

## Week 2 – The Project Manager's Job

Peter So, project management in your organizations today. What does the job of a project manager typically involve?

Hao On a daily basis I see project management focusing on two things, two main things. Number one is keep the communication with all the stakeholders going, as well as communication with the project team members. Know what's going on, what's happening, that kind of thing – this is very important for making sure progress is being made on a daily basis. The second issue I do see them focusing on as a project manager is focusing on issue resolution whether it is a schedule slippage, or cost overrun, or scope (whether it's defined or not defined). Those are the two areas I see them focused on a daily basis.

Peter Thank you, Hao. Helen?

Helen Well, I would echo what Hao said. I think those are definitely the two main points: communication and issues. Regarding the issues, I would also say that entails things like escalation, making sure that the right people are aware of the right things so that we can help solve the problems. Sometimes we need to ensure that the project manager understands that there is a support system behind him or her and so, I would respectfully say that they are part of the team. And so, part of their role, I would think is escalation to the right people at the right time, making sure that that helps in the issue resolution and obviously in the communication that Hao was talking about.

Peter Okay, and Bruce?

Bruce Well, I'm going to repeat the same things somewhat and I'm going to give some percentages. I think when you look at our project teams, our project managers spend about 80% of their time in direct communications so, in other words, either on the phone, in meetings... and it's a pretty large group of folks. We have a lot of subcontractors that we interact with, and with our clients and our consultants. And so, 80% of the time is conversing with them either, and then I have a bit of a breakdown from there. Probably about 60- 70% of that time is spent problem solving of some kind or clarifying issues or clarifying documents. So either you're clarifying to the people downstream or you're getting clarification from people upstream or straightening out people upstream, that combination of things. And then about 30 - 40% of the time is dealing with money issues.

When you're in construction, there's a lot of money being spent, so you're talk about \$100 million dollar job over the course of a couple years, you're talking about several million dollars a month, you have to make sure people get paid - it's their livelihood. It's about making sure people

get the documentation in to get paid and we get our documentation in to get paid so it's about money issues. So that's a good chunk of it. And probably the other 15 - 20% of the days are spent in documenting things, getting the ducks in order that says, here's what happened because at the end of eighteen months you forget what happened on day 12 so it's all that documentation that's part of dealing with large sums of money and make sure you know where the bodies are buried.

Peter      Thank you.