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NSSA-370
HW#12

2) What actions of a project manager can be measured for success?

One of the project manager's main responsibilities, as discussed in previous chapters, includes actively monitoring and controlling all six success factors (scope, time, cost, resources, performance, and value), by keeping each factor right on target, in order to ensure project management success, which will increase the chances of project success. Chapter 12 of the textbook also summarizes other measurable actions taken by the project manager to ensure project success, which were also covered in previous chapters. Project managers must possess professional skills, people skills, and relational skills to perform their roles effectively. Professional skills are needed for project managers to realize their levels of authority, accountability, and responsibility; and all three ethical drivers influence whether everyone else in the project organization (including project team members and upper-management individuals) sees project managers as reliable in that they can be depended upon as and when needed, and display integrity/a strong ethic in their job performance.

Professional skills also include technical, organizational, and soft skills. Though project managers are not required to be tech-savvy – because of the unlikelihood to fully adapt to technology changes that suit market and organizational demands – and can hone their technical skills (*e.g., the capability of using industry-based software tools*) on the job, project managers need to have at least sufficient organizational skills to effectively and efficiently manage projects. For instance, project managers have to be organized in order to actively plan structured activities & tasks for the project; constantly manage both necessary project deliverables and each project success factor, based on key metrics and results from project audits; and consistently update schedules for project activities to be more realistic, and to accurately reflect on both strategic & result-based changes in the progression of the project and the alignment of such changes with organizational objectives. Most importantly, project managers need to be decisive – even though their conscious and unconscious bias will interfere with decisions, such as the selections of projects and team members – because project managers must lead and manage the project & every stakeholder involved, at the same time, to get closer to both project management success and project success; if project managers lack confidence and/or doesn't take full ownership of their decisions and actions, other project-involved stakeholders would gradually lose interest, or find it pointless to continue with the project, because of unclear expectations and potential loss of project value.

Besides the high-level descriptions of required professional skills, which make project managers work-focused, project managers also need to be human-centered to effectively manage their team members by supporting team members individually and professionally, and encouraging a psychologically safe work environment: a major factor of a positive team culture. Regardless of their personality traits, project managers who

take pride in their roles have to exemplify positive behavior to all project-involved stakeholders, including project team members. Even after project managers lead by example, they need to continuously apply such mentality in order to maintain full collaboration internally in the project organization, and cooperation with external stakeholders. In both cases, project managers need to be transparent by being available as and when needed, but also communicating with all project-involved stakeholders regularly. Project managers can communicate effectively by sharing their knowledge and lessons learned, and by clarifying, based on their own understandings, areas of concern that would affect the project's path to success (*i.e., high-level requirements & specifications; schedule changes; project status; individual concerns – project managers need to keep team members and stakeholders informed, and either help external stakeholders to realize their benefits or ensure they get the reward they deserve, after coming to contractual agreements*).

Accordingly, project managers have to continuously gain better understanding of the project's and/or organizational vision in order to remain responsive and outcome-and-performance-driven; and frequently check in with all project-involved stakeholders to keep them on track with the progression of the project. Again, project success isn't guaranteed, but with effective management in various areas (i.e., project success factors, human resources, project risks, etc.), not only will the project have a greater chance of success, but also project managers are able to build and maintain stronger relationships with project-involved stakeholders, which could both enhance project managers' reputations and maximize work productivity in order to launch a product into the market faster.

18) How can groups come to decisions?

First, the process of decision-making as a group depends on the amount of contribution per project team member, assuming each team member either has relevant knowledge and information to share, or is open to both share with the team and be vulnerable to mistakes – if they're aware of the project status and confident about their abilities, despite having to face ongoing uncertainty; team members' willingness to share is also influenced by other factors, such as psychological safety (*in that the project team feels welcoming, and the project manager regularly checks to see how each team member is doing*) and specific standards set by the project manager, using legitimate power and/or reward power, that every team member complies with for the best of the team. Second, there are few kinds of decisions that can be made individually and/or collaboratively; [autocratic decisions] are made either individually (*in which the project manager owns his/her decision, and expects team members to agree with him/her*) or as a group, using existing knowledge and information that's currently available. Similarly, [consulting decisions] are made either individually or as a group (*such that a consultant – an internal or external subject-matter expert – will partake in the team's decision-making process, gather input from each team member, consolidate the inputs, and facilitate the communication of these inputs to the project manager for him/her to make the decision. This type of decision is based off the Delphi Technique discussed in Chapter 3 of the textbook*).

Among the decision types, [joint team effort] is most relevant to this question, because decisions don't get finalized unless they're of good quality, and fully accepted by all project-involved stakeholders (*autocratic decisions should not dictate the progression of the project; and consulting decisions would be acceptable if they're carefully reviewed, and considered accurate by the majority of project-involved stakeholders*). Together, team members brainstorm possible solutions and alternatives, or if using the Ring-Exchange Technique – as discussed in Chapter 3 – they'll take turns brainstorming and writing down their thoughts before discussing them as a team, then building upon each other's ideas. Once enough ideas are prepared, team members will validate the ideas, verbally (*which saves time, but can also be ineffective because of possible biasness and words left unsaid*), or by applying useful decision-making tools, such as the Thought Process Map (TMAP) and the Nominal Grouping Technique (NGT). After ideas are accepted – especially by key stakeholders – the project team needs to define the project's objectives; rely on scientific tools (e.g., DMAIC process) to gather information/details in order to better understand knowns, unknowns, and project constraints; and align the thought-process-mapping outputs with the accepted ideas in order to create a clearly defined roadmap for the project's path to success, and identify other necessary tools for the project. On the whole, groups come to their decisions by making use of necessary decision-making tools and by involving all stakeholders in the project, including the project team members; such inclusion helps to establish trust and positive work experiences, make good decisions, and gain both acceptance and satisfaction with the decisions made.

Grade: 98 / 100

Professor's Feedback:

2. What better way to start than embracing the six success factors. You took a wholistic approach (not being bound by chap 12 content) in answering this question which was good.

There are many variables to success discussed in chap 12. I don't particularly like the question's wording "measured for success" because the answer needs to contain variables/traits which are not quantitative....that's just a side comment.

You probably hit on my top two variables: effective communication and decision-making.

18. This is another question whose answer can draw upon knowledge gained from previous chapters. Your first couple of sentences are really talking about some of the tools in chap 3 such as brainstorming.

You covered the three decision-making topics from chap 12 so there was good coverage for this question.