?

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Project plan example "Wiki Takes Northern Tyrol"

- What? Goal: To achieve at least 70% coverage of monuments with pictures in the region
    - "Need to have": Pictures of cultural and natural monuments, adding descriptions to monuments lists
    - "Nice to have": Other articles of topics in that region without pictures
    - "Not to have": Monuments in other areas of Austria, pictures of mountain tops, alpine cabins
- Why? Compared to other areas in Austria the coverage was very low
- Who? A core team of 3 organisers plus at least 2 more photographers
- When? On a long weekend in June 2015 (four days in total)
- How? That's the difficult part...

Project page: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProjekt_%C3%96sterreichische_Denkmallisten/Wiki_Takes_Nordtiroler_Oberland_2015

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Project plan example "Wiki Takes Northern Tyrol" - The How

- Have a kickoff meeting that gets everyone on the same page concerning the six questions
- Draft a project plan that will address all your needs within the project. In this case, a wikitable was sufficient:

Task description	*Responsible*	*Should be done by*	*Was done by*	*Status*	*Comments*
Book hotel rooms in Imst	Susi	19/04/2015	10/04/2015	✔	Hotel rooms reserved for 4 persons
Organise Lunch	Philip	02/06/2015		✖	Was left to the individual teams to organise themselves

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Project plan example "Wiki Takes Northern Tyrol" - The How, Part 2

- Draft a budget according to the project plan
    - Usually includes Travel costs, accommodation, equipment, other expenses
    - Keep the original draft and compare it to the actual costs in order to pinpoint where the costs were lower or higher than anticipated

- Set up meetings following the kickoff in a semi-regular fashion (when in doubt, do it regularly)
    - Meeting every month at the WMAT office, starting in February with the kickoff
    - Always agree in the meeting on a date for the next meeting
    - Take notes of what you discussed and change your project plan accordingly
    - Be mindful of who needs to be at a meeting and who doesn't - not every aspect will be discussed at every meeting, making it rather boring for some project members

Project page: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProjekt_%C3%96sterreichische_Denkmallisten/Wiki_Takes_Nordtiroler_Oberland_2015

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Project plan example "Wiki Takes Northern Tyrol" - The How, Part 3

- Document your experiences
    - Plan the project on Wikipedia - project members tend to look at their watchlist quite often
    - Make sure everyone knows what to do after the project (upload pictures, add the right template for every picture, etc.)
    - Postmortem documentation: Combination of evaluating the numbers/results on Wikipedia and Commons as well as a discussion in the "Lessons Learned" format
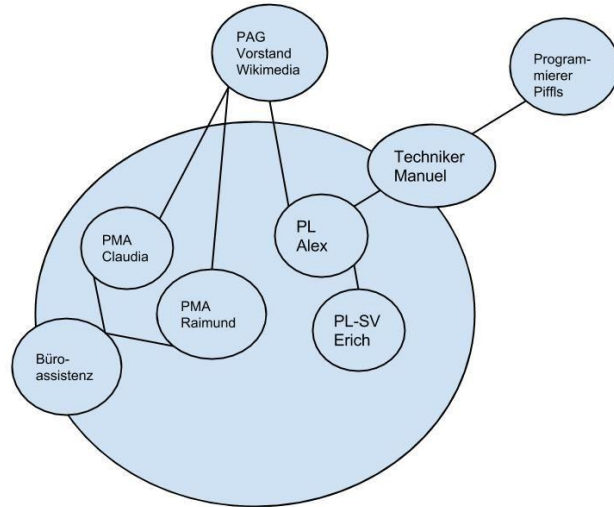
Project page: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProjekt_%C3%96sterreichische_Denkmallisten/Wiki_Takes_Nordtiroler_Oberland_2015

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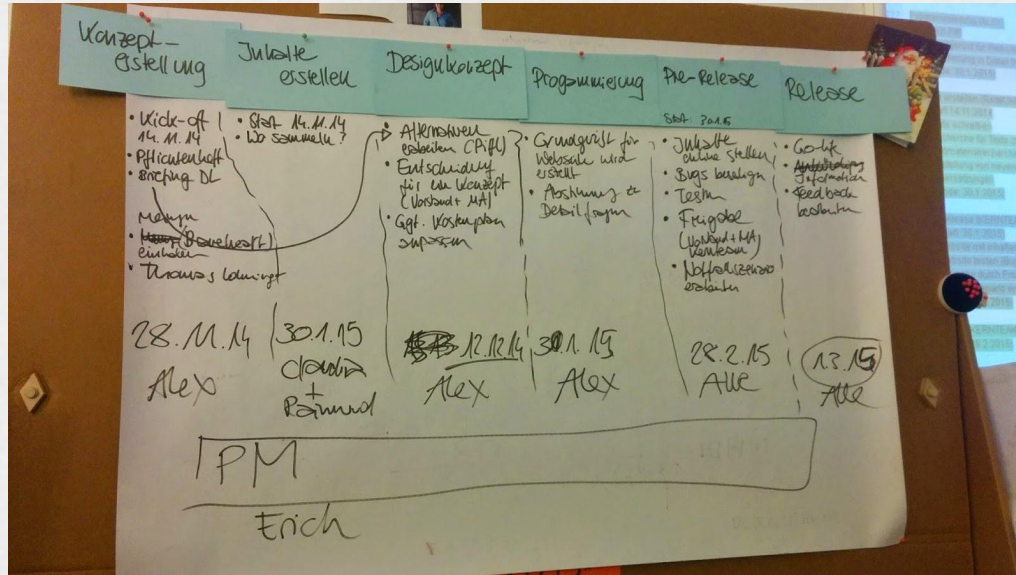# Case study "WMAT Website relaunch": project team

4. Organigramm

Project team consisting of

volunteers (project leader, project manager, server management),

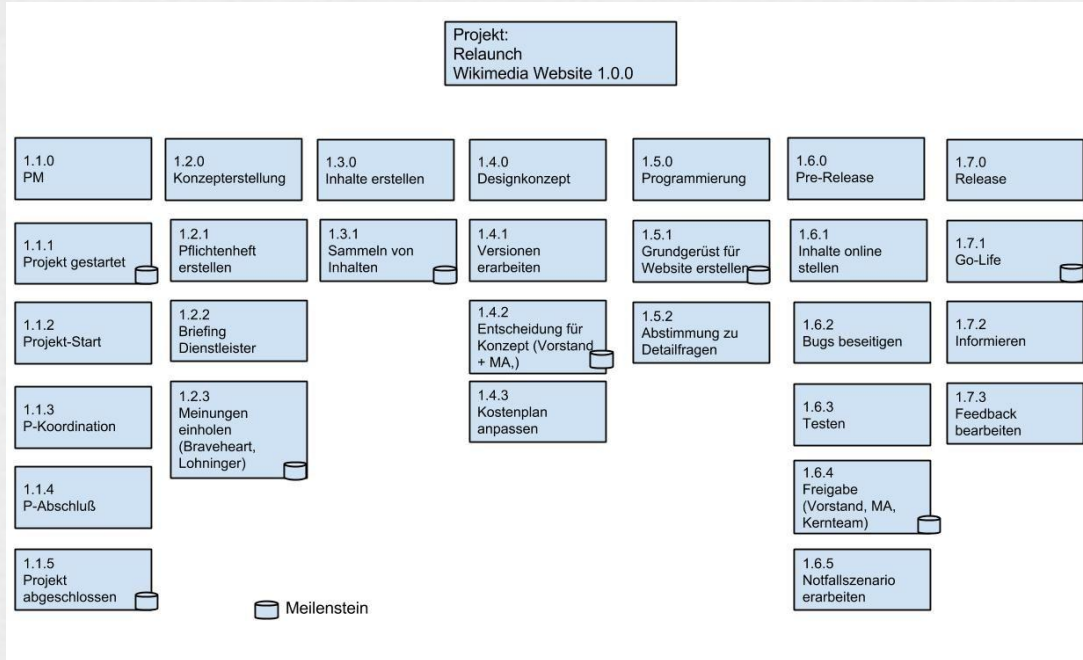staff (responsible for various work packages), and

contractors (programming)

Case study "WMAT Website relaunch": kick-off and planning

Kick-off meeting to get to know each other and to generate the foundation for the concept, scope statement, and project plan (1 full day)

Case study "WMAT Website relaunch": project plan

Project plan and work breakdown structure:

Clear responsibilities and timelines for all the work packages

Case study "WMAT Website relaunch": scope statement

Scope statement content

- **Main objectives:** New website for WMAT by March 1, 2015
- **Key features:** Platform with interesting content for key stakeholders (donors, partners)
- **Secondary objectives:** Usability, design
- **Non-objectives**: Not a replacement for the members wiki or Wikipedia project pages
- **Start date:** November 14, 2014
- **Project duration:** 4.5 months
- **Budget:** 3,000 EUR approved by the board
- **Project manager:** Alexander Wagner

Case study "WMAT Website relaunch": communication

Constant communication and documentation

Adapt project plan and timeline when necessary

Project closure and lessons learned

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Helpful tools

- Project planning
  - Easy to use
    - Trello (http://trello.com/)
    - Excel/Spreadsheets
  - Advanced
    - Phabricator (https://phabricator.wikimedia.org/)
    - ProjectLibre (http://www.projectlibre.org/)

Thanks!