

PROJECT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES, INC

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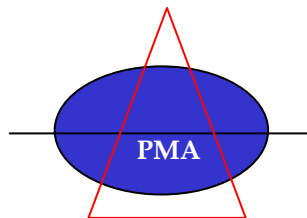
Presents

Basic Project Management

Via

WEB BASED LEARNING

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MODULE #3:
Profile of an Effective Project Manager.

SKILL DEFINITION

Technical Skills: Ability to use knowledge, techniques and tools for technical problem solving.

People Skills: Ability to work with and through people to get the job done.

Conceptual Skills: Ability to understand the complexity of the overall business process and to manage the process.

General/Functional
Management

SKILL REQUIREMENTS VERSUS MANAGEMENT LEVELS

Project Management

Top Management

Systems Products
Project Mgr.

Middle
Management

Engineered Product
Project Mgr.

First Level
Management

Standard Product
Project Mgr.

Worker

Team Member

TECHNICAL
SKILLS

PEOPLE
SKILLS

CONCEPTUAL
SKILLS

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR THAT IS CRUCIAL AT THE
DIFFERENT LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT
MANAGEMENT IS:
PEOPLE SKILLS

PROFILE THE PROJECT MANAGER EXERCISE

OBJECTIVE OF THIS EXERCISE:

Identify the qualities, skills and characteristics of an effective Project Manager.

WHAT TO DO:

1. Think.
2. Brainstorm.
3. Do not evaluate as you go.
4. Use 80/20 rule.
5. Scribe your answers.

DELIVERABLE:

A list of skills, qualities and characteristics of a good project manager.

TIME: 15 Minutes

WRITE DOWN YOUR ANSWERS NOW!

Project Manager Personal Skills Checklist

Technical Skills

1. Some technical knowledge
2. Some product knowledge
3. Process knowledge
4. Handling numbers
5. Scheduling

People Skills

1. Leadership
2. Communications – verbal, written, listening, presentation
3. Interpersonal
4. Selling
5. Conflict Management
6. Negotiation
7. Facilitation
8. Delegation
9. Team Building

Conceptual Skills

1. Process
2. Planning
3. Organizational
4. Problem solving
5. Financial
6. Time management

Qualities That Contribute To Excellence in Project Management

1. Self-motivated, self-confident, self-directing, self-disciplined, self-commitment – sets positive example for others
2. Has ambition, drive, energy, enthusiasm and motivation.
3. Has integrity, high values and a sense of justice – stands above organization politics and gamesmanship.
4. Has a high level of deserved self-respect and self-esteem.
5. Accepts the role of leader with humility, enjoys the role and is clearly accepted and respected in the role.
6. Is customer focused – action driven.
7. Is continually searching, learning, developing and expanding.
8. Demonstrates objectivity, as well as flexibility.

9. Is persistent, tempered with sound judgment.
10. Is decisive and avoids procrastination.
11. Is a **“WINNER”!**

How does the above list compare to yours?

SOLVING PROBLEMS AND MAKING DECISIONS

GUIDELINES:

The following ideas will increase the project managers' effectiveness in problem solving and decision making:

1. **Anticipate problems**; be alert for symptoms; whenever possible, head off problems with preventative action before they fully materialize.
2. **Get into the habit** of actively solving problems and making decisions. Avoid indecision, procrastination and rationalization. Avoid handling problems or making major decisions when tired, pre-occupied or irritated.
3. Give problems/decision making **priority** in accordance with their importance.
4. **Define** the problem, strip it of all unnecessary elements and distill it down to its simplest terms.
5. **Subdivide** particularly difficult problems into related segments. Often by solving one segment, the other segments more readily lend themselves to solution.
6. **Get the facts**; discard irrelevant material; eliminate biases; challenge assumptions; correlate all relevant material.
7. **Analyze** material carefully; draw affected people into the decision process (consensus). People who share in decision making are more likely to be committed to its success than if they had no part in it.
8. **Formulate** possible solutions.
9. **Assess** risks and consequences.
10. **Incubate**; set a time limit; decide as promptly as possible; but avoid premature decisions. Remember that frequently, more than one choice could work.
11. **Plan implementation action** closely and effectively. Consider the need for contingency plans and develop them as appropriate.
12. Take **timely** action, follow up and take corrective action as necessary.
13. **Accept** accountability for each decision and its consequences.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is an excellent technique for project teams to use in identifying concerns, opportunities for performance improvement and problem solution ideas. It is important that everyone feel free to suggest ideas and discuss problems.

Often we are reluctant to express our ideas for fear that our ideas will not be accepted or that we will be criticized for our ideas. This means that a lot of good ideas are never heard and a lot of opportunities for making improvements are missed.

Brainstorming is a sound technique for creating an environment in which everyone can express their ideas. In brainstorming, we follow special rules, which give everyone an equal chance to be heard, protect fragile “new” ideas and allow people to build on one another’s ideas. These **guidelines** will keep brainstorming efforts:

1. The targeted objective, problem or opportunity should be posted for all to see.
2. Allow a few minutes for “think time” at the very beginning.
3. All ideas are acceptable. There is no such thing as an inappropriate idea. Allow time for all ideas to be encouraged.
4. Freewheeling is encouraged. You are encouraged to build or “piggyback” on other people’s ideas.
5. No one is to evaluate, criticize, rebut, clarify, question or modify ideas while the ideas are being generalized.
6. Everyone has an equal chance to participate.
7. Record all ideas. Keep ideas visible.

THE FOLLOWING PROCESS RULES SHOULD BE USED BY THE GROUP:

1. Only one person speaks at a time. You should start with one person and go around the room in sequence. Each person speaks his idea when it is his turn.
2. If it is your turn and you don’t have an idea, just say “pass” and the facilitator will go on to the next person. Don’t feel bad about having to pass. You may have an excellent idea by the time the group comes back to you.
3. Continue the process until everyone is passing. Then stop and in silence review the ideas for a few minutes.
4. Then, open the floor for additional ideas. You do not have to take turns now.
5. Finally, when all the ideas are squeezed out of the group, it is time to start discussing the merits of each idea.

THE GROUP LEADER’S (FACILITATOR’S) ROLE IS TO:

1. See that the rules are followed.
2. Record or delegate the task of recording all the ideas as they are generated.
3. Take care in restating, clarifying or merging of similar ideas (to be done only with the permission of the person who generated the idea).
4. Recognize when the meeting has stagnated. Call for an end to the meeting and schedule a following meeting to allow time for new ideas to “incubate”.

THE GROUP LEADER (FACILITATOR) SHOULD NOT:

1. Express his/her own ideas or opinions or comments on any of the ideas offered by others. Be sensitive to facial expressions and body language which can speak louder than words.
2. Allow side discussions between group members. Time will be allowed in later sessions to discuss the relative merits of each idea.
3. Change the wording of any idea without the permission of the person who generated the idea.

After the generation of ideas, they should be prioritized and accountability for action planning and implementation assigned.

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Consensus does not equate to 100% agreement. As most everyone knows, achieving 100% agreement is next to impossible. Consensus does equate to 100% "buy-in" (live with) commitment to the decision. Commitment to the decision is achieved through discussions and participation among team members. Consensus occurs when each person on the team can say that he or she has had a chance to speak, has spoken, and has been sincerely heard. Consequently, each person has either persuaded the group to his or her way of thinking or has not persuaded the group. Either way, the team decision is accepted, possibly with reservation, but always with ownership and commitment to the decision and its implementation.

Consensus occurs when, after a decision has been made, all members can state the following:

1. "I believe that you understand my point of view."
2. "I believe that I understand your point of view."
3. "Whether or not I prefer this decision, I will support it because the decision was arrived at in an open and fair manner."

Obviously, this approach takes time and trust. Eventually, however, this process yields team synergy with accompanying performance improvement.

Effective consensus process + group knowledge + motivation = effective decisions.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING:

1. Avoid arguing for your own priorities. Present your position as clearly and logically as possible, but listen to and consider the other members' reactions carefully before you press your point.
2. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next-most-acceptable alternative for all parties.

3. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.
4. Avoid certain conflict-rendering techniques such as majority vote, averages, coin-flips and bargaining. When dissenting members finally agree, do not feel that they must be rewarded by having their own way on some later point.
5. Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision making process. Disagreements can help the group's decision because, with a wide range of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon the best solutions.

THE FOLLOWING FACTORS CAN INFLUENCE A GROUP WORKING TOWARDS A CONSENSUS:

1. **Leadership:** Make sure each meeting has a leader who encourages full participation and keep things moving forward.
2. **Knowledge:** Identify people on the team who are knowledgeable about the subject. Lean on them for information and advice.
3. **Communication:** Stay alert for breakdowns in communications. Make sure everyone gets to have a say and is listened to.
4. **Time:** Consensus building takes time. Make sure you take the time needed to get full participation. It will pay off later in support for the decision.
5. **Participation:** Use questioning and other techniques to get full participation.
6. **Size:** Too many members cause competition for "air time". Six to eight people is an ideal group size.
7. **Environment:** Choose a private, quiet, comfortable place that feels good to work in. People will be more relaxed and will be better participants.
8. **Process:** Decide on the problem-solving approach to use with a group and make sure everyone understands it. This will provide structure to the meetings and will improve the climate for participation.
9. **Conflict:** Find out why people feel the way they do. Then discuss the issues. If conflict is destructive or purely interpersonal, deal with it outside the meeting.
10. **Recording:** Keep visible notes on flip charts during the meeting. This will help keep everyone on board.

Decision making means using power to influence selection among choices. Decision making choices ranges from **directive** (telling) where power is closely held to **consensus** where power is dispersed. When to use which mode depends on the complexity of the task, its urgency, and the degree of impact of the project team once implemented.

SOME GUIDELINES ON USING POWER TO INFLUENCE:

1. Directive:

Best Use: When complex coordination is not needed, when knowledge is closely held, when crises or absolute stalemate prevents alternative modes or when group skills are so immature as to preclude effective discussion and resolution.

Caution: Over use prevents development of talent, restrains initiative and discourages critical thinking. This forces managers to stay in a fire-fighting mode as a convenient rationale for monopolizing the decision power.

2. Consultative and Collaborative:

Best Use: When it is made clear in advance where the power to decide remains **and what** the role of the group is. May be effective when stakeholder interests or values are in dramatic conflict (i.e., “dug in”) or when problems **are so** complex requiring technical input best synthesized by senior power held.

Caution: Over use fosters low accountability and high upward delegation. It perpetuates conflict vs. recognition of mutual interest or the “corporate good.” Managers who are inappropriately involved in the technical world use this decision power to maintain their technical status.

3. Democratic:

Best Use: When widespread commitment is not critical; when issues are routine and when a minority opinion poses no risk of non-compliance. This process reaches closure quickly.

Caution: This method can create win-lose feelings and conscious sabotage of implementation. Seldom on important issues does voting “finalize” the decision, i.e., the issue re-surfaces repeatedly (one-on-one, hidden agendas, etc.)

4. Consensus:

Best Use: When issues involve interdependencies, resource sharing, complex coordination or a significant impact on the people affected by the decision. Requires willingness to equalize power and share information. Demands astute team leader skills and resolution/patience to “trust the process”. Groups need moderate interpersonal and group skills, e.g., active listening, positive negotiation.

Caution: Takes more time. When misused, it substitutes for completed staff work, preparation and critical thinking. Consensus becomes a vehicle for “opinion giving”, holding out and delaying action. Impatience with the consensus process can lead to “horse trading” and compromise versus true agreement with the reasonableness of the decision.

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Although everyday personal influence interfaces often tend to be taken for granted, the quality of a Project Manager’s interpersonal relations, reveals competence, personality and attitude and is of great significance in the process of project implementation and performance improvement. Attention to the following basic factors is recommended.

1. Treat each interface as a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas and learn.
2. Make adequate time available for discussions with others, give them your undivided attention and avoid interruptions.
3. Create and maintain an open, natural climate.
4. Try to establish a common bond, (partnership relationship) with people, seek areas where your experiences or interests overlap.
5. Treat people with dignity, show respect for them and for their ideas, opinions and feelings.
6. Avoid gamesmanship and manipulation of people. Try to establish a “Win-Win” situation.
7. Avoid “pseudo-communication”. Be candid, objective and talk directly to people. Encourage them to relax and talk directly to you.
8. Develop and practice the art of active listening.
9. Be apathetic and sincere.
10. Use discretion and tact.
11. Avoid perception of “putting people down” or putting them on the defensive.
12. Offer advice and counsel only when asked.
13. Watch your body language, e.g., posture, facial expressions, gestures, etc.
14. Avoid the appearance of being too busy and breaking off discussions with others. If you must terminate the discussion, tactfully explain why.
15. Respect the confidence of others.
16. Develop the skill of remembering facts, names and facts about people.

USING TIME AND ENERGY EFFECTIVELY

Time is one of the three measures of project success. The clock or calendar stops for no one. We cannot delay or hasten it. We can only collect its performance output. Setting realistic time objectives and effective use of one’s time are critical to project performance. Time costs money. If we waste one, we waste the other. If we use one wisely, we enhance the value of the other.

The Project Manager who is harried by the pressures of too much to do and too little time to do it in, is much like the obese person who desperately wants to lose weight. Why? Both want to be given the secret trick or technique, a way to melt off the pounds or magically put more hours in the day. They want all of this with no change in basic behavior.

Unfortunately, this is nonsense. There is no painless way to lose weight or to use time better. But just as there are basic principles of nutrition and weight control, there are basic principles of time management and effective practices logically follow these principles. Effective time management, like effective dieting depends on will power and self-discipline. There has to be a real desire and not just idle wishfulness.

Worrying about effective time management and not doing anything about it is a devastating source of anxiety to many Project Managers. It is far better to “do and not worry” or “not do and not worry” than it is to “worry and not do”. The latter leads only to ulcers.

The first step in time management is conducting a time analysis and finding out where you are spending your time, who or what controls your time and what are your time wastes. Time wastes must be recognized if they are to be avoided.

The following are some of the most significant “time robbers”:

1. PLANNING AREA

- a. Fuzzy objectives.
- b. No objectives, priorities or daily plans.
- c. Shifting priorities.
- d. Leaving tasks unfinished.
- e. Fighting fires – crisis management.
- f. No self-imposed deadlines (daydreaming).
- g. Attempting too much – unrealistic time estimates.

2. ORGANIZING AREA

- a. Personal disorganization – cluttered desk.
- b. Duplication of effort.
- c. Confused responsibility and authority.

3. STAFFING AREA

- a. Untrained/inadequate staff.
- b. Under or over staffed.

4. COMMUNICATING AREA

- a. Unclear, under or over communicating.
- b. Failure to actively listen.
- c. Poor meeting management.

5. DIRECTING AREA

- a. Doing it yourself.
- b. Too much involvement in routine details.
- c. Ineffective or no delegations.
- d. No teamwork.
- e. Not managing conflict.
- f. Inability to handle change.
- g. Snap decisions.
- h. Indecision – procrastinating.
- i. Wanting **ALL** the facts.
- j. Decision by committee

6. CONTROLLING AREA

- a. Telephone/Visitors.
- b. Incomplete information or invalid information.
- c. No standard or progress reports.
- d. Over control.
- e. Mistakes and ineffective performance.
- f. Overlooking poor performance
- g. The inability to say “**No**”.

SOME OF THE REWARDS FOR EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT:

1. Increased performance – focusing on what is important.
2. More job satisfaction – excellence in performance.
3. Improved personal relationships – quality time will increase.
4. Reduced time anxiety and tension – worry, guilt, and fear reduce mental effectiveness.
5. Better health – less stress, better eating habits and more time for exercise.

USE THE FOLLOWING RULES FOR EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT:

1. Conduct a time analysis (time log).
2. Plan blocks of undisturbed time for important things.
3. Ration time and attention in proportion to importance and urgency.
4. Establish priorities.
5. Reserve your periods of peak energy for priority work.
6. Train your system (boss, subordinates, team members, and peers).
7. Focus attention on task at hand.
8. Practice delegation.
9. Practice management by exception.
10. Focus on opportunities, not on problems.
11. Tackle each task separately and freshly.

ANALYZE:

1. What am I doing that I don't have to be doing at all?
2. What am I doing that can be done better by someone else?
3. What am I doing that could be done sufficiently by someone else?
4. Am I establishing the right priorities for my activities?

SUMMARY FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

In summary, Project Managers face multiple challenges in directing their projects to successful completion. They must adapt to multiple roles that are imperfectly prescribed – those of initiator, communicator, integrator, team leader, decision maker and climate creator. They must continually guide project team members with diverse backgrounds, interests, and personal values and needs toward clear but adaptive objectives, securing their commitment, developing an effective process and climate, and creating the mechanics for free flow of information.

People must be motivated to contribute; to build a supportive atmosphere where team members work together, not against each other. The Project Manager must rely on influence over, respect from, and acceptance by the team members. The ability to do so is completely dependent upon the competency of the Project Manager in leadership and managerial skills.

Conflict emanating from multiple sources is characteristic of the project environment. One of the most demanding tasks for the Project Manager is to build a supportive team while coping with conflicts.

There are four (4) important **project manager characteristics**, which greatly affect the performance of the Project Manager. They are accessibility, credibility, visibility, and a sense of priority.

1. Accessibility - The Project Manager must:

- a. Communicate with, establish and maintain effective partnership (contractual) relationships with customers, team members and supervisors.
- b. Maximize his accessibility opportunities.

2. Credibility

- a. Credibility implies integrity and trust.
- b. Credibility comes from the image of effective leadership and managerial skills, accountability and successful performance.
- c. Credibility must be refueled often.
- d. Making success visible to others increases one's credibility.

3. Visibility - The Project Manager must:

- a. Be aware of the amount of visibility he really needs.
- b. Make a good impression when presenting his project to others.
- c. Use team members to help regulate the visibility he really needs.
- d. Make sure managers who need to know are aware of what he and the team are doing and their accomplishments.
- e. Sell the specific importance of his project – relate it to the overall goals of the organization.
- f. Stress competitive aspects – changes for success.
- g. Secure testimonial support from others.
- h. Emphasize “spin-offs” which may result.
- i. Sell priority on a one-to-one basis.

4. Sense of Priority - The Project Manager Must:

- a. Sell the specific importance of his project – relate it to the overall goals of the organization.
- b. Stress competitive aspects – chances for success.
- c. Secure testimonial support from others.
- d. Emphasize “spin-offs” which may result.
- e. Sell priority on a one-to-one basis.