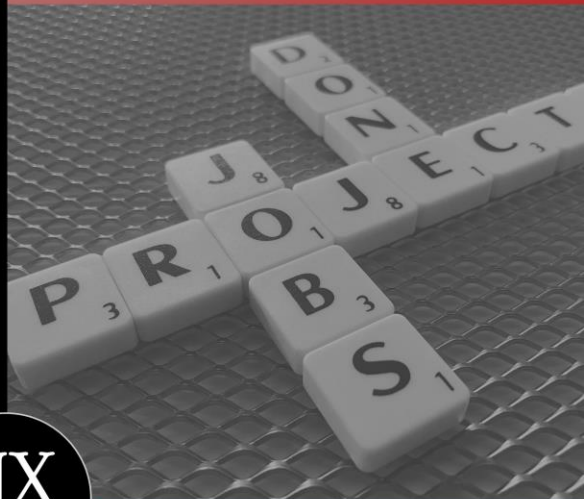


# SIX-WORD LESSONS FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

100 Lessons to  
Make You a Better  
Project Manager



Lonnie Pacelli

*Six-Word Lessons for Project Managers*

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**PROJECT MANAGERS**

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Legend has it that Ernest Hemingway was challenged by some friends to write a story in six words. Hemingway responded to the challenge with the following story: *For sale: baby shoes, never worn.*

The story tickles the imagination. Why were the shoes never worn? Were they too small? Did the baby die? Was the baby not able to wear shoes? Any of these are plausible explanations left up to the reader's imagination.

This style of writing has a number of aliases: postcard fiction, flash fiction, micro fiction, and sudden fiction. A dear friend of mine, Tom Fowler, introduced me to this style of writing over a cup of coffee. I was entranced with the style of writing and started thinking about how this extreme brevity of writing could apply in today's micro-burst communication culture of text messages, tweets, and wall posts. Thus the inspiration for **Six-Word Lessons**.

In **Six-Word Lessons** you'll get a bevy of wisdom nuggets with a practical explanation of how to apply the nuggets in your day-to-day routine. Rather than pore through pages and pages of content trying to mine nuggets, **Six-Word Lessons** gives them to you straight up; no strainer needed.

My hope is that you're able to mine some great take-aways from **Six-Word Lessons** and improve how you do things day-in and day-out. Tell me how it's impacted you at [story@6wordlessons.com](mailto:story@6wordlessons.com).

# **Teams that Gel Deliver Once Again**

82

## Biased PMs: can I trust you?

A PM who shows favor toward a particular person or group risks alienating the rest of the team.

PMs *must* demonstrate objectivity in their team interactions, particularly in multi-organizational teams.

# 83

Great teams stand  
unified in public.

Team members that publicly bad-mouth decisions undermine the credibility of the entire team.

PMs need to ensure an environment of healthy debate while reinforcing the need to support decisions publicly.

84

## Poor performers must feel the heat.

Team members who don't meet commitments risk destroying the morale and performance of others.

PMs have to publicly and professionally hold team members accountable for delivery.

85

“Not my job”  
isn’t an excuse.

Allowing a project to fail because a team member felt something “wasn’t his job” is a pitiful excuse for failure.

PMs should reinforce a “Let’s pitch in” ethic to get something done; just avoid repeatedly bailing out a nonperformer.



86

## Political animals blow with the wind.

Some team members tend to focus more on politics and personal advancement than project success.

Know who is playing politics. Work to keep them focused on delivery but remove them if they won't cooperate.

87

## Empowered leaders can't forget to lead.

Team leaders can either be autocratic in decision making, or in the spirit of empowerment, not drive decisions.

PMs should empower the team to make decisions and own their work, but make tie-breaker decisions when needed.

88

Team meets regularly.  
Project forges ahead.

Teams that don't meet regularly to discuss project issues, risks and status tend to play tug of war.

Have regular status meetings where the team discusses the project, its problems, and how to push forward.

89

Laughter is the best  
project medicine.

Teams that bear the weight of the world on their shoulders and don't enjoy a joke are more likely to fail.

PMs need to promote an environment of work balanced with a bit of fun to keep the team motivated and excited.

90

Share the praise,  
bear the brunt.

PMs who hoard praise, then throw team members under the failure bus don't earn the respect of the team.

PMs must openly share the praise when something good happens and accept accountability for bad stuff.



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