

OSLOMET

Seminar 2

Research Project Leadership – Introductory Course

15.06.2023

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Groups

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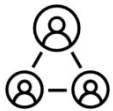
Program

09:00	Welcome
09:05	Project leadership – best practice part II
09:45	Break
10:00	Home assignments – Group work
11:30	Lunch and walk and talk ML
12:30	Preventing and handling conflicts
13:30	Break
13:45	Home assignment – Group work
15:00	Break
15:15	Time management and requirements at Oslo MET
16:00	End of program

Game Rules

- **Share personal experiences – as important as theoretical perspectives**

- "Confidentiality"



- Critical and constructive approach
- Processes are critical – participate actively and be on time
- Shared responsibility for the outcome



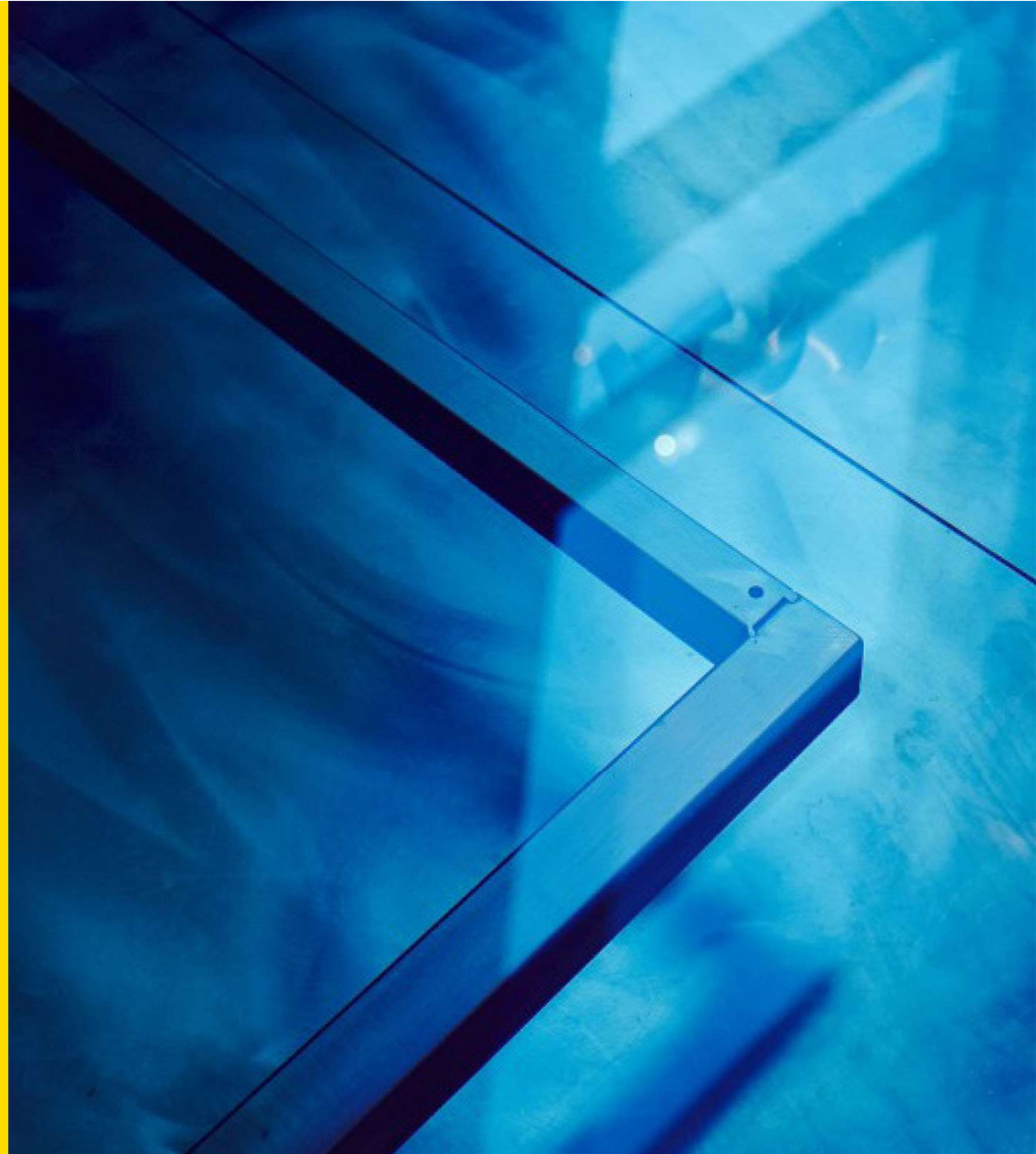
- Brief, concise input in plenary
- Time constraints – may be necessary to interrupt and move on
- Mobile phones and emails only during breaks

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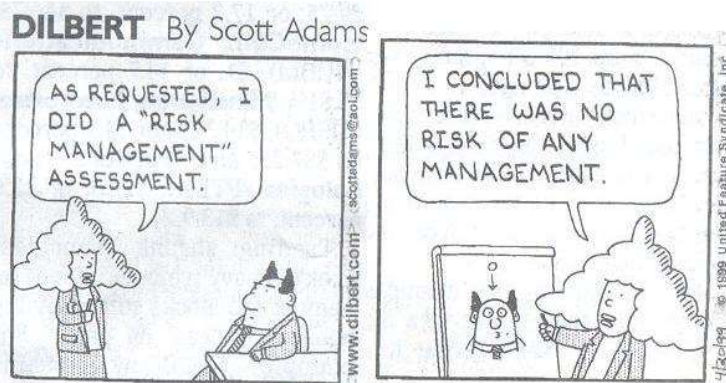
Project leadership III

- Risk

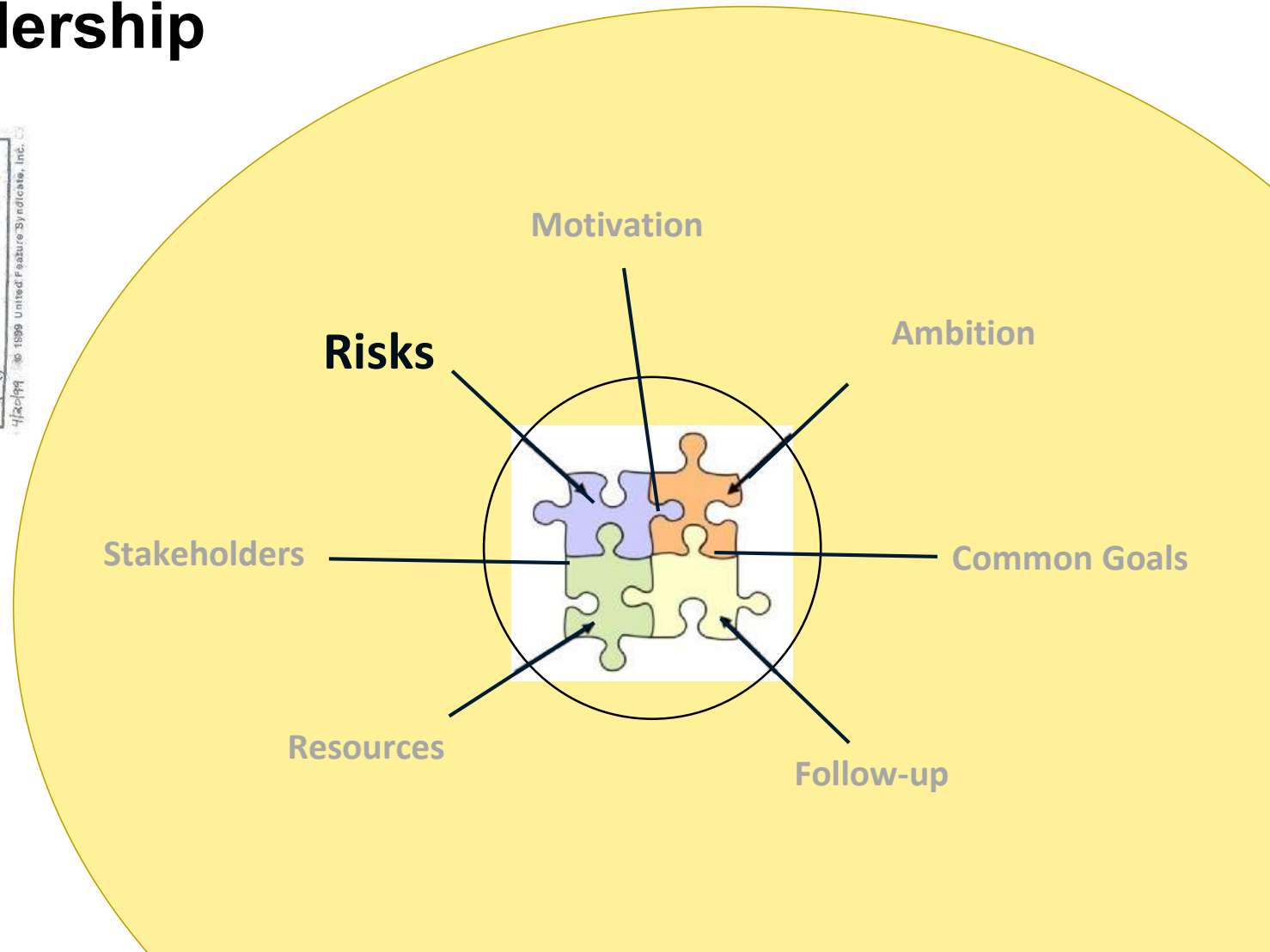
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Project leadership



A **project risk** is an uncertain event that may or may not occur during a **project**.



Definitions of the term "uncertainty"

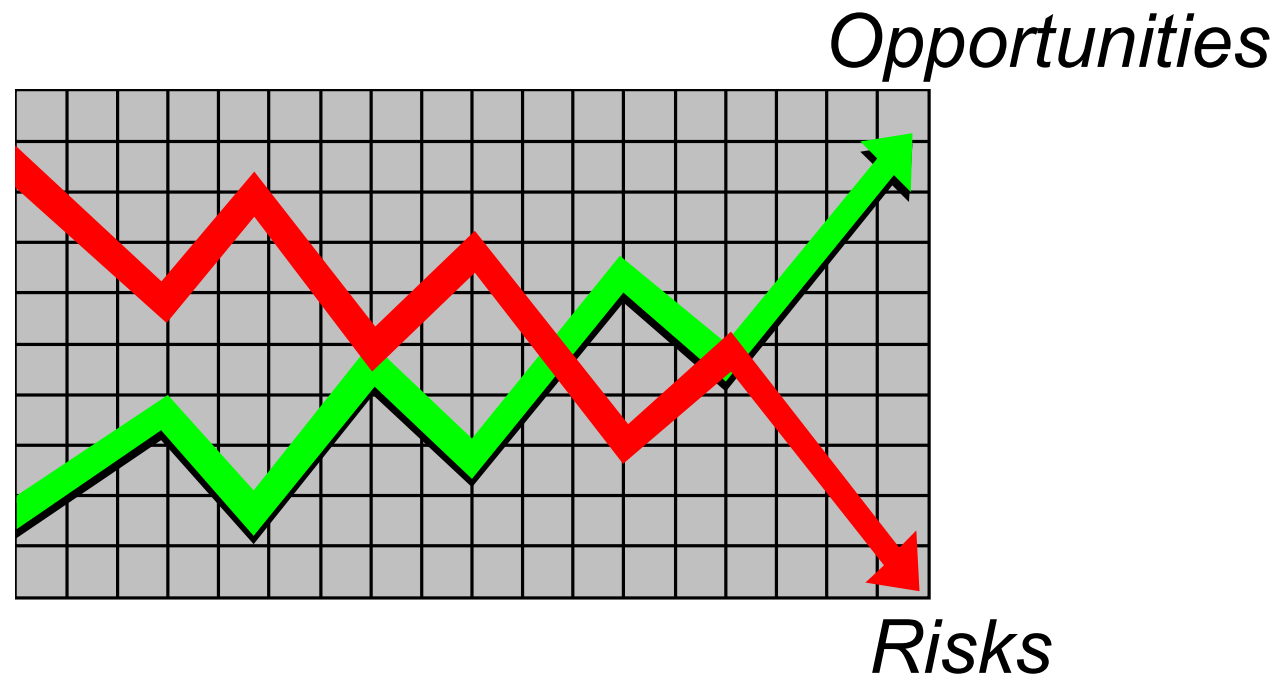
- The difference between the *information required* to perform the task safely and the *information possessed* by the organization (Galbraith, 1979)
- All possible outcomes of an element as a result of *incomplete information*
- Perceived uncertainty is the difference between the *knowledge required* and the *knowledge possessed* (information and competence) (Kolltveit og Reve, 1998)

"Uncertainty" is an umbrella term with two varieties:

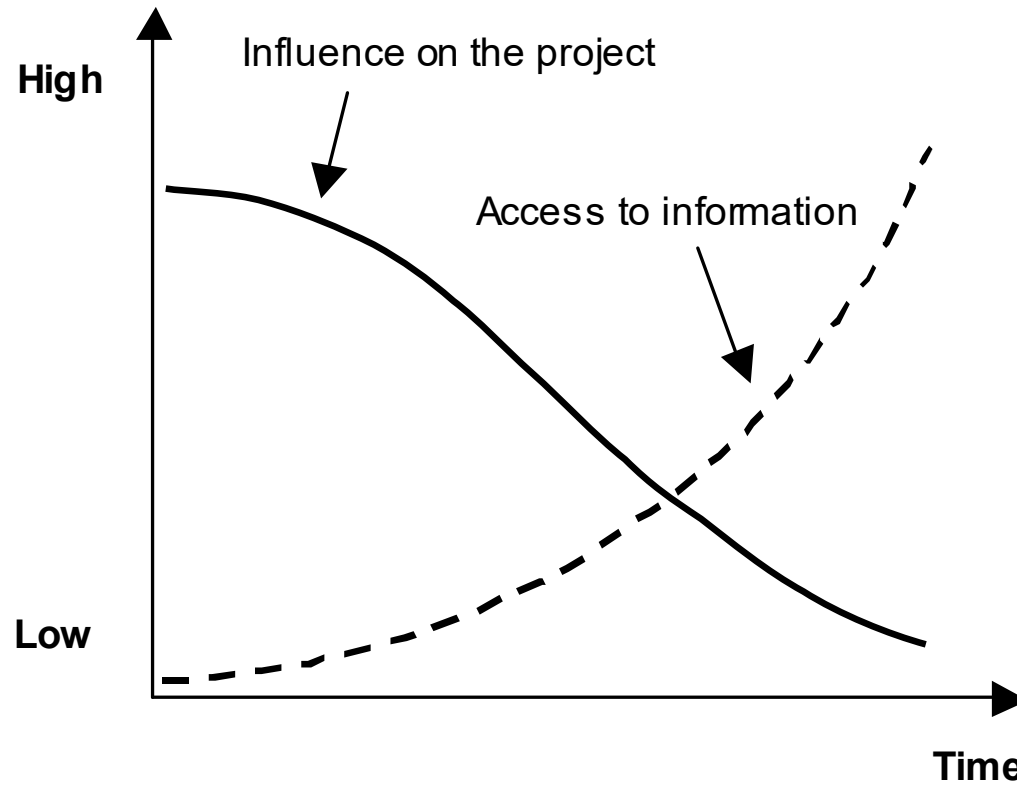
- Risk, referring exclusively to a *threat*, i.e. an uncertainty with negative effects
- *Opportunity*, which is an uncertainty with positive effects (Hillson, 2002)

Risks and opportunities

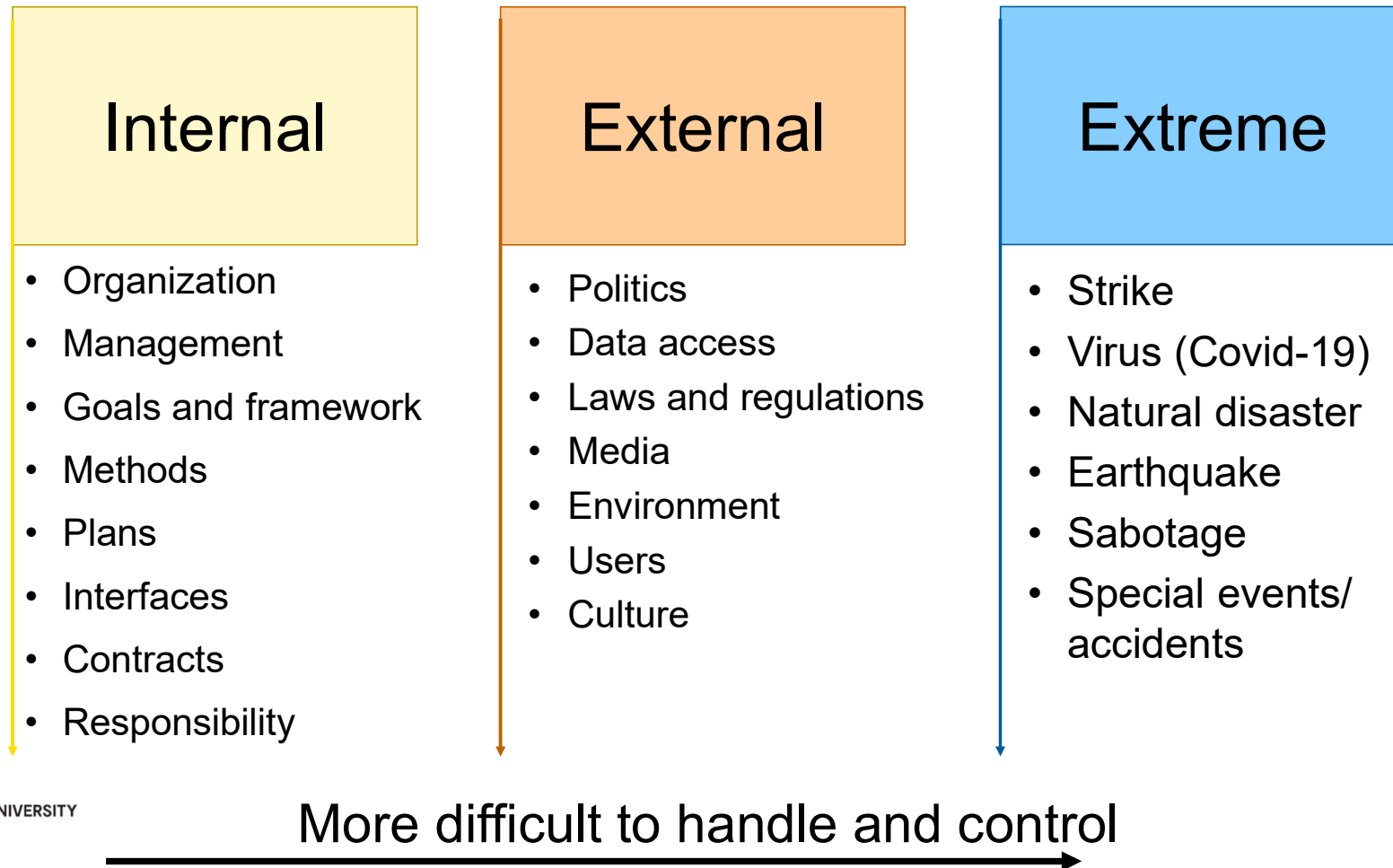
- Project uncertainty is the aggregate of all uncertainty elements, including both risks and opportunities



The information-influence gap



Types of risks and uncertainty



Reflection and discussion

- What are the most typical forms of risk in your projects?
- Reflect for 2min
- Discuss in groups

Examples of risks in research projects

- Sufficient competence among researchers
- Recruitment of researchers
- Researchers do not have adequate training
- Lack of management
- Insufficient funding
- Suitable facilities
- Unrealistic expectations
- Satisfying funders needs
- Ambitions of the proposal
- Loss or quality of data
- Conflict of interest
- Adverse media commentary
- Obtaining consent

When to focus on risks and uncertainties

1. When important decisions are made
2. When doing cost estimation / budgeting
3. When planning (creating a schedule)
4. In daily management of the project

Typical risk areas

Risks commonly occur where you have:

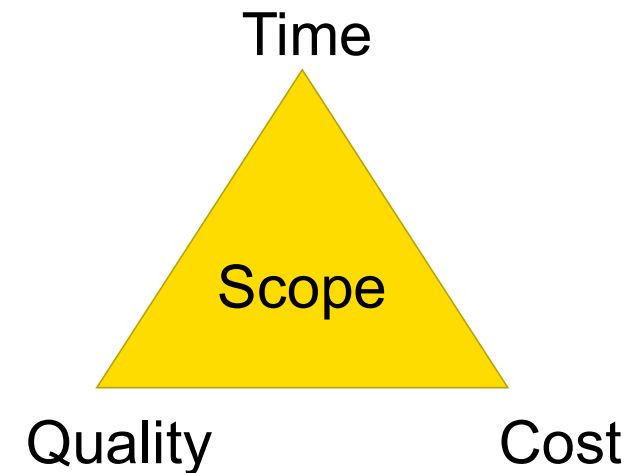
- Assumptions
- Interfaces (physical, managerial and virtual)
- Complex contractual / organization structures
- New systems
- Tight schedules
- Shared resources
- Comfort in repetition.....what you have “always” done

Analysis of risks

Two important questions:

- What is the probability that the risk occur?
- If it occur, what are the consequences?
 - Costs
 - Time
 - Quality

Do you remember this..?



The risk matrix

Probability

High			C
Medium		S	
Low	M		
	Low	Medium	High

C = Critical
S = Significant
(considerable)
M = Minor

Consequences

The risk matrix

Probability

High			C
Medium		S	
Low	M		
	Low	Medium	High

C = Critical
S = Significant
 (considerable)
M = Minor

Consequences

Your project risks

- Consider your most important research project:
Map the risks for the research project with respect to probability and consequences for the project (The risk matrix)
- Share and discuss in groups

The roles of the research project leader

Communicator of the ambition

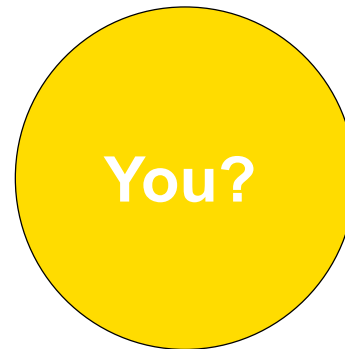
- translate/interpret
- direction and framework

Academic leader

- clever/skilled and respected

Academic professional

- time for own academic production and development



Coordinator

- the engagement and concerns of the various individuals/groups
- the big picture concerns
- the management teams

Facilitator

- establish the common goals
- good processes in the organisation
- listen to the motivation

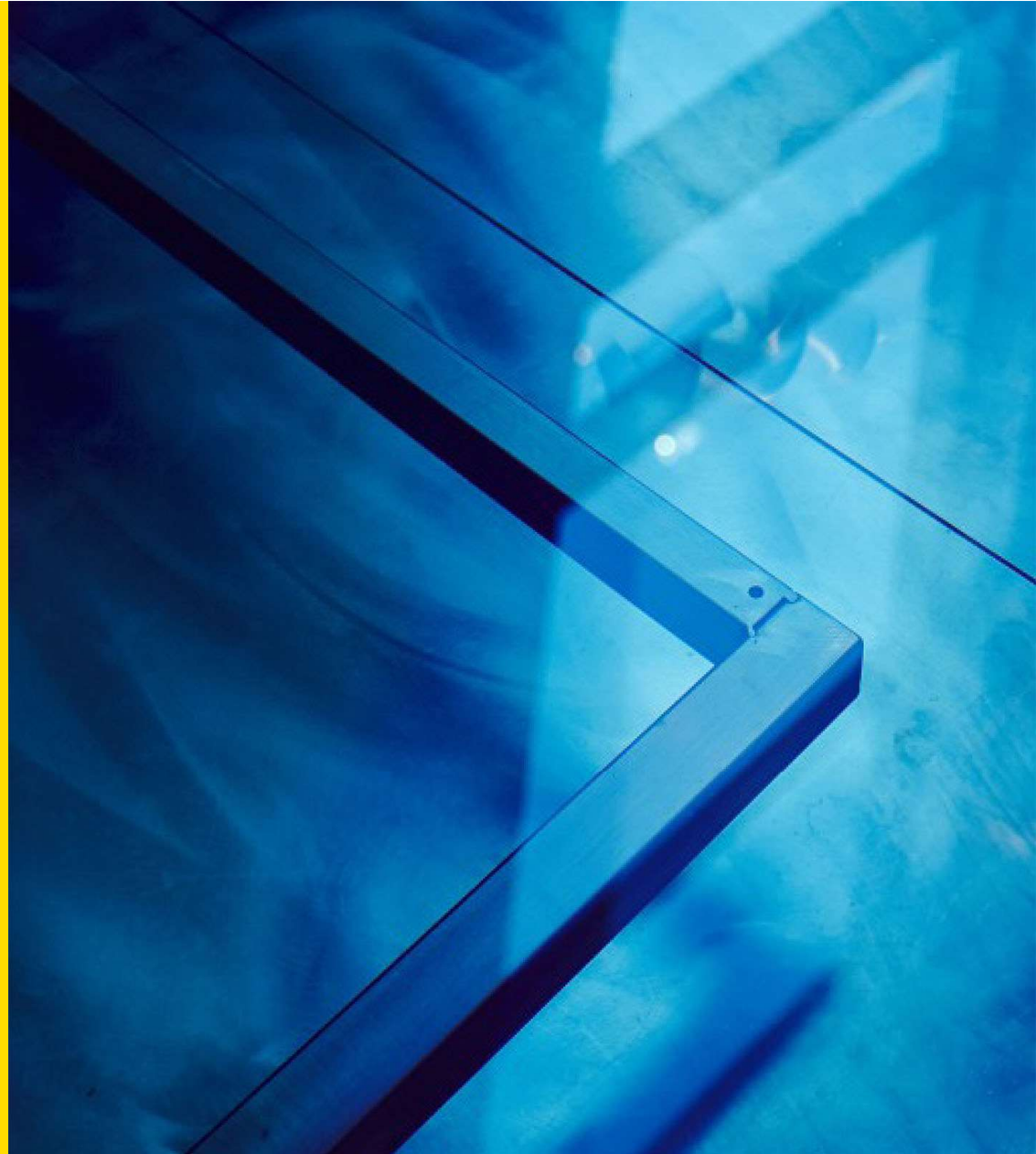
Balance-keeper

ambitious ↔ realistic
production ↔ development

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Home assignment – group work

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Home assignment – personal mini-case

Preparing a personal mini-case *to be presented to the workgroup on day 2*

The personal mini-case should deal with a problem from your everyday life in a project environment. A good mini-case deals with an actual problem from your project work in practice, which you find is challenging and you would like to discuss with others. The problem may be challenging because it somehow interferes with your own work and development, or because it irritates you and impairs your motivation. It may also be that this is something you would really like to improve or develop.

A good case may typically include:

- A description of how you see the situation.
- A bit of context: the group size, etc.
- Who are involved – and what is your role and their roles?
- A bit of history.
- What this situation does to you - your feelings and thoughts about it?
- What you want others to comment on?

The typical mini-case is ½ -1 page.

We ask you to bring it with you to the course in 4 copies.

Personal case: A leadership challenge

Each of you have prepared a personal case on a current leadership challenge. During the webinar your group will help you by unfolding perspectives and attention points for your case using a Reflecting Team method.

Rules of conduct

The case presentations and group reflections are restricted to the learning group. Please be considerate and ask for permission if you wish to share any details outside your group.

The group will be attentive to the feedback needs of each case presenter.

The purpose of the group reflection is to help the case presenter and all reflections should be communicated in a constructive way.



'In the box' - Reflecting Team method

- **Purpose:**
The person in focus presents a personal case and then withdraws the discussions to allow for reflection. As person in focus you don't have to respond to input or challenge them. You simply listen.
- **How:**
With this method, the group spends **25 mins. on each case.** It's helpful if the group selects a time manager to guide the case work.

Guidelines for 'In the box' Reflecting team method		
<i>Phase:</i>	<i>The group:</i>	<i>The person in focus:</i>
Case-presentation 4 min.	Listens without interrupting or asking questions.	Gives a short presentation (max. 5 min.), which shortly introduces your case. Try to be concrete on what you would like to have new perspectives upon.
Questions 3 min.	Asks clarifying (factual) questions.	Gives short and concise answers to clarify questions from the group.
Keywords 2 min.	Each member notes down 3 keywords.	Awaits the reflections of the group. Prepares herself to take notes and listen.
"In the box" 13 min.	Joint reflection on the issue. Contributes with equivalent experiences and considerations concerning the generic characteristics of the situation, but leaves out advice or admonishments (such as: "I think you should be more direct in your announcements" etc.). <i>We are here to understand and fold out – not judge. A way to do that: Reformulate input – and share experiences!</i>	Is now "In the box" and should not comment on inputs from the group. Listens and writes down notes. Possibility: The person 'in the box' is muted – and could turn off camera and just listen!
"Opening of the box" 3 min.	Asks the main character what he or she has gained from listening to the discussion.	Steps out of "the box" and comments on the thoughts of the group and on his or her profits of the process.

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LUNCH AND WALK & TALK

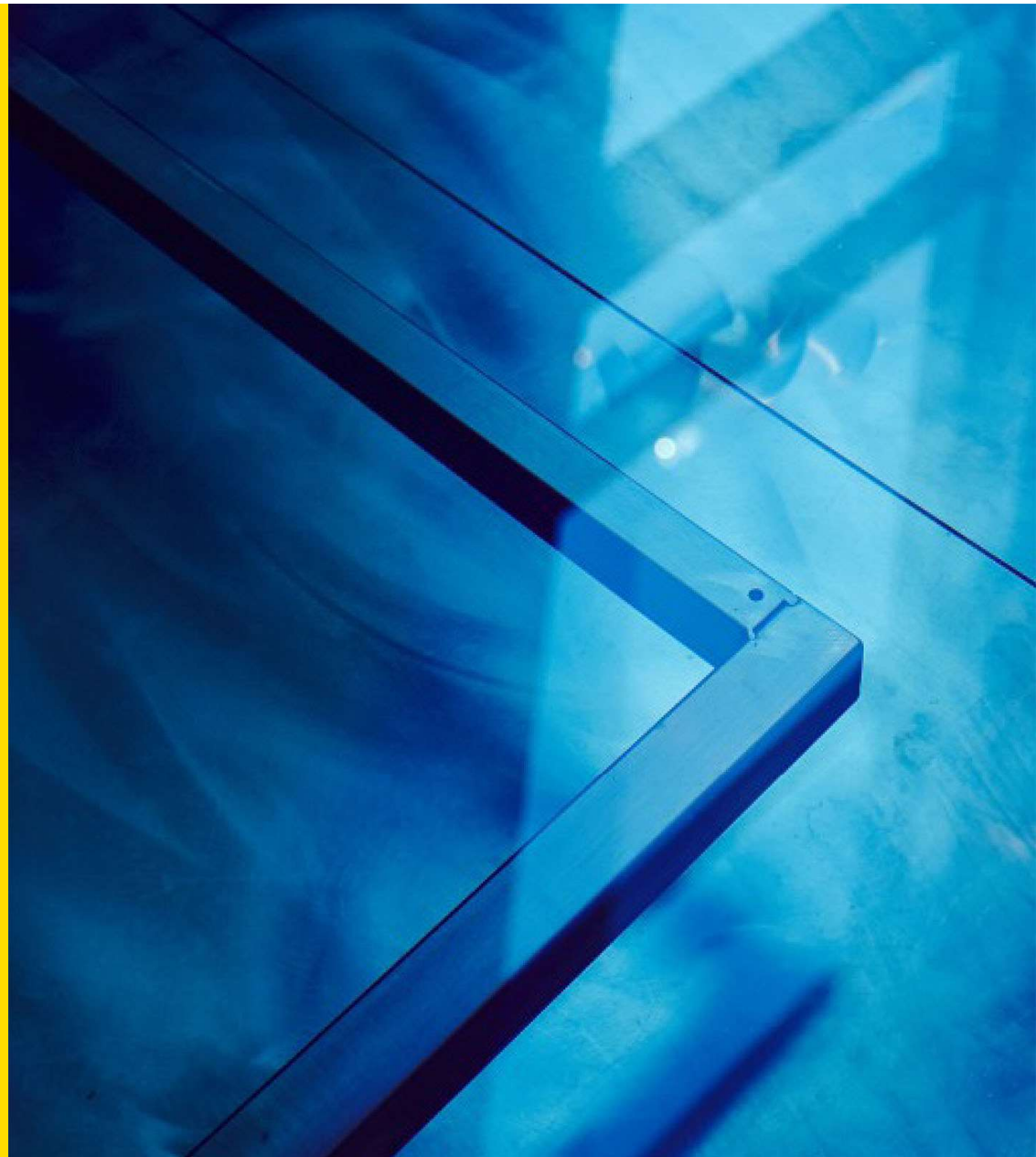
WE MEET BACK HERE AT 12:45

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Preventing and handling conflicts

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What would you do?

The group meetings in the project group are consistently 10 minutes delayed because people show up late. You have a feeling it has turned into some sort of "status game". Showing up late has become a way of asserting oneself to the colleagues.

- You find this has become a real problem
- What do you do?

Handling bandits – shared norms are the foundation

When working both to change existing workplace culture traits or building new ones, the following elements are crucial:

1. Designing and managing processes
2. Open discussion of mutual expectations
3. Outlining the playing field/ground rules together
4. Playing by the ground rules
5. Handling deviant behaviour
6. Evaluation and follow-up

Disclaimer



- The “bandits” have “bandit behaviour” – they are rarely “real” bandits
- They have usually developed “bandit behaviour” through a long period of demotivation
- Recognition, understanding and respect is often the best way to remove the “bandit” behaviour

Typical examples of bandit behaviour:

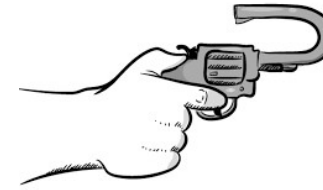
- The loud and domineering colleague
- The colleague who always enters into unnecessarily long-winding assessments
- The non-participating meeting participant (crossed arms, gazing elsewhere, silent)
- The participant who consistently talks to the neighbour at meetings
- The one that works on other things during the meeting (the workaholic)
- The negative meeting participant (sighing, showing disapproval)
- The colleague who does not respect deadlines or deliverables
- The one who does not take part in or adhere to agreed practical processes (tidying up, filling in log-books, taking part in tedious, but necessary administrative task)
- The purposely manipulating colleague – or the one stealing ideas or taking credit for other people's work
- The abusive participant (verbal onslaughts)
- The one that leaves the meeting angry (and slams the door)

Norms must be enforced

- Unless bandit behaviour is sanctioned, norms will not remain norms
- This means that violations cannot be accepted in the long run
- Violation of the norms must be dealt with



May backfire – watch out



- Violations must be sanctioned, but in a considerate manner
- Anger and aggression may obviously also be felt by leaders, but should not be exhibited in leadership situations
- Norm violations should be handled by being prepared:
 - The norms must be established beforehand
 - The norms must be visible, explicit and accepted
 - The leader must know beforehand how to use norms as arguments

Basic handling

- Approach everyone or just the person in question (breaks may be useful)
- Refer to common rules or norms
- If these are not established, a reaction may have to wait until they are in place
- Show empathy towards the possibility of a real problem behind the issue (the one who works with something else during a meeting, may have an urgent deadline)
- Take care of the actual problem rather than the symptoms
- Create agreement about the solution – refer to common rules or norms
- Avoid anything that may cause escalation:
 - *Unpleasant public reprimands*
 - *Showing your own anger or irritation*
 - *Lack of objectivity or neutrality*
- Remember that you, as a leader, are always a role model – for better or worse!

Stone in the shoe

- Irritating phenomena (person)
- Uses a lot of energy and focus
- Demotivation
- Change perspective? Learning opportunity?



Reflection

- Dealing with deviant behaviour – what are my own experiences?
- Who are my worst bandits?
- What is my "stone in the shoe"?
- Any situation I want to practice?
- When am I a bandit? Why do I resort to bandit behaviour?

Preventing and handling conflicts

One definition:

"Conflicts are disagreements which cause tension in and between people"

Source: Center for konfliktløsning – Kompendium 2000

Positive and negative aspects of conflicts

- Point at problems and the need for solutions
- Focus on and contribute to necessary change
- Constructive conflict resolution strengthens motivation and unity
- Stimulate creativity
- Hostility, lack of motivation and reluctance to cooperate
- Withholding information and resources
- Delays and increased costs
- Key workers may leave due to long-lasting unresolved conflicts

The purpose of having conversations: Development – not necessarily consensus

	Agreement	Disagreement
Trust	Retaining safety Stagnation	Development The learning organization
Distrust	Armed neutrality The letter (not the spirit) of the law	CHAOS Guerrilla warfare

Two kinds of conflicts...

- **Task conflict**
 - Disagreement relating to a task, including viewpoints, ideas and opinions
- **Relational conflict**
 - Interpersonal disagreement which typically leads to tension, irritation and/or hostility



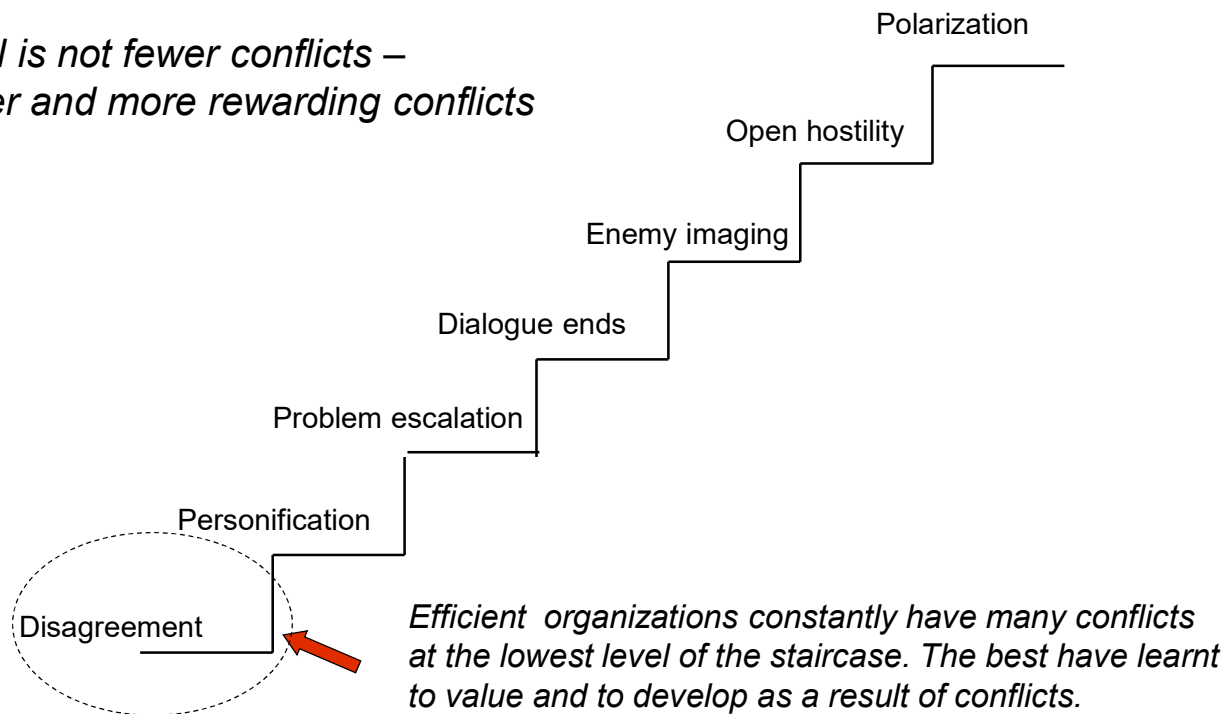
Jehn: 1995

Task and relationship conflicts

- Relationship conflicts always have a detrimental impact
- However, a moderate amount of task conflict is healthy
- Can the team distinguish between task and relationship conflicts?
- But: Relationship conflicts and task conflicts have a tendency to correlate
 - How task conflicts are handled influences the degree of relationship conflicts
 - Relationship conflicts are often played out in “task arenas”

Conflict staircase

*The goal is not fewer conflicts –
but better and more rewarding conflicts*



Conflict types

Conflicting understandings

- About concrete goals, methods, funds, structures or procedures.
- Handling: Problem solving
- Wanted outcome: Reaching a common ground and moving on.

Conflicting interests

- About distribution of resources, funds, work, room, facilities and/or time.
- Handling: Negotiation
- Wanted outcome: An agreement

Conflicting values

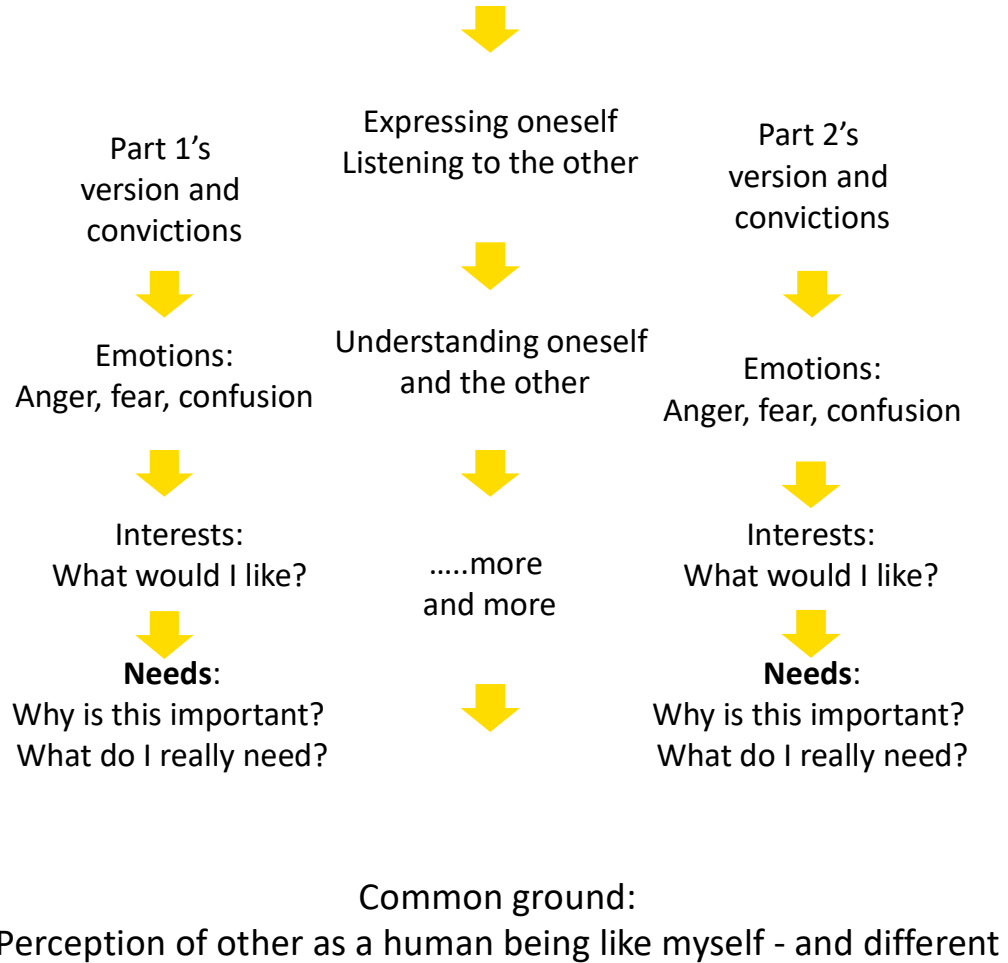
- About key personal or cultural values, e.g. ethical, religious or political values
- Handling: Open respectful communication
- Wanted outcome: Mutual accept.

Conflicting individuals

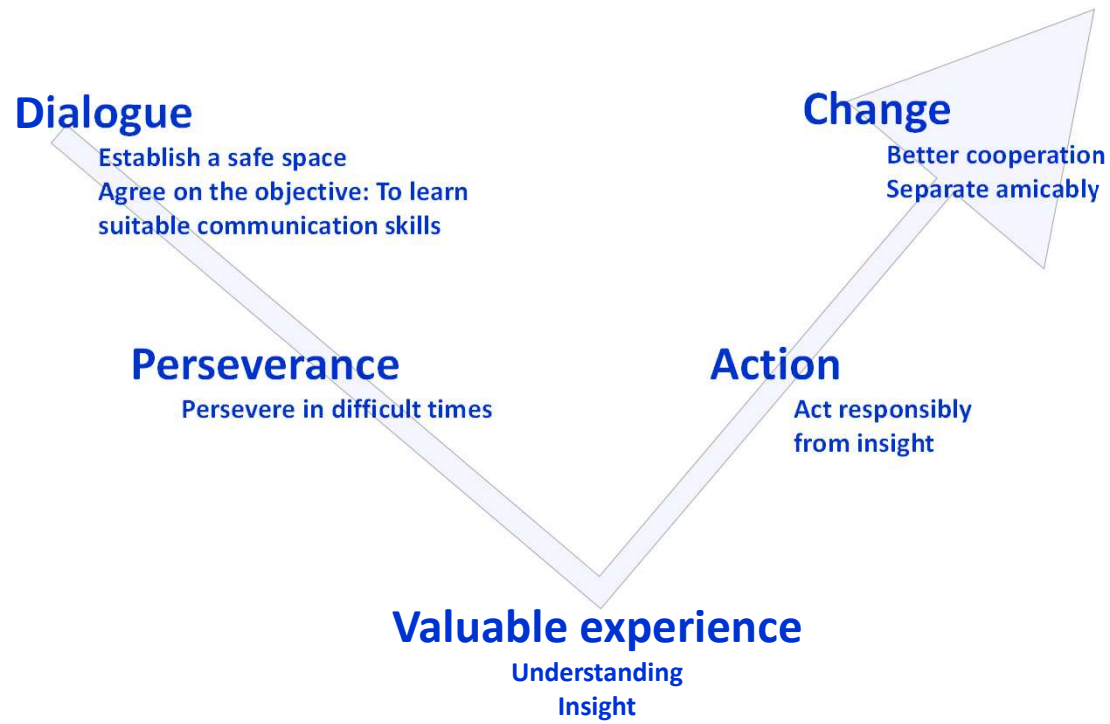
- About identity, loyalty, breach of trust, rejection.
- Handling: Open respectful communication and venting of emotions .
- Wanted outcome: Mutual understanding and reconciliation

Basic conflict resolution:

Basic conflict resolution



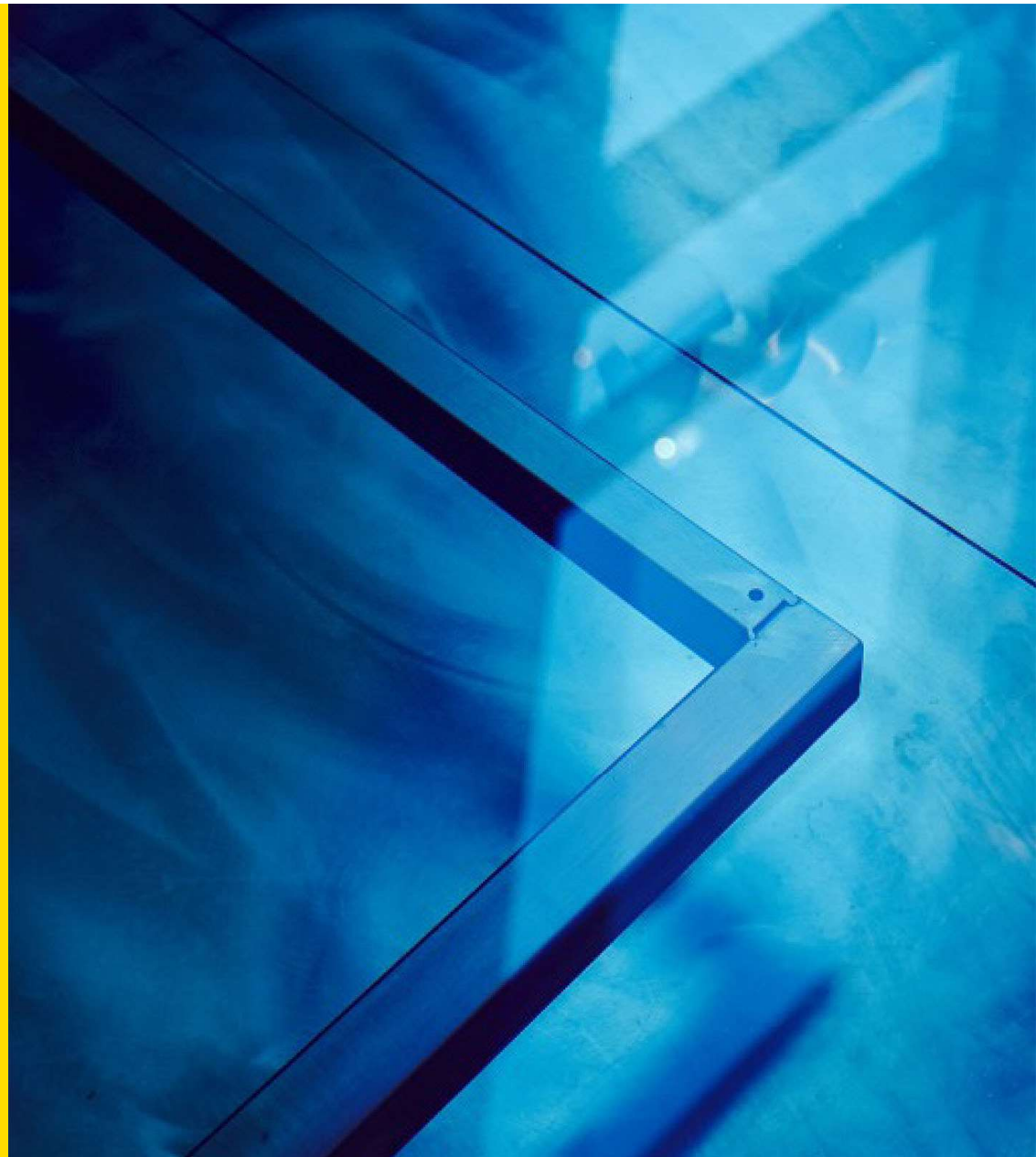
Dialogue for change



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Home assignment – group work

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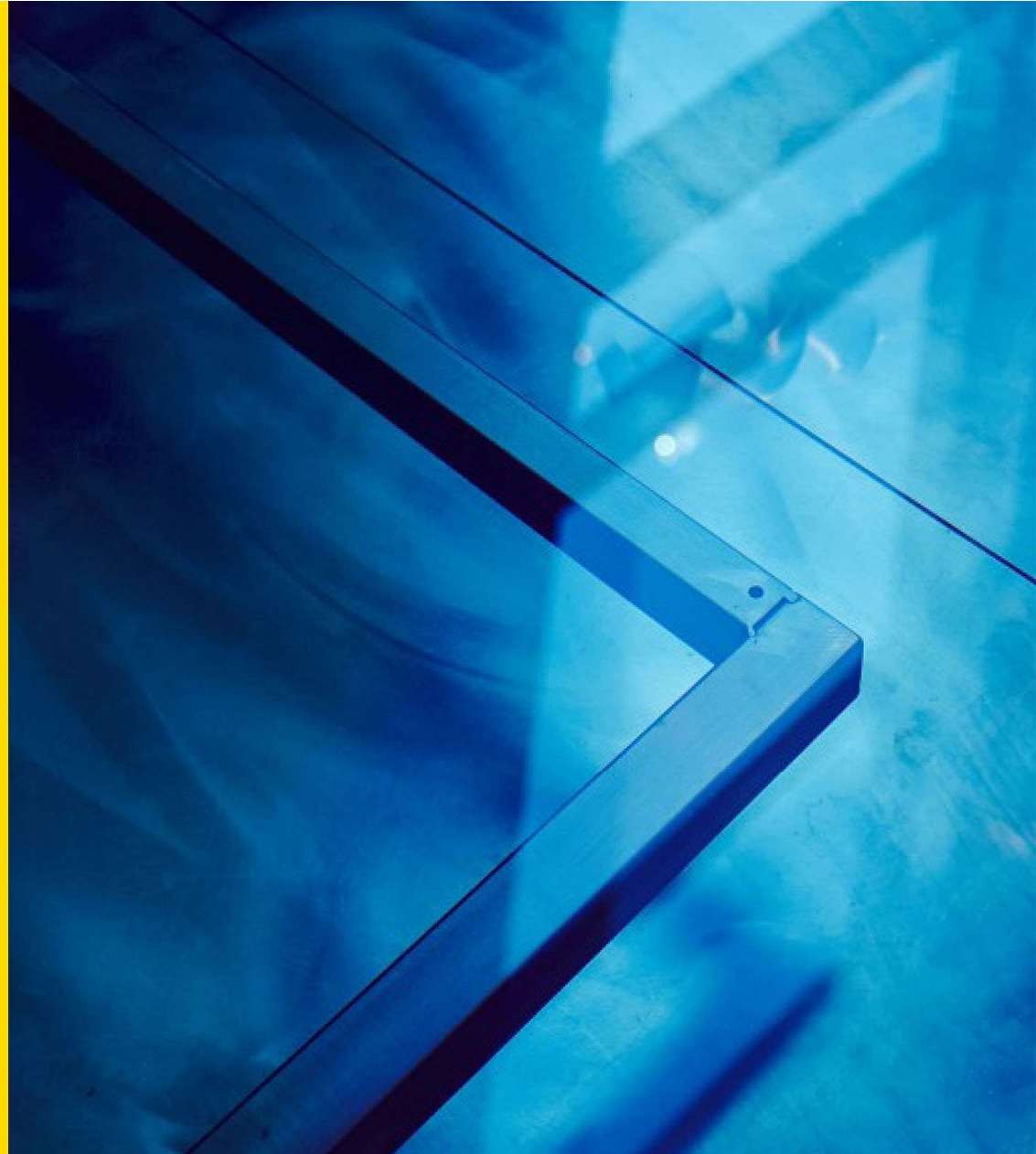
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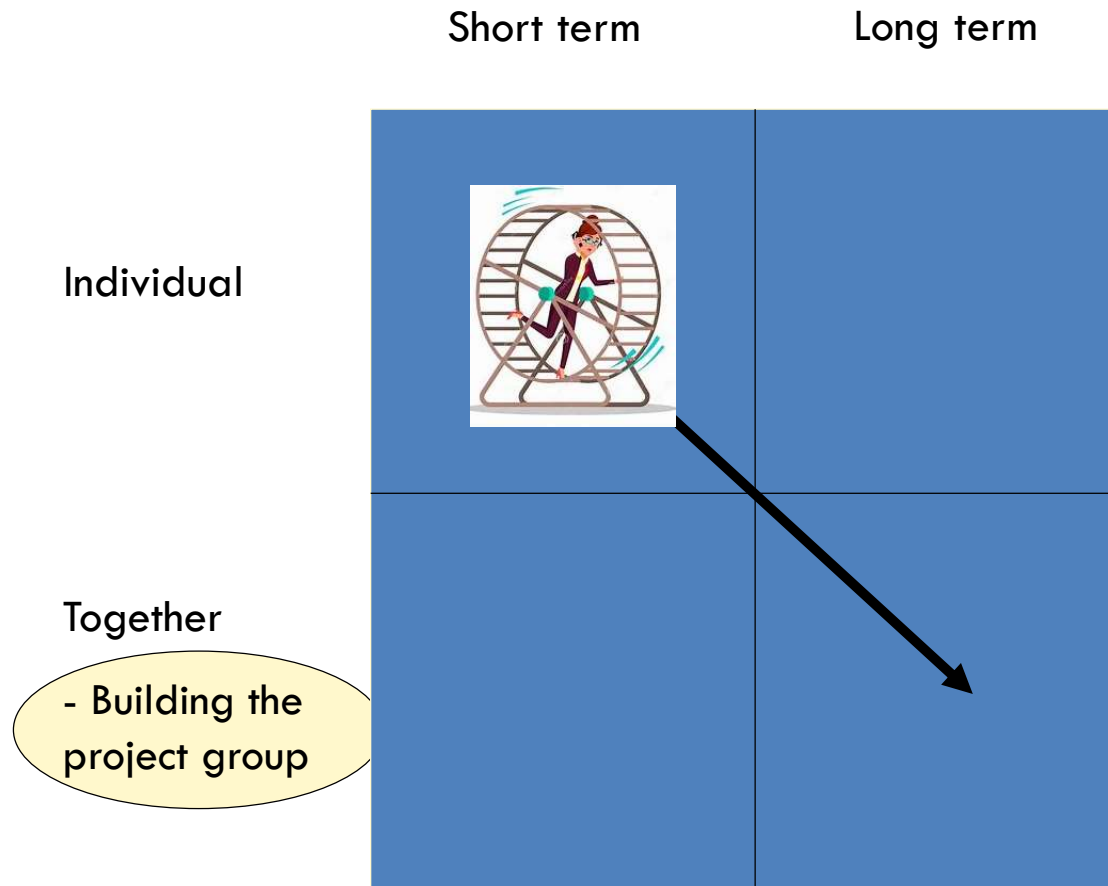
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Time management

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The principle



Reflection

It may be important to stop for a moment, look at what you do and ask yourself:

What is the purpose of my role?

This question is not about the daily routines and tasks, or minor goals, but the main purpose: your job's raison d'être; that, which determines whether a task is important and relevant.

- *What is the purpose with your role? Your ambition?*
- *What are the five most important things you do? In prioritised order?*
- *And what are the criteria for success for each of these?*

The roles of the research project leader

Communicator of the ambition

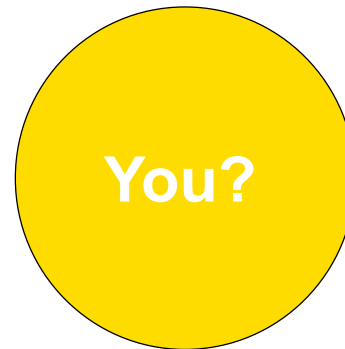
- translate/interpret
- direction and framework

Academic leader

- clever/skilled and respected

Academic professional

- time for own academic production and development



Coordinator

- the engagement and concerns of the various individuals/groups
- the big picture concerns
- the management teams

Facilitator

- establish the common goals
- good processes in the organisation
- listen to the motivation

Balance-keeper

ambitious ↔ realistic
production ↔ development

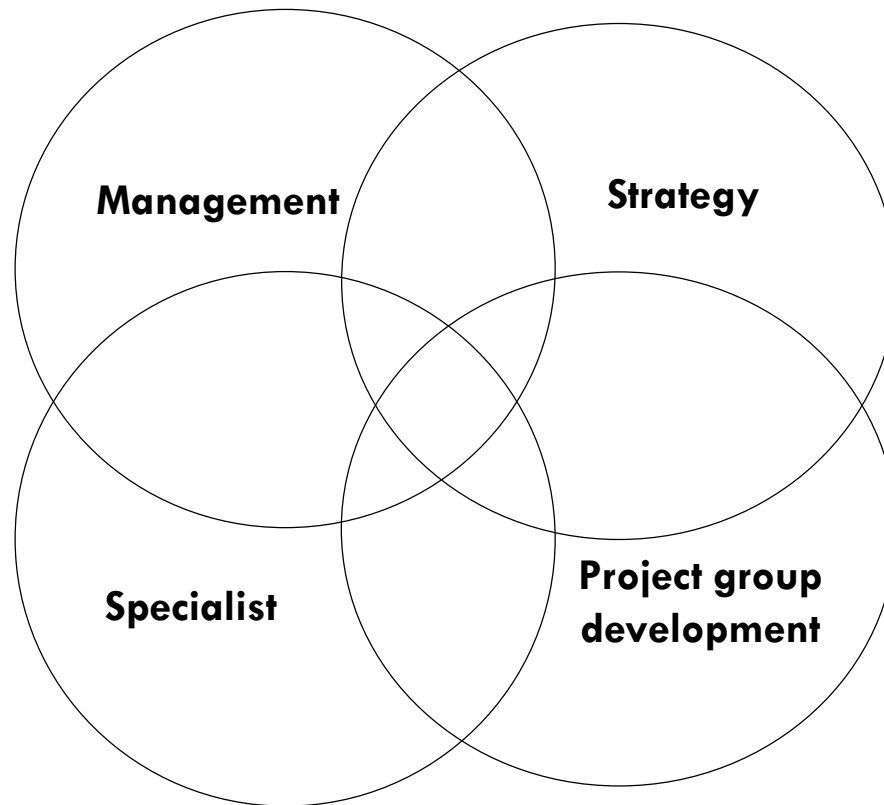
Four dimensions of tasks of the project leader

Manage the business

- Administrative affairs
- Budgets and targets
- Control and follow-up
- Resource allocation
- Internal overview and risk minimization

Do the job

- Being able to do it yourself – doing it yourself
- Case handling
- Problem solution
- Knowing the matter
- Professional supervision
- Adding value by own expertise and know-how



Develop the future

- Developing and implementing a shared ambition, values and attitudes
- Challenging the culture and presumptions
- External overview – understanding the environment

Project group development

- Focusing on individual and team skill development
- Attracting, developing and keeping the project group members
- Evaluating and acting on achievements

How do you spend your time?

Divide your total work hours (measured in percentages) between the four dimensions

Management

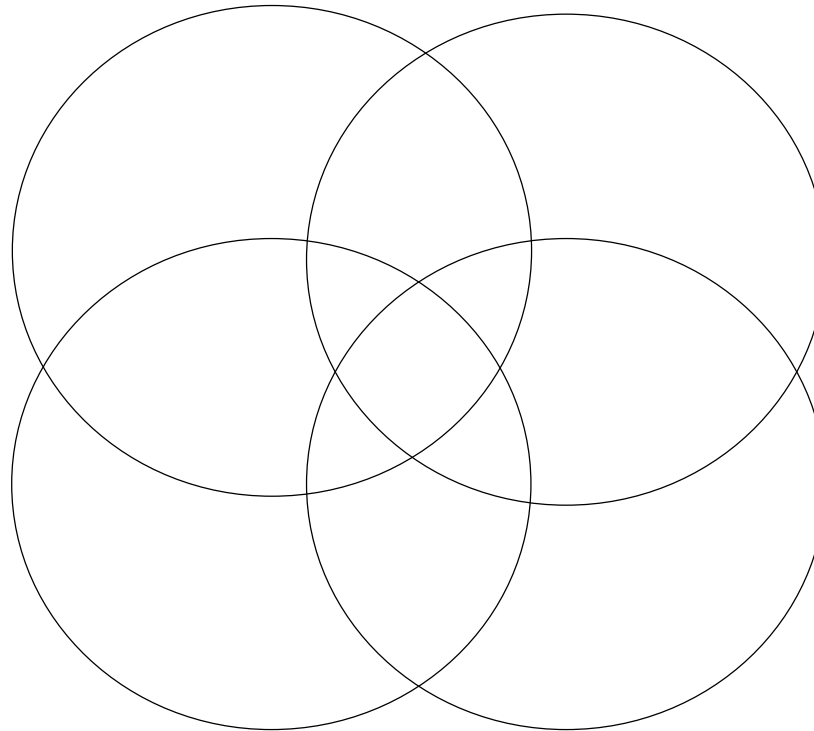
Percentage of your time

Satisfied with the result:
1-10:

Specialist

Percentage of your time:

Satisfied with result:
1-10:



Strategy

Percentage of your time:

Satisfied with the result:
1-10:

Project group development

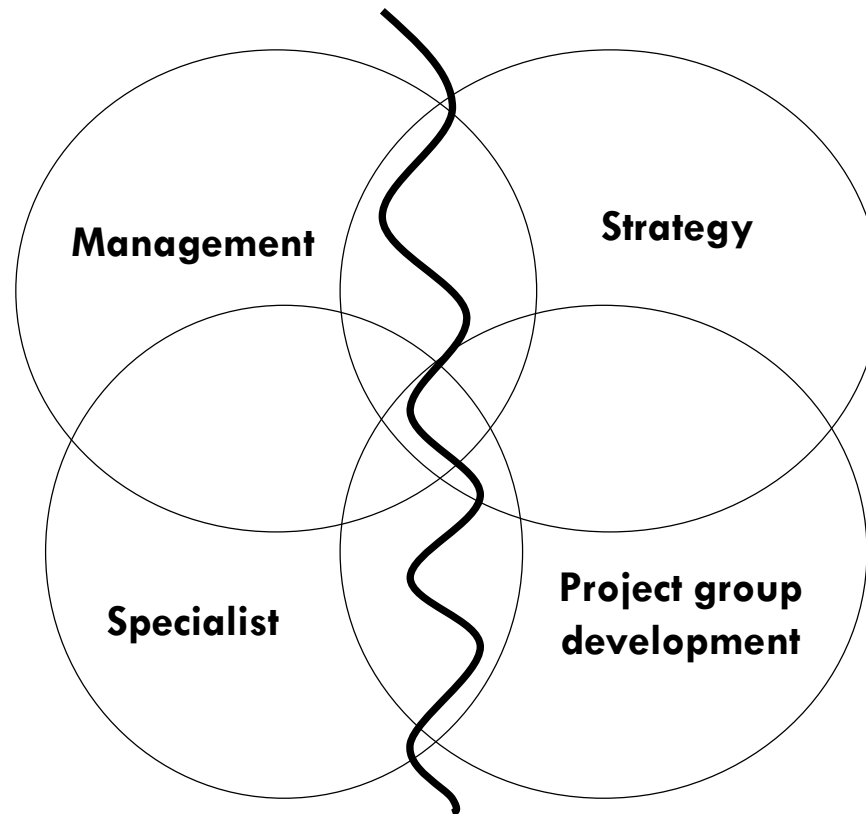
Percentage of your time:

Satisfied with result :
1-10:

Differences

Deliver today

Deliver tomorrow



Often “urgent” but maybe not that “important”

Short term focus and immediate visible results

Minimize risk

Immediate satisfaction

Mainly transaction-oriented

Progress through problem-solution and external change

Reactive: Based on cropped-up needs

Very “Important” but not “urgent”

Investment in future – often non-tangible results

Takes courage

Mainly strategic, process- and person-related

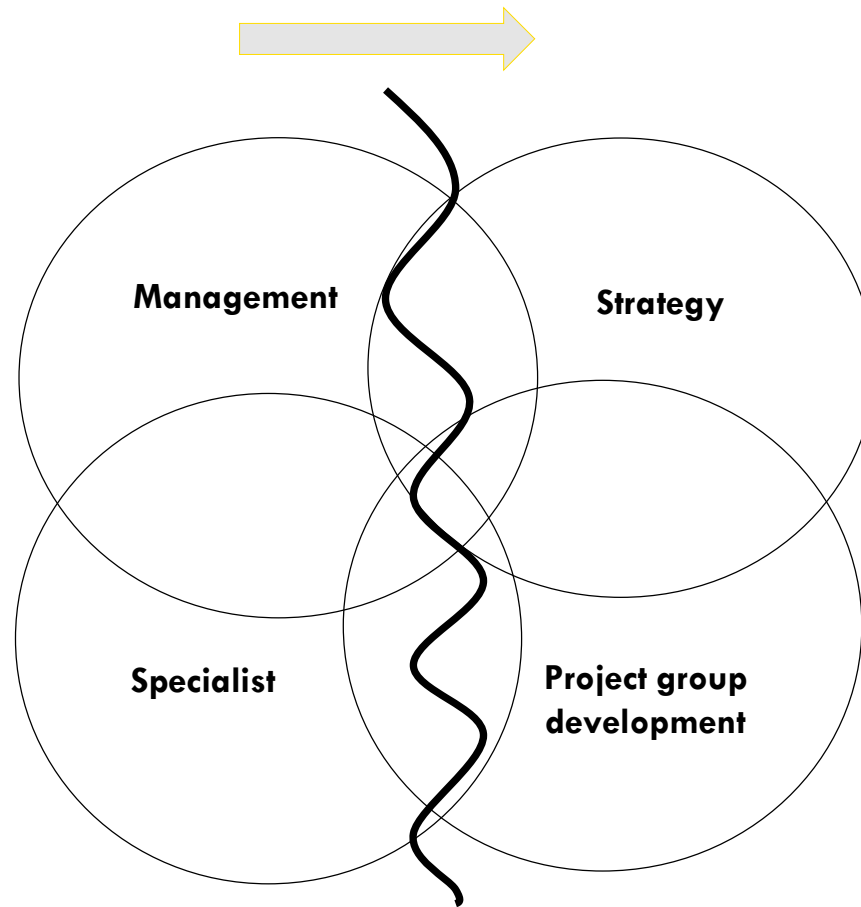
Progress through learning and change

Proactive: Based on anticipated needs

*Both sides are important for a well functioning business:
The question is “Have you found the right balance”? What is your opinion?*

Behavior and activities to support the movement from "reactive" to "proactive"

- Shift to more long-term planning
- Focus on leadership and strategy at meetings
- Improving processes (=fewer urgent fires)
- Feedback founded in trust rather than control
- Questions rather than answers
- Clear communication on goals and values
- Analysis and prioritizing based on "urgent/important-logic"



Just working more and more ruins your work-life-balance

Many important things do not seem to be urgent...

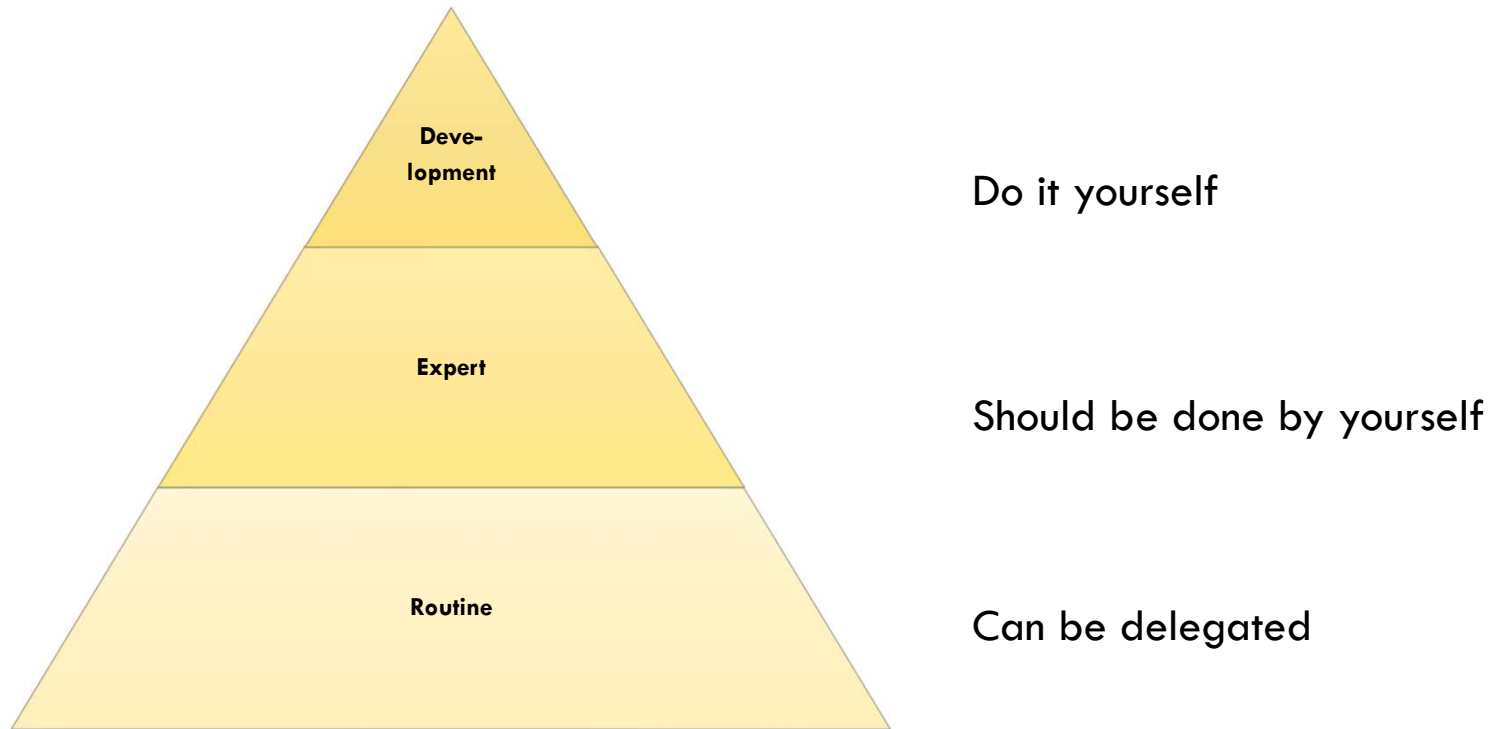
	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p>1</p> <p>Crises</p> <p>Some “here-and-now” problems</p> <p>Time-limited projects, Meetings</p> <p>Preparation</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Prevention</p> <p>Value establishment</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Personal relation-building</p> <p>Genuine relaxation</p>
Not important	<p>3</p> <p>Some meetings</p> <p>E-mails</p> <p>Phone calls</p> <p>Many “here-and-now” problems</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Trivialities</p> <p>Some phone calls</p> <p>Past time – TV / Suduko</p>

The challenge is to prioritize based on quadrant 2

– **The quality quadrant**

Realize what is important and find the time necessary to focus on it

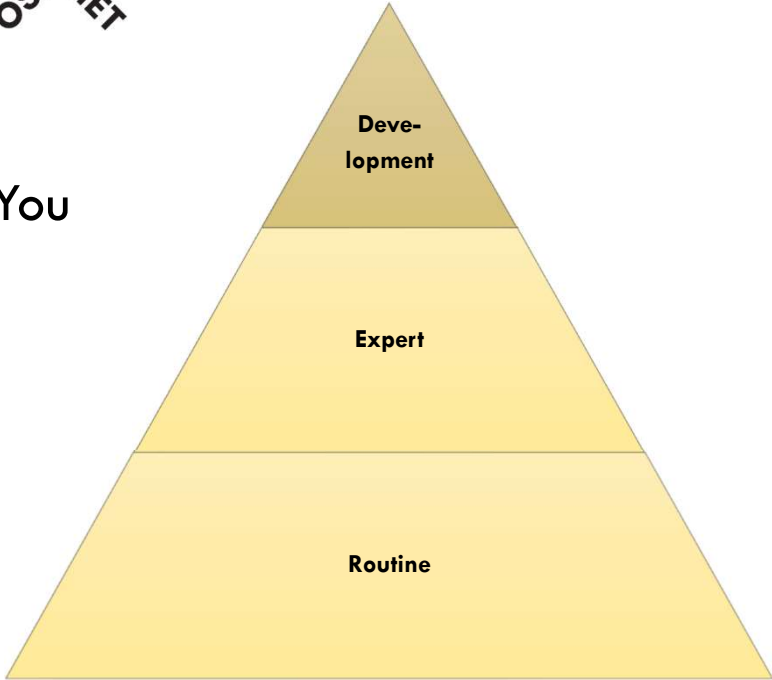
Which tasks should be transferred?



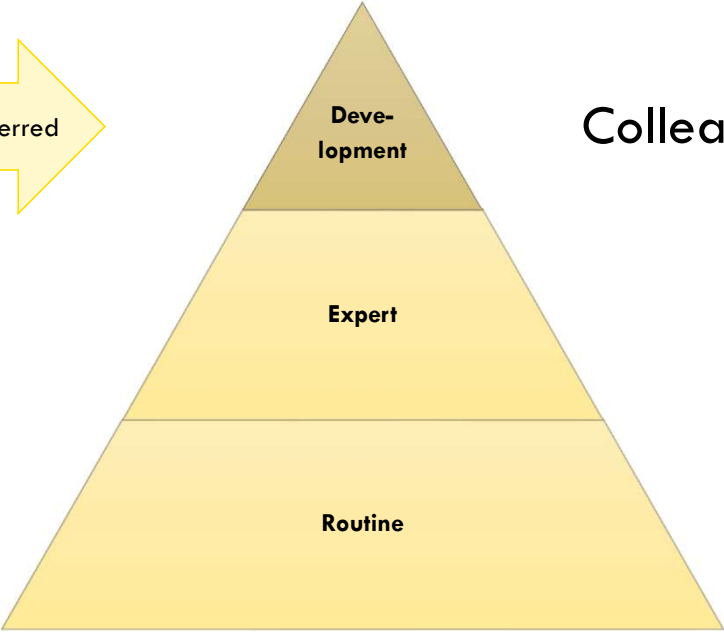
Your routine work is an area of development for others

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You



Can and should be transferred



Colleague

Individual reflection and discussion in pairs



- What do I need to address in my personal leadership and time management?
- How can I do this?
- Who can help me?

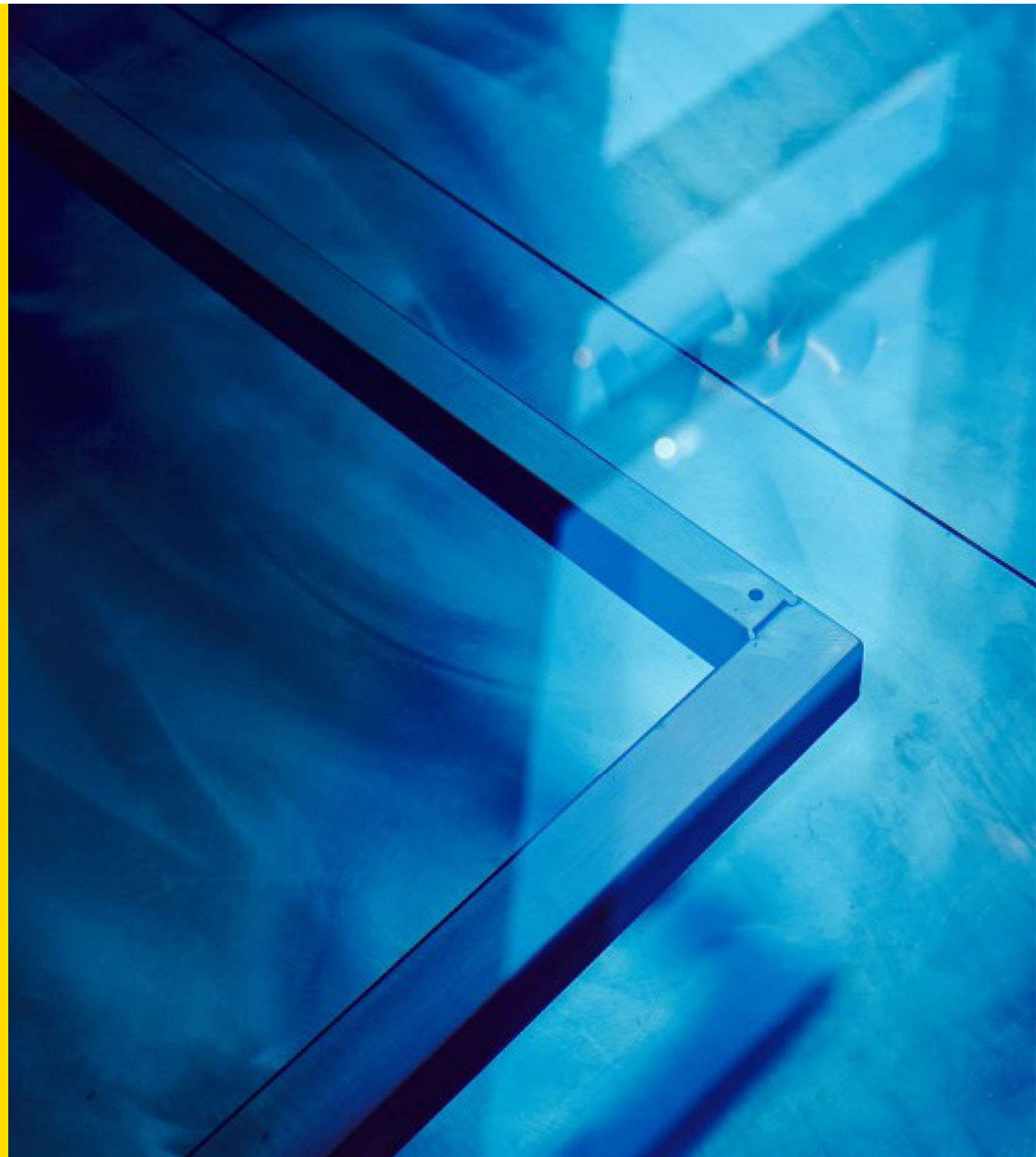
Formal requirements:

There are no requirements or guidelines at the institutional level in place today. But remember: You apply with OsloMet org.nr/PIC code, so OsloMet as institution is responsible. It is therefore important that every application is approved by the Head of Department. And quality checked by the project controller and research adviser.

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End of program

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The roles of the research project leader

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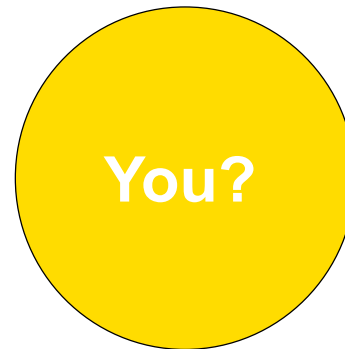
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Learning objectives

As a research project leader you need to balance research activities and the work that needs to be done as a leader. E.g. facilitating shared ambitions and cooperation between the members of the project group, create good processes that prioritizes goals, resources and deliverables in the project.

- In this course you will introduced to concepts, tools and perspectives to develop your project leadership skill set.
- Sharing experiences, views and wonderings are key for your learning process.