



2nd Chairs: Vexation to Value Added

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Why do I Get the Newbie?

One day, you get a resource ping in your inbox.

Resource Management assigns you Sally Lunchbox as your PM 2nd Chair.

Look, you appreciate the help but were hoping for someone with a little more....experience?

You are already exhausted managing people who should be managing themselves.

However, you can't:

- stalk every resource's meeting
- review every resource's client communications
- scrutinize everything resources do

And you know a 2nd Chair is needed on the project.

However, you still wonder or perhaps fear the worst:

- What if they aren't trained?
- What if they can't do the work?
- What if this is their first project?
- What if they have issues being a 2nd chair?
- And the list goes on.

Then your buddy Kyle calls you and tells you scary tales about Sally being kicked off a project, as a 1st Chair! At least, it's what he heard from another friend working on Sally's last project.

What do you do? SWOT the truth about Sally.

2nd Chair: Something Borrowed

Second chair is a lawyer who helps the lead attorney in court.

2nd Chair: Something New

Project Managers have a second chair, who is either junior in position or responsibility on the project. It is typically a developmental or temporary support role.

SWOT the Truth

You never get everyone you want for a project, so deal with it.

You have no idea how Sally will perform until she does.

So, you must be open-minded about Sally and get to know her:

- **Strengths** – Proven value she provides a team: Ex. Leading teams
- **Weaknesses** – Patterned performance struggles: Ex. Calculating estimated work
- **Opportunities** – Possibilities for added value: Ex. Learning to be a 1st Chair
- **Threats** – Past failures: Ex. Was removed from the 1st Chair, because she consistently overspent on her projects.

Her SWOT could be obtained in your initial 1:1 conversation.

And, transparency is crucial for new relationships, so tell the 2nd chair about your personal SWOT.

Now, you can get down to the business of setting expectations based on capabilities.

Value Added

Project Managers are value creators, not value receivers. We create value through diverse people, skills, and collaboration.

Any added team members are nothing more than an opportunity for greater value creation.

Project managers must adopt a [Growth Mindset](#), role model it, and develop it in their project team members.

A team member's SWOT is a great starting point, so you can build your 2nd Chair's contribution shaped by your growth vs fixed mindset.



Conclusion

Project managers must create value from whatever the company gives them.

This includes people resources.

Try using SWOT to understand who is serving alongside you.

And adopt a growth vs fixed mindset, so you can see and enable the greatest potential in your resources.

Call to Action

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