

# 10 challenging types of techies... and how to manage them

**Date:** October 9th, 2007

**Author:** TechRepublic

**Category:** 10 things, Career, IT management

**Tags:** Strategy, Team, Techie, Team Member, Team Management, Management, TechRepublic

It's wrong to stereotype people. It isn't wrong, however, to recognize classifications of the team members you deal with every day. Many of the types of techies identified below may seem familiar to veteran IT managers. My ideas on how to work effectively with each type follow the descriptions.

*This information originally appeared in the article "Tame these 10 types of techies," by Patrick Andrews. It's also available as a PDF download.*

## #1: Human Bottleneck

These techies either demand to do all the coding, or never finish their work, or both. Impress upon them that quality is often the opposite of perfectionism. Also, feed them small, well-defined tasks and praise any competent output that is on schedule.

## #2: Bright Green

These straight-out-of-college developers like the new, cool technology. They tend to over-engineer by exploiting all the bells and whistles of the development environment — even when it's inappropriate. These green techies often rely on their planet-size intellects to help them get back on schedule in predelivery all-nighters. Introduce them to colleagues who recently were Bright Green but learned the hard way to focus on deliverables.

## #3: Tried-But-Untested

The mantra of these techies is, "Hey, we've got a whole testing team, why should I worry about checking my code?" It's a guarantee that these specimens will cause you grief, so it's essential to pull them up short. You'll be doing them a favor in the long term.

## #4: Techno-Babbler

Their code doesn't work because they "need" something. These techies spend too much time in newsgroups and fail to realize that overusing jargon is not a sign of adulthood. Require these techies to give an acronym-free, from-first-principles explanation of project results to management.

## #5: User-Loser

These techies consider many client questions stupid and deem the client worthy of a verbal flame. This often leads to the client not doing business with your company in the future. If your developers have contempt for "suits," try introducing a "dress-up Wednesday" — and keep them away from outside phone contact.

## #6: Task Farmer

As your self-appointed deputy, this type of techie assumes that the project plan is only a guideline and that it's acceptable for team members to swap roles and tasks without asking you. Clarify that although their suggestions are welcome, you're the one who carries the weight of the project.

## **#7: Under the Radar**

This colleague has a tendency to generate maximally obscure code. This is usually a way to hide inelegance of implementation and to secure employment by preventing any other developers from working on his or her input. A curative strategy is to make the techie responsible for technical mentoring of a demanding Bright Green team member.

## **#8: Winging-It Commander**

This type of techie's curriculum vitae says they're proficient in Java, SQL, and Perl, but their lines of code are sparse and curiously primitive. This techie will also place unusual demands on other team members to help "debug" their deliverables. Projects can't accommodate this level of on-the-job training. Encourage team members to be honest about their technical comfort zones by offering them appropriate training opportunities.

## **#9: Prima Donna**

These characters simply won't tackle mundane tasks. And if you suggest that they have to adapt existing code, there's always a performance of operatic proportions. Make it clear that they'll work for the technical author for a month if this nonsense persists.

## **#10: Gender Agenda**

Some developers have trouble working for, or even alongside, colleagues of the opposite sex. Challenge their assumptions by introducing them to a cross-section of your most accomplished colleagues.

Project managers don't have time to conduct therapy sessions in the course of an already-demanding project. All you can do is recognize team members' specific ongoing issues and ensure that they don't damage the work in progress.

# **Print/View all Posts**

## **Comments on this blog**

## **Trackbacks**

The URI to TrackBack this entry is:

<http://blogs.techrepublic.com.com/10things/wp-trackback.php?p=245>

No trackbacks yet.

Copyright © 2007 CNET Networks, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

0