

PEP TIP

Handling the reading pile

Once they have completed PEP most people are pretty good at handling their “must do” reading. However, their ongoing challenge is all the other reading (the “like to” reading) that slowly turns into that daunting pile on the bookshelf.

One strategy for dealing with “like to” reading is both simple and effective. Instead of the traditional circulation slip (where everyone signs it just to get the reading out of their in-tray, but no one actually reads anything), try allocating specific pieces of reading to individual team members. Their job is to read the material and prepare a half page of dot points on any of the key points that are relevant to the teams’ roles and responsibilities. At the next team meeting they circulate their dot points and briefly explain them to the whole team.

This approach has many benefits:

- It helps develop capability within the team because there is shared responsibility for “like to” reading.
- Everyone in the team benefits from the content even if they haven’t read the document. If it catches anyone’s fancy then they can read the whole thing for themselves later.
- It builds the knowledge capital of the team, which in turn helps them get better at setting priorities.
- The team leader has more time for strategic work because they aren’t swamped down with too much reading.

This method can be a little challenging when you’re the team leader because you have to let go of something, but in the long run everyone in the team benefits.