

Tips and Pitfalls - Team Organisation

This document describes some positive and negative situations we have experienced. This is formulated into tips and pitfalls to be shared with other initiatives.

Tips

- Use a contact form with specific questions to categorise and create a simple overview of the companies and individuals who offered their support. If all team members have access to the replies, they can quickly search for the expertise they need amongst the respondents.
- Do not hesitate to look for external support and include new specialists in your team. As soon as we felt we could use someone with a different expertise, we asked that person to join our team. E.g. to design 3D printable components, build modules of our software, tune our pressure controllers. We experienced the easy inclusion of external expertise as a strong feature of our team.
- Be aware manufacturers may be able to produce parts you would not expect. A railway company may be able to produce the power supply.
- Focus on regulations and risk management from day one. Although the design team may feel as the most important subteam, the subteam that focus on compliance to standards, regulations and risk management is critical for clinical acceptance. .
- Use media and social media attention to make the project known amongst manufacturers. The combination of media attention we received in the beginning of our project and the use of the contact form, laid the foundation for a database of offered expertise. We still use this database today.

Pitfalls

- Without knowing what other subteams are doing, it is inevitable that some activities are done twice. A complete team with multiple subteams that work under time pressure can do much work in a short time, as everyone focuses on their own tasks. The downside is that subteams do not have insight in each other's work, so some work can be done twice. Regular contact between subteam managers therefore is necessary to detect this inefficiency early in the process.
- Do not keep your team too much in the dark, in terms of information and updates on general progress. They do not need to know the details of every subteams activities, but daily updates on the general steps taken that day improves the team spirit.