Mid-Semester Report

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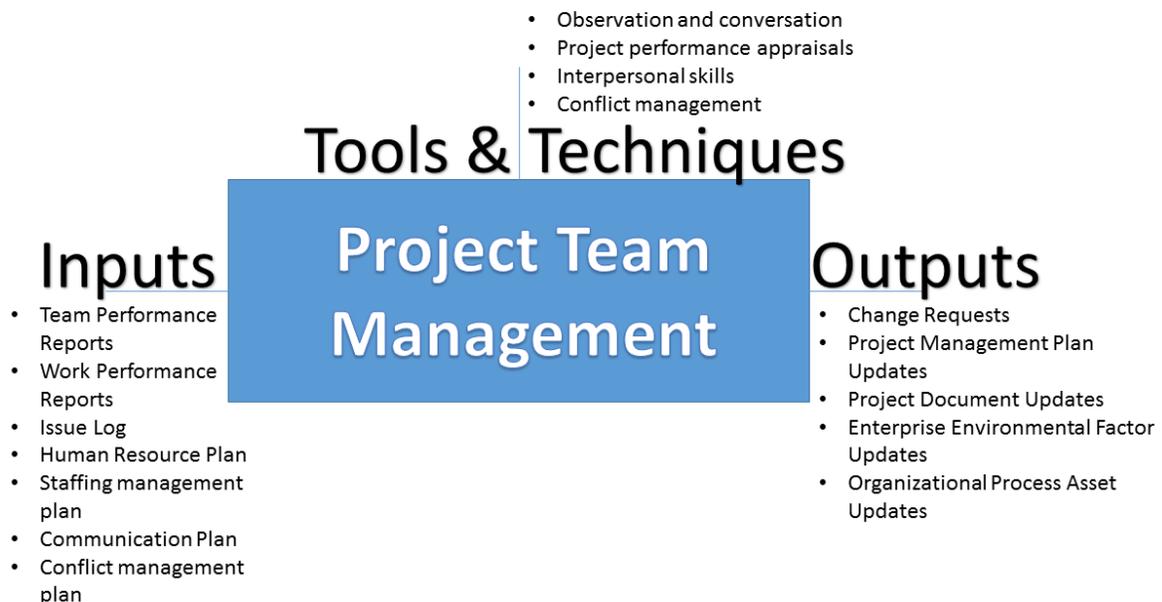
ISQS 4350

13 April 2016

The Art of Project Team Management

Project Team Management

Project team management is undertaken during the controlling and executing phases of the project lifecycle. It is used to monitor and control the effectiveness of the project team; and is monitored by the team leader, and team manager. Project team management is also a process under PMBOK's Human Resource Management. The assessment of the effectiveness of the project team is determined by the project team plan. Throughout the following paper there will be discussion of what the perfect project team is, and the best practice for the management of the team. Shown, in figure 1.1 below, is the inputs and outputs, chart for project team management (Schwalbe).

- Observation and conversation
- Project performance appraisals
- Interpersonal skills
- Conflict management

Tools & Techniques

Inputs

Project Team Management

Outputs

- Team Performance Reports
- Work Performance Reports
- Issue Log
- Human Resource Plan
- Staffing management plan
- Communication Plan
- Conflict management plan

- Change Requests
- Project Management Plan Updates
- Project Document Updates
- Enterprise Environmental Factor Updates
- Organizational Process Asset Updates

(Figure 1)

The Perfect Project Team

The characteristics of the perfect project team are varied. But, there are quite a few similarities between all of the definitions. Below is a list from Glenn Parker's *Team Players and Teamwork*:

- Clear Purpose—vision, mission, and goals have been defined.

- Informality—informal, comfortable, relaxed climate.

- Participation—everyone is encouraged to participate and contribute.

- Listening—members use effective listening techniques.

- Civilized Disagreement—members are comfortable with conflict

- Consensus Decisions—open discussion of everyone's ideas leading to an acceptable solution.

- Open Communication—members are free to express their feelings; no hidden agendas.

- Clear Roles and Work Assignments—clear expectations of role for each member.

- Shared Leadership—formal leader but leadership role can shift at times depending upon circumstances.

- External Relations—members develop outside relation-ships and build credibility in other parts of the organization

- Style Diversity—members emphasize attention to task and goals and focus on process.

- Self-Assessment—periodic examination of how well the team is functioning. (Meier)

It is important to understand each member of the project team, prior to selecting them. As well as to build a project team with an equal spread of skills. There cannot be one person carrying everyone else's weight. As the saying goes, you are only as strong as your weakest link.

Best Practice for Managing a Project Team

The Road towards the best practice for project team management starts with a great team leader. It is their task to provide the monitoring and controlling of the project team. Meaning, that if the team leader is sub-par, so shall be the team. According to PMBOK, there are three key strategies to successful team management: Motivation theories, influence and power, and team effectiveness. All three of the strategies deal with assessing the performance and conformity of the team.

Motivation Theories are the key to the best practice for project team management. If a team is not properly motivated to complete the project, it will fail. Motivation theories are based on rewards. Some of these rewards are: recognition, advancement, and job growth. These motivation theories depend heavily on understanding the needs of each project team member. As written by Shivshanker Shenoy, project managers must understand Maslow's Hierarchy of needs; which is based on physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs. The following chart, figure 2, explains these needs in detail (Shenoy).
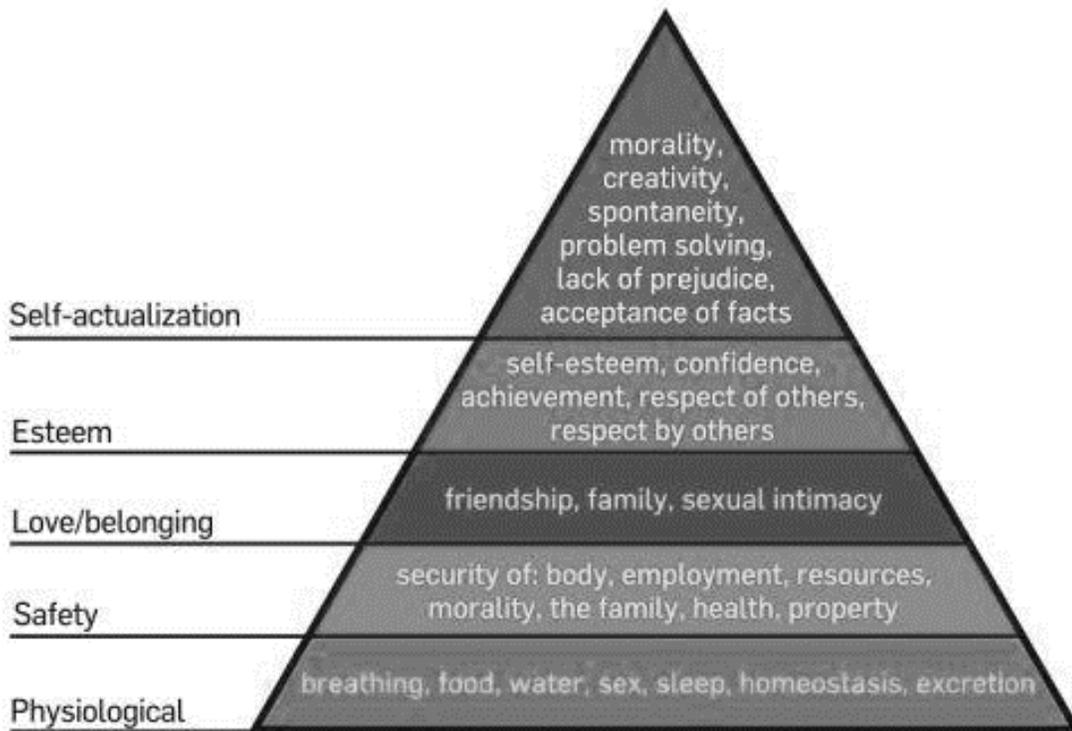
(Figure 2)

Along with Maslow, project managers need to be familiar with Victor Vroom's expectancy

theory. A theory that discusses the expectation of intended results, based on personal

assumptions. This theory is based on three variables: Expectancy, Instrumentality, and Valence.

Expectancy is based on the personal expectation leads to desired performance. Meaning that

expectations must equal the desired outcome. Instrumentality is the idea that performance leads

to favorable outcome. Which is similar to the motivational theory of rewards. Valence is the

importance one places on needs, goals, and rewards. Such as their esteem needs showcased in

figure 2.

It is important to understand the underlying make-up of each team member; in order to

fully understand how they work, and form an assessment around that performance. As well as

create motivation techniques that will successfully motivate the team. It is vital to the success of the project that there is the ability to measure the progress of both the project deliverables, and the performance of the team members.

Influence and power are strategies that depend highly on the project team leader. Influence is how the expertise, and work challenges, provided by the team leader, effect the project team members. The expertise provided by team leaders needs to be concise and helpful. As written by Eric Dontigney, "if team members recognize the project manager as an expert on the project topic, either through education or experience, it prompts them to defer to the manager's judgment" (Dontigney). A boastful, and demanding team leader will lead to a decrease in team moral. As will unattainable project goals. The team leader must understand what motivates their team, before deciding which challenges will work best. Power is how influential team leaders are. There are multiple different ways to influence team members, but the best way is rewards. People react most positively to rewards, as opposed to referent or coercive powers or influence.

Effectiveness is how well the project team members are working together. The best practice for project team management effectiveness is following Covey's 7 habits. These habits are listed below:

1. Be proactive

2. Begin with the end in mind

3. Put first things first

4. Think win/win

5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood

6. Synergize

7. Sharpen the saw (Schwalbe)

When project team management follows theses 7 habits, it leads to a higher chance of overall project success.

The 7 habits also correlate to how project managers should handle conflict management. Conflicts arise in all project teams; no matter how efficient they are otherwise. It is extremely important for best practices that a project team leader, and manager, have conflict management plans. The best way to handle conflict is to be proactive and sit down and talk with the conflicting parties. Then, the project leader must do as the 5th habit suggests, "seek first to understand, then to be understood" (Schwalbe). If the conflict is not resolved by communication, the team leader must decide how to move forward. But, most conflicts end once the parties sit down and talk through the problem.

As an organization, Google is known for its effective project teams; and was listed as the top ranking workplace in Fortune Magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For" (Fortune Magazine). In order to fully understand what the best practice for project team management is, an analysis of Google's project team management must take place. As they are the leader in innovation, and workplace happiness.

Google project management

As the top ranking workplace in Fortune Magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For," Google is the leading authority in project management. Specifically project-team management. The reason Google is one of the top companies to work for, is their unique and innovative stance on monitoring and controlling their employees. Google Campuses around the globe are considered hubs for innovation and entrepreneurship. As stated on the Google Entrepreneur site,

"We build community hubs, called Campuses, where entrepreneurs come to learn, share ideas, and launch great startups" ("Google for Entrepreneurs"). Google does not adhere to the workplace standards from the 1960's. There are no bosses staring down the backs of their subordinates. Rather, the atmosphere is relaxed, and employees are given the freedom to spend their time as they see fit; to allow a better flow of creativity. But, it is the constant flow of communication that sets Google apart. Google's employees, or Googlers, have the opportunity to shares ideas or opinions with top-level management. As stated on their website:

> We strive to maintain the open culture often associated with startups, in which everyone is a hands-on contributor and feels comfortable sharing ideas and opinions. In our weekly all-hands ("TGIF") meetings—not to mention over email or in the cafe—Googlers ask questions directly to Larry, Sergey and other execs about any number of company issues. Our offices and cafes are designed to encourage interactions between Googlers within and across teams, and to spark conversation about work as well as play. ("Our Culture – Company – Google.")

Communication is the key to the best practice of project team management. If there isn't a clear and useful communications plan, the project team will fail.

Based on the inputs listed in figure 1, and the analysis of Google's team management, the best practices for project team management are as follows:

1. Freedom to Innovate

2. An open flow of communication

3. Pre-determined standards for team member efficiency

4. An emotionally intuitive project team leader and manager

5. Project guideline that are not strict nor restricting

Innovations for Managing a Project Team

Innovations for project team management begins with the assembly of the project team. If the project team works well together, project team management is much easier. The project team members should be chosen, not just based on skill, but by how well they work together. One of the common problems in project team management is the "lack of accountability" of project team members; including team managers and leaders ("Top 10 Project Management Challenges"). To account for this issue, team members should be able to rate their fellow team members; just like how it is done in schools. This leads to better accountability, and an allowance for better communication. As most individuals would rather talk through a problem first, before getting the offender in any sort of trouble.

Another innovation for project team management is creating more opportunities for the project team members to get to know one another throughout the project. Currently, most team members only speak to one another during work hours. If they were given more social atmospheres to get to know one another in, they could begin to better understand the flow of the team. And, the better people know one another, the better they can communicate and work together. It also becomes easier for the project team leader to motivate the team, as they will know the team members on a more personal level.

The last innovation for project team management is including "free-time" for the project team throughout the work day. This has already been implemented by a number of organizations, but the industry standard still enforces strict work standards. Which can cause team members high levels of stress, and the project may not meet the high expectations of the consumers. Free-time would be an hour a day, not during the allotted lunch time, where team members could go work out, or nap. This time of relaxation will allow their minds to be cleared, and also give them

a chance to work off any stress. In the end, this will lead to more effective and efficient project

teams. Which is the purpose of project team management.

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