Risk management is a process of forecasting and planning for potential challenges to the project. Identification and analysis of project risks are required for effective risk management [1]. As stated in the given report, communication problems are the number one risks to the success of projects. Some risks of project failure are associated directly with inadequate communication and interpersonal skills [2]. The ability to communicate both in writing and verbally with others in a team environment is important, a skilled resource who cannot communicate well can often pose a greater risk to the project. However, the communication processes are challenging. Ninety percent of a project manager’s job is communication [5], the lack of communication hurts a project manager’s ability to manage risks. The given report provides insights into where risks exist and how to migrate project risks of communication breakdown.

Three main project risks associated with the risk of communication breakdown addressed in the given report are organizations-related risk, resource risk and staffing risk. Moreover, the given report prepares the appropriate risk management strategies through project risk identification and qualitative risk assessment.

1. Organizations-related risk.

This type of risk relates to defects in the organizational structure. Organizational issues may have adverse effects on project outcomes. For example, distant and separated teams often make more errors than teams that are close in contact, because it is difficult to build a team if the team never works together in proximity and communicate adequately. Another example of organizational issue is organizational structures such as functional organization and weak matrix organization can create communication barrier or even conflicts [2].

In order to overcome communication obstacles between team members, the team should enhance project communications, for example, everyone should meet other team members on a day-to-day basis from the beginning of the project; project manager may identify the type of organization firstly and build time into project schedule for effective team-building activities. One essential way to facilitate communications is through proper meetings, to build teams, make group decision, solve issues, and achieve goals. Another simple and effective way is to develop and use standard communication templates [5]. Templates can be pulled from previous similar projects and to be developed or modified to meet immediate communicating needs.

1. Resource risk.

This type of risk relates to tight budget and time, and a lack of upper management support for team-building activities. Time constraint is likely the most important resource that everyone acknowledges. If there is no time for new teams to build relationships the communication suffers [2].

The risk mitigation strategies include encouraging communications, building team identifications, giving team members a sense of ownership, encouraging them to talk about risks freely, and involving team members in the risk management process [6]. It is crucial to make sure teams are aware of these risks and what to do if they happen. To sum up, a more bottom-up approach can help solve this problem.

1. Staffing risk.

Alongside non-people resources, we also must consider staffing risks [3]. One aspect of staffing risk is that gaining and losing team members all the time can make team building very difficult [2]. A project might involve dozens even hundreds of employees and it is essential to manage issues of leaving of key personnel. Not having the right number of people is a common factor influencing the failure of projects. The given report gives several ways to reduce the impact of this risk, like document everything related to the project, incorporate a buddy system to shorten the learning curve for new team members, bridge the gap between diversified team members, etc. [2]

Project managers themselves is another aspect of staffing risk. The project manager is responsible for ensuring effective communication amongst the team and ensuring real, two-way communication between the project team and customers [4]. Inadequately trained or inexperienced project manager often increases the project risks. Failed projects frequently show that project managers were unaware of this kind of risk [5]. Project managers should follow these guidelines to run effective communications: start by identifying their own weaknesses, develop skill sets over time, always include a team-building element, keep the communication simple, work together with team and communicate risks in order to mitigate them ahead of time. Project managers should aim to share the right risk information at the right time with the right people and can follow up all task assignments.

Throughout the project it is important to ensure effective communication among all levels – stakeholders, managers, team members, customer representatives. Project team participation and face-to-face interactions are essential for building team relationships and trust; sharing information and getting feedback about risks can greatly increase the probability of success. A project manager must plan early, plan often, and make communication a top priority of risk management; furthermore, a project manager should strongly encourage teams to think proactively and communicate about risks throughout the project. The key element to success is to communicate again, again, and again.

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