Admin Essentials

No matter what kind of community you're managing, here are some key tips on how you can be more successful as a staff member.

- Security
- Project Management

Security

Especially in larger communities, your position makes your accounts — Discord, Minecraft, or other platforms — valuable to those involved in the community (as a member or to intentionally cause disruption). You should take steps to ensure your account is secure to keep the community safe. Here are some basic tips:

1. **Use common sense!** Don't download suspicious files, ensure you trust executables, and be wary of third-party services that require login. If you think something is a red flag, **even if you just have a suspicion, it probably is**. Ask a technical friend if you're unsure.
2. **Use an email address you own!** Your email is used to recover your account if something goes wrong. Make sure you (and only you) have access to your email.
3. **Turn on two-factor authentication!** Two-factor authentication is an extremely powerful security measure and you should have it enabled for as many accounts as possible.
4. **Be careful about logins!** Don't log into devices you don't own. If you need to, use private/incognito mode and close the session when you're finished. Many services allow you to view devices logged into your account. Remove any you don't recognize and change your password.
5. **Don't share your token!** Attackers can gain access to your account with an exposed account token, even with a strong password with two-factor authentication. This token allows logged-in devices to have a temporary key so that you don't have to log in again. An attacker can use that token on their own device, so never share internal app information like the developer console.

Project Management

Overview

This is where we have to get into the boring management stuff, but do read; this is incredibly important for creating successful projects. Most projects break down into phases. Typically the phases of production are:

- **Pre-production**: The work done before full-scale production begins, such as planning, prototyping, pipeline setup, and initial designs.
- **Production**: The actual creation of the project and elements within it.
- **Post-production**: Work done after the final project appears to be complete including quality assurance (QA), editing, testing, bug fixing, and final polishing.
- **Operations**: Ongoing work after a project has been released to keep it running such as updates and continued maintenance.

Properly planning for each phase of the production cycle is crucial when you need to deliver a project that is on time and works as expected.

When working on projects, you need to plan appropriate schedules, manage time, communicate, and collaborate. Even if you're working on a project independently, it's likely that you'll be communicating with others at some point in the production process, especially when engaging in user testing. Let's explore some guidance for successfully completing and delivering projects, as an individual or member of a larger team.

Documentation and Tracking

Documentation plays a critical role in project management. Our wiki and official docs act as central information hubs where you can record the specific requirements for whatever you want to create. When managing projects, consistently use design documents in the following ways to guide the design and development process:

- Identify the purpose, audience, and goals of your project.
- Identify the necessary project steps by creating a project plan.
- Within the project plan, create a timeline with specific deliverables and due dates.
- Consistently track your milestones in order to produce deliverables and meet deadlines.
- Assign roles when working in teams, and define and prioritize tasks for you and all teammates.

- Make sure you and all teammates are following up and following through on roles and responsibilities.

Time Management

Effective time management is critical to the delivery and completion of the project. When managing projects:

- Scope time for each phase of the design and development process.
- Use contingency planning for any unforeseen delays; reprioritize and update the tasks and deliverables in your project plans when needed.
- Identify which project planning and management tools are suitable for you or your team; when you've chosen them, *use them consistently*.

Communication

Without clear communication, collaboration is challenging at best and *impossible* at worst. Communication is one of the most important skills for working with others in any capacity and is vital for effective project management. When communicating with others on your project:

- Be clear about your progress and any issues that impact the work of others, whether they are members of your team or supporting external collaborators.
- Be respectful of others' time as well as your own.
- When critiquing work, remain constructive and sensitive to the feelings of others. Focus on making your feedback helpful, specific, and respectful.
- Be open to feedback yourself by actively listening and engaging with the person delivering the feedback. Reflect honestly on how their feedback can be addressed.

Respect and Professionalism

Even if you're completing a project for personal development or fun, when working with others it's important to respect them and have a professional attitude in your work. When collaborating on a project with others:

- Be punctual.
- Promptly reply to the team around you.
- Listen to others' opinions and contributions.
- Actively engage in collaborative work.

Tracking a Project

Once you have your project clearly scoped out, it is time to start planning how to manage a project by planning appropriate schedules and managing a project plan. While the project plan is usually created in pre-production, it is used and iterated *throughout* the production phase to track the project's progress.

The project plan takes the elements identified in the documentation and sets specific tasks and deliverable dates. If you don't create and follow a project plan, the result is usually *scope creep*: the continuous adding of new ideas and features to your plan which can lead to being late or worse - failing altogether. Some guidelines to successfully track projects, for both individuals and teams, include:

- Identify the necessary project steps.
- If working in a team, identify and assign specific project roles and responsibilities.
- Create a timeline with specific due dates, including project completion.
- Identify common problems and issues in project management, such as scope creep, overly ambitious design plans, and tight time constraints.
- Set due dates for each smaller piece of the project that will build to the overall project.
- Create reasonable time frames for each project phase.
- If working in a team, designate task owners for each task on the list.

Operations Activities

The final phase of the production cycle, operations, includes work typically done after a project has been released to keep it running. Although operations activities generally don't start until the release date, they should be identified and planned during pre-production. These activities include ongoing updates, fixes, and continued maintenance.

Project Retrospectives

Finally, a retrospective should be planned once the project is released so that you (and your team, if there was one) can reflect back on the design and development process. Retrospectives help you identify areas that went well, areas that didn't go well, and ways to improve for future projects. The simplest approach to conducting a retrospective can be to make a chart with three columns and identify things that you think you should **start doing**, **stop doing**, and **continue doing**.