Musing 1

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Any project manager needs to know that the team they are working with is acting a cohesive unit in order to complete the project within the time and budget constraints. However, often times conflicts within the team, or that trickle into the team, can cause difficulties. While project managers aren’t capable of fixing *all* team conflicts that can arise, they can have a powerful impact on keeping the team focused on the project and not on conflicts. To be able to have that impact, project managers need to keep a keen eye out for problems that may arise within the team. They also need to know the members of the team sufficient enough that they can detect when there are conflicts building under the surface.

One of the primary ways that conflict can arise amongst a project team is through poor communication. While all team members are working towards a common goal, sometimes they come from very different backgrounds. “It's important for a project manager to be able to identify the cause of any misunderstandings and work to resolve things as quickly as possible” (Alexander, para 4).

Another reason for conflict on a project team is limited resources available to complete the project. Almost no matter what the scope of the project is, this will be an issue, so a project manager needs to be prepared to deal with it. “Resources are typically limited in most companies, and this only creates a tug-of-war because of conflicting goals and perceived priorities. A project manager plays a key role in identifying and scheduling all priorities and associated resources to meet those priorities” (Alexander, 2016). Failure to react to this conflict can result in wasted time as members compete for resources for their various parts of the projects.

Although there are many additional causes of team conflicts, the last one I will focus on is accountability. This is, perhaps, where a project manager can have the biggest impact. When each phase of the project begins, assignments and responsibilities are given to the different members of the team. The project manager helps to ensure that the responsibilities are divided fairly among the team. They are also in charge of following-up with the team periodically to see what kind of progress is being made on the various aspects of the project. This puts the project manager in a unique position to be able to hold team members accountable.

# References

Alexander, M. (2016, November 21). *How a project manager can smooth interdepartmental conflict*. Retrieved from CIO: http://www.cio.com/article/3143564/project-management/how-a-project-manager-can-smooth-interdepartmental-conflict.html