

Best Practices for Running a Successful Consult Project

The following list of best practices has been assembled to help sponsors maximize the success of their Consult Project. If you have questions or would like additional assistance, we're happy to help you through the process; you can contact us at support@31projects.com or (919) 899-9603.

1) Be clear about your goals for the project

The first step in a Challenge is to clearly define the goals of the Challenge- what you hope to get out of it. Start by identifying the problem you'd like to solve or the area where you need help, and what a successful outcome would look like.

2) Develop a clear, interesting project description & title

One of the most important steps in a successful project is developing the project description. The description and title should be interesting and appealing to students, and the project requirements should be clear and understandable. If you'd like help in formulating your description, we're happy to review it with you.

3) State what form the final product should take

As part of the description, be sure to also clearly specify what form the solution should take, whether it is Powerpoint, a word document or PDF, images/videos, or something else.

4) Set a reasonable deadline for the project

Students are busy and are often balancing courses along with their work on the project and any other activities. Expect each student to spend on average 10 hours per week on the project and calculate an appropriate deadline based on this and your desired team size. In some cases students may work faster, for example in the case of recent graduates or during summer break, but be sure to provide ample time in setting your completion deadline.

6) Schedule a kickoff call and regular project updates

Once you have selected a team for the project, the students will contact you to set up a kickoff call. You can also find their contact information by navigating to the project under Current Projects. During the kickoff call review the project requirements again with the team and provide them all background information they need to understand the context and get started. You should then work out a plan with the team for update calls during the course of the project, depending on project length. Check-in calls can be scheduled on a bi-weekly basis, although a different frequency may make sense depending on the length and intensity of the project.

7) Discuss any changes in scope directly with student(s)

Changes in scope or requirements are sometimes unavoidable parts of managing a project. If this occurs, first discuss the proposed changes with the students and reach agreement on how to handle them. Once the students have agreed to the changes, be sure to revise the project description on the 31Projects platform– you can do this by navigating to the project under Current Projects and clicking “Edit Description” to make the changes. Students will then be notified of the changes and asked to approve them in the system.

8) Make yourself available to the students

In our experience, the more interaction you have with the students during the project, the better the outcome. Additionally, interaction gives you the chance to get to know each of the students and build relationships with them.

9) Don't forget to provide feedback, both at project completion and along the way

Feedback is an important part of managing a successful project. Providing feedback to the student(s) during the project is important to both keep interest high among the team and to ensure that students continue steering in the right direction. Upon project completion you will be prompted to provide overall feedback to the students through the 31Projects platform, which then appears in each student's Feedback Portfolio on the site.

10) If you have questions, we're here to help!

We love talking with project sponsors about their projects and helping them along the way. If you have any questions or just want to discuss your project, give us a call at (919) 899-9603 or email us at support@31projects.com.