



# SOFTWARE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

## STAFFING IN SOFTWARE PROJECTS

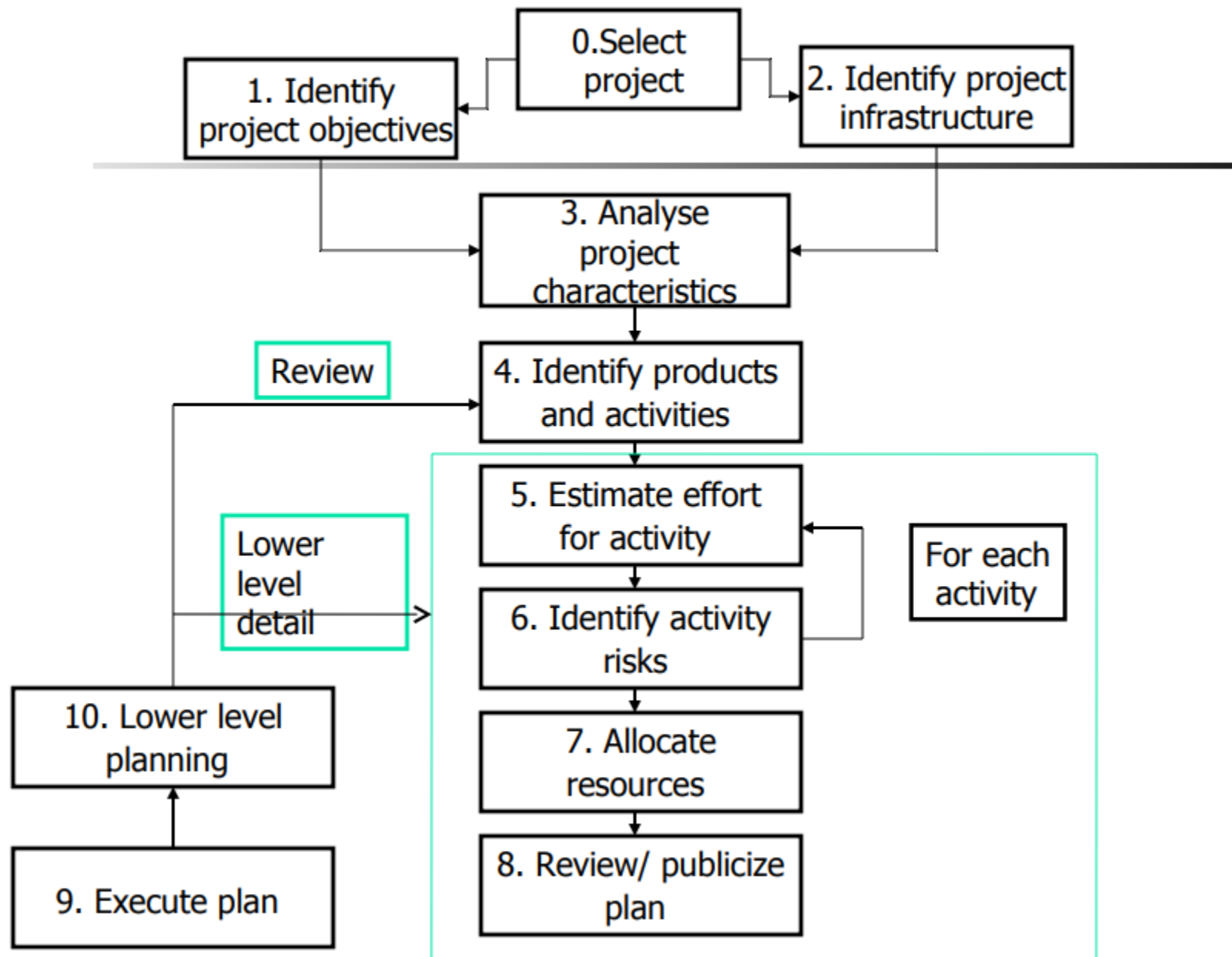
### Module 5

PRIYANKA SINGH

# Introduction

- We will look at some aspects of organizational behaviour (OB) research. There will be three concerns: staff selection, staff development and, which will be dealt with in more detail, staff motivation.
- We will look at how the project leader can encourage effective group working and decision making while balancing this, where needed, by purposeful leadership. The final part of the chapter looks at some of the more formal aspects of organizational structures.
- The issues raised in this chapter have impacts at all stages of project planning and execution but in particular at the following points (shown in figure on next page)
  - although perhaps having little control over organizational structure, the project leader needs to be aware of its implications (Step 2);
  - the scope and nature of activities can be set in a way that will enhance staff motivation (Step 4);
  - many risks to project success relate to staffing (Step 6);
  - the qualities of individual members of staff should be taken into account when allocating staff to activities (Step 7)

# 'Step Wise' - an overview



# Understanding behaviour

- People with practical experience of working on projects invariably identify the handling of people as one of the most important aspects of project management. What project manager will want to know is whether the effective and sensitive management of staff comes only from experience or whether guidance can be useful. The field of social science known as organizational behaviour (OB) helps.
- This has evolved theories that try to explain people's behaviour and that tend to be structured 'If A is the situation then B is likely to result'. Attempts are then made to observe behaviour or to conduct experiments where variables for A and B are measured and a statistical relationship between the two variables is sought. Unlike physical science, it is rarely, if ever, the case that it can be said that B must always follow A.
- A major problem is that in the real world there is bound to be a very wide range of influences on a situation, many of which will not be apparent to the observer. It is therefore difficult to decide which set of research findings is relevant. A danger is that we end up with a set of maxims that are little better than superstitions.

# Organizational behaviour a background

- The roots of studies in OB can be traced back to work done in the late 19th and early 20,th centuries by Frederick Taylor.
- By studying the way that manual workers did tasks, he attempted to work out the most productive way of doing these tasks. The workers were then trained to do the work in this way.
- Taylor had three basic objectives:
  - to select the best person for the job;
  - to instruct such people in the best methods;
  - to give incentives in the form of higher wages to the best workers.
- The conditions under which the staff worked also affects productivity.
- OB researchers discovered that the state of the minds of the people influenced productivity.

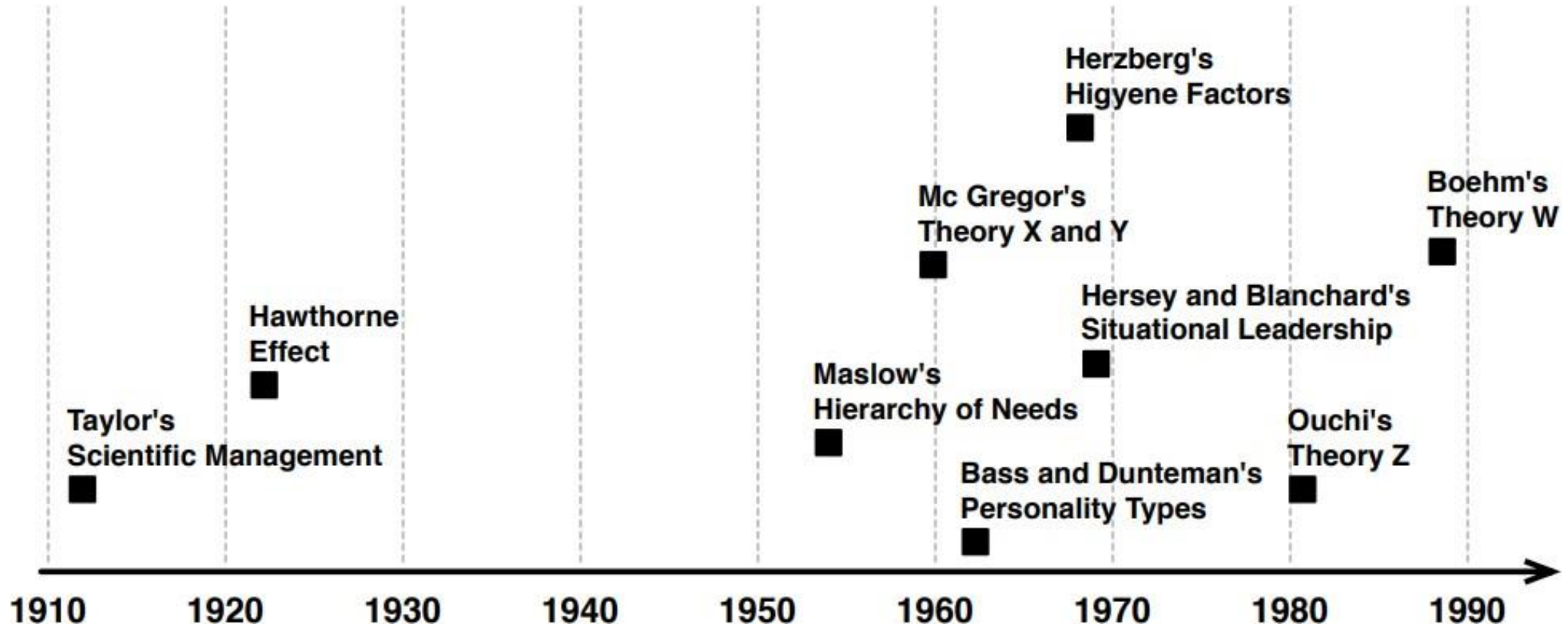
# Cont...

- Taylorism' is often represented as crude and mechanistic these days. Interestingly though, the Taylorist approach is one that is adopted, in pan, in modern sports coaching.
- Understanding what motivates people at work is difficult (but with a great potential impact).
- During the 1920s, OB researchers discovered, while carrying out a now famous set of tests on the conditions under which staff worked best, that not only did a group of workers for whom conditions were improved increase their work-rates, but a control group, for whom conditions were unchanged, also increased their work-rates.
- Simply showing a concern for what workers did increased productivity. This illustrated how the state of mind of workers influenced their productivity.

# Cont...

- The cash-oriented view of work of some managers can thus be contrasted with a more rounded vision of people in their place of work. The two attitudes were labelled Theory X and Theory Y by Donald McGregor.
- The Hawthorne effect (studies about the effect of lighting conditions on productivity) demonstrates how difficult it is to come out with accurate theories
- Organized in:
  - Motivational factors
  - Personality traits/Interaction types
  - Management strategies

# Timeline





# Theory X - Donald McGregor.

- The average human has an innate dislike of work.
- There is a need therefore for coercion, direction and control.
- People tend to avoid responsibility.
- Human beings are poorly creative in solving organizational problems.
- Motivation is mainly related to satisfying physical/security needs.



# Theory Y - Donald McGregor



- People are, on average, very creative
- Motivation is often self-realization and self-esteem
- Work is as natural as rest or play
- External control and coercion are not the only ways of bringing effort directed towards an organization's end
- Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement
- The average human can learn to accept and further seek responsibility
- The capacity to exercise imagination and other creative qualities is widely distributed.

# Cont...

- The two theories entail different styles of leaderships:
  - Theory X entails an autocratic leadership
  - Theory Y entails a climate of trust
- Managers will apply theory X or Y management style according to their opinion of the people they deal with.
- One way of judging whether a manager espouses Theory X or Theory Y is to observe how the manager's staff react when the boss is absent: if there is no discernible change, then this is a Theory Y environment: if everyone visibly relaxes, it is a Theory X environment. McGregor's distinction between the two theories also draw attention to the way that expectations influence behavior.
- If a manager or teacher assumes that you are going to work diligently and do well, then you are likely to try and meet these expectations.

# 1- Selecting the right person for the job

- Taylor stressed the need for the right person for the job. Many factors, such as the use of software tools and methodologies, affect programming productivity. However, one of the biggest differences in software development performance is among individuals.
- **What sort of characteristics should they be looking for?** Should they go, for example, for the experienced programmer or the new graduate with the first class mathematics degree?
- It is extremely dangerous to generalize but looking specifically at behavioral characteristics, the American researcher Cheney found that the most important influence on programmer productivity seemed to be **experience**.
- Besides the **s/w tools** the individuals selected for a job affect the programming productivity.
- Person who can **communicate well** and more importantly; with users. .

The American researchers Conger and Zawacki found that computing people would appear to have much weaker 'social needs' than people in other professions. They quote Gerald Weinberg; 'If asked most programmers preferably say they prefer to work alone where they wouldn't get disturbed by other people.' This is reflected in the problem that people attracted to writing software, and are good at it, will not make good managers later in their careers.

# The recruitment process

- Recruitment is often an organizational responsibility.
  - **Eligible candidates**- have a curriculum vitae which shows the right and required details
  - **Suitable candidates**- who can actually do the job well.
- A general approach might be the following.
  - **Create a job specification**- Advice is needed, as there will be legal implications in an official document. However, formally or informally, the requirements of the job should be documented and agreed.
  - **Create a job holder profile**- Using the job specification, a profile of the person needed to carry out the job is constructed. The qualities, qualifications, education and experience required would be listed.
  - **Obtain applicants**- Typically, an advertisement would be placed, either within the organization or outside in the trade or local press. The job holder profile would be examined carefully to identify the medium most likely to reach the largest number of potential applicants at least cost. For example, if a specialist is needed it would make sense to advertise in the relevant specialist journal.

- ***Examine CVs-*** These should be read carefully and compared to the job holder profile- nothing is more annoying for all concerned than when people have CVs which clearly indicate that they are not eligible for the job and yet they are called for interview.
- ***Interviews etc.-*** A number of different selection techniques can be tried, including aptitude tests, personality tests, and the examination of samples of previous work. All these methods must be related to specific qualities detailed in the job holder profile. Interviews are the most commonly used method. It is better if there is more than one interview session with an applicant and with each session there should not be more than two interviewers because a greater number reduces the possibility of follow-up questions and discussion.
- ***Other procedures-*** References will need to be taken up where necessary, and a medical examination might be needed.

## 2- Instruction in the best methods

- When a new member of the team is recruited, the team leader will need to plan that **person's induction** into the team very carefully. Where a project is already well under way, this might not be easy. However, the effort should be made - it should pay off eventually as the new recruit will become a fully effective member of the team more quickly.
- The team leader should also be aware of the need to assess continually the training needs of their team members. Just as you formulate a user requirement before considering a new system, and you construct a job holder profile before recruiting a member of staff, so a **training** needs profile is drawn up for each staff member before you consider specific courses. **Some training can be provided by commercial training companies.** Where money is tight, other sources of training should be considered but training should not be abandoned altogether even if it consists only of a team member's being told to find out about a new software tool and then demonstrating it to colleagues.
- The methods learnt need, of course, to be actually applied. Reviews and inspections should help to ensure this.



# 3- Motivation

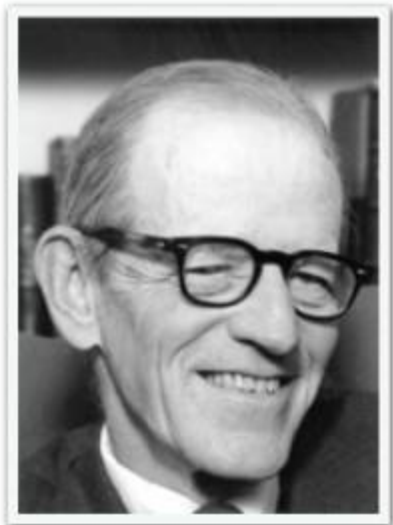
- Motivation and application can often make up for shortfalls in innate skills
- Taylor's approach - financial incentives
- Abraham Maslow (1908-1970)
  - motivations vary from individual to individual. People will be motivated by different things at different times. People will always feel dissatisfied, but the focus of the dissatisfaction changes over time.
  - hierarchy of needs – as lower ones fulfilled, higher ones emerge

# Taylor (1911)

- First systematic theory on management. Most of it obsolete by the 30's, but seminal
- Main objective is improving economic efficiency and labor productivity
- Considerations about workforce:
  - \* Most workers who are forced to perform repetitive tasks tend to work at **the slowest rate that goes unpunished.**
  - \* Workers could not be relied upon for talent or intelligence and all workers behave similarly: high control is needed
  - \* Need for better pays (linked to outputs)
  - \* Breaks are necessary, but simply as a way to improve efficiency



# Hawthorne Effect



George Elton Mayo

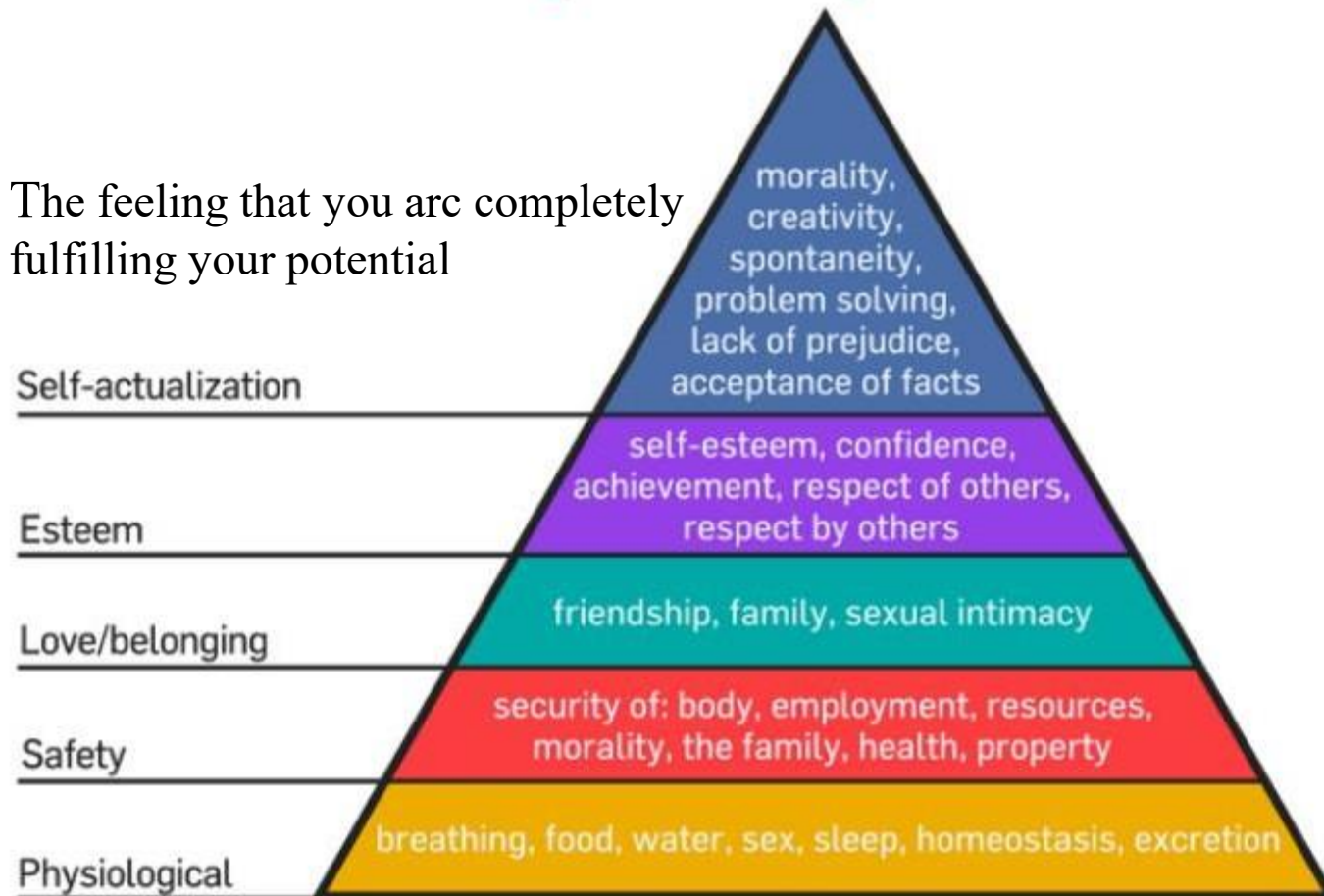
- Studies conducted in the twenties to understand the effect of different lighting conditions on productivity
- Results indicated that increasing or decreasing lighting conditions improved workers' performances
- Conclusion: attention and feeling to be part of something important is what really matters
- Seminal work which would be later criticized (small numbers of workers involved)



# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

## Maslow (1954)

The feeling that you are completely fulfilling your potential



# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Lower level of the hierarchy: d-needs (deficiency needs). If not met, distress
- Higher level of the hierarchy: fulfilment
- A sound management ensures that:
  - d-needs are satisfied
  - Higher levels of the hierarchy are achieved

# Frederick Herzberg

## (1968)

—Three prevailing philosophies:

- \* Organizational theorists think humans are irrational. The only way is organizing work
- \* Industrial engineers believe that humans are mechanistically oriented and economically motivated
- \* Behavioral scientists believe in creating a cozy environment

—Different positive and negative KITAs (Kick In the Ass) have been tried: physical and psychological

—They do not work!



Certain things about a job might make you dissatisfied, if the causes of this dissatisfaction are removed, this does not necessarily make the job more exciting.

Frederick Herzberg proposed the “Two Factor Theory”

1. **Motivational Factors:** which make you feel that the job is worthwhile, like a sense of achievement or the nature of the work itself .
2. **Hygiene Factors:** which can make you dissatisfied if they are not right, for example, the level of pay or the working conditions;



# Motivational and Hygiene Factors

<b>Motivational Factors</b>	<b>Hygiene Factors</b>
Achievement	Company Policy and Administration
Recognition	Supervision
Work itself	Relationship with supervisor
Responsibility	Work Conditions
Advancement	Salary
Growth	Relationship with peers
	Personal life
	Relationship with subordinates
	Status
	Security

# Vroom -The expectancy theory of motivation

- Vroom and colleagues identified three influences on motivation
  - **Expectancy** – the belief that working harder leads to better performance
  - **Instrumentality** – the belief that better performance will be rewarded
  - **Perceived value**- of the resulting reward
- Note: If any of the above factors has a zero value, then motivation will also be zero. Motivation will be high when all three factors are high. A zero level for any one of the factors can lead to a lack of motivation.
- If you are working on a package for a user and, although you think you can get it to work, you discover that the user has started employing an alternative package and no longer needs this one then you will probably feel you are wasting your time and give up (zero instrumentality).
- Given that the users really do want the package, your reward in this is set of circumstances might simply be a warm feeling that you have helped your colleagues and that they are grateful to you.



# Oldham-Hackman Job Characteristics

- Managers should try to group together the elements of the tasks that need to be carried out so that they form meaningful and satisfying assignments.
- Oldham and Hackman suggest that the satisfaction that a job gives is based on five factors. The first three factors make the job 'meaningful' to the person who is doing it:
  - **skill variety**, the number of different skills that the job holder has the opportunity to exercise;
  - **task identity**, the degree to which your work and its results are identifiable as belonging to you;
  - **task significance**, the degree to which your job has an influence on others.

The other two factors are:

- **autonomy**, the discretion you have about the way that you do the job;
- **feedback**, the information you get back about the results of your work.

# Methods of improving motivation

- **Setting specific goals**-These goals need to be demanding and yet acceptable to staff. Involving staff in the setting of goals helps to gain acceptance for them.
- **Providing feedback**- Not only do goals have to be set but staff have to have regular feedback about how they are progressing.
- **Job design**- Jobs can be altered to make them more interesting and give staff more feeling of responsibility.
- Two measures are often used to enhance job design - job enlargement and job enrichment.
  - **Job enlargement** -The scope of the job is increased so that the member of Job enlargement and job staff carries out a wider range of activities. It is the opposite of increasing enrichment are based on specialization. For example, a programmer in a maintenance group might be the work of F.
  - **Job enrichment**- In this case, the job is changed so that the holder carries out tasks that are normally done at a higher, managerial, level. Staff might be given responsibility for ordering consumables, for scheduling their work or for quality control. With a programmer in a maintenance team, they might be given authority to accept requests for changes which involved less than five days' work without the need for their manager's approval.

# Becoming a team

- Simply throwing people together does not mean that they will immediately be able to work together as a team. Group feelings develop over a period of time. One suggestion is that teams go through five basic stages of development:
- Five basic stages of development:
  - **forming** - the members of the group get to know each other and try to set up some ground rules about behavior;
  - **storming** - conflicts arise as various members of the group try to exert leadership and the group's methods of operation are being established;
  - **norming** - conflicts are largely settled and a feeling of group identity emerges;
  - **performing** - the emphasis is now on the tasks at hand;
  - **adjourning** - the group disbands.

Belbin came to the conclusion that teams needed a balance of different types of people.

- **The chair-** Not necessarily a brilliant leader but must be good at running meetings, being calm, strong but tolerant.
- **The plant-** Someone who is essentially very good at generating ideas and potential solutions to problems.
- **The monitor-evaluator** Good at evaluating ideas and potential solutions and helping to select the best one.
- **The shaper-** Rather a worrier, who helps to direct the team's attention to the important issues.
- **The team worker-** Skilled at creating a good working environment, for example by 'jollyng people along'.
- **The resource investigator-** Adept at finding resources in terms of both physical resources and information.
- **The completer-finisher** Good at completing tasks.
- **The company worker-** A good team player who is willing to undertake less attractive tasks if they are needed for team success.

# Group performance

- Are groups more effective than individuals working alone? Given the preference of many people attracted to software development for working on their own, this is an important question. In many projects, judgement's need to be made about which tasks are best carried out collectively and which are best delegated to individuals to do on their own.
- One way of categorizing group tasks is into:
  - Additive tasks
  - Compensatory tasks;
  - Disjunctive tasks;
  - Conjunctive tasks.
- Additive tasks are where the efforts of each participant are added together to get the final result, as in a gang of people clearing snow.
- With disjunctive tasks there is only one correct answer. The effectiveness of the group depends on someone coming up with the right answer and the others recognizing it as being correct.
- Conjunctive tasks are where progress is governed by the rate of the slowest performer. Software production where different staff are responsible for different modules seems to be a prime example of this.

# Decision making

- Decisions can be categorized as being:
  - **structured**, generally relatively simple, routine decisions where rules can be applied in a fairly straightforward way;
  - **unstructured**, more complex and often requiring a degree of creativity.
- Another way of categorizing decisions is by the **amount of risk and uncertainty** that is involved.
- Yet another distinction is between the **rational-economic model and the satisficing model**. The rational-economic model of decision making is the basis of classical economics. It predicts, for example, that a prospective buyer of personal computer equipment will purchase goods at the lowest possible price. This assumes that the decision maker has a complete knowledge of the state of the market. In order to achieve this, days, weeks, or months could be spent phoning dealers.
- Sensible people probably follow a satisficing approach and would look at a limited number of representative outlets to get a general idea of prices. Any potential loss of money through having missed an even lower offer would probably be offset by the savings in time, phonecalls, travel and so on.

# Cont...

## Some mental obstacles to good decision making

We have to accept the role of intuition but must be aware that there are some mental obstacles to effective intuitive thinking, for example:

- ***Faulty heuristics***- Heuristics mean rules of thumb. Rules of thumb can be useful but there are dangers:
  - they are based only on the information that is to hand and this can be misleading;
  - they are based on stereotypes, such as accepting a Welshman into a male voice choir without an audition because of the 'well-known fact' that the Welsh are a great singing nation.
- ***Escalation of commitment***- This refers to the way that once you have made a decision it is increasingly difficult to alter it even in the face of evidence that it is wrong.
- ***Information overload***- It is actually possible to be presented with too much information so that you 'cannot see the wood for the trees'.

# Cont...

## Group decision making

- Assuming that the meetings are genuinely collectively responsible and have been properly briefed, research shows that groups are better at solving complex problems where the members of the group have complementary skills and expertise. The meeting allows them to communicate freely and to get ideas accepted.
- Groups are less effective when dealing with poorly structured problems, which need creative solutions. Brainstorming techniques have been developed to help groups in this situation but research shows that people often come up with more ideas individually than in a group.



# Cont...

## Obstacles to good group decision making

- Group decision making has some disadvantages: it is **time consuming**; it can in some cases **stir up conflicts within the group**; and **decisions can be unduly influenced by dominant members** of the group.
- Conflict could, in fact, be less than might be expected. Experiments have shown that **people will modify their personal judgements to conform to group norms**. These are common attitudes that are developed by a group over a period of time.
- You might think that this would tend to moderate the more extreme views that some individuals in the group might hold. In fact, people in groups often make decisions that carry more risk than where they have to make the decision on their own. This is known as the **risky shift**.

# Cont...

## **Measures to reduce the disadvantages of group decision making**

- One method of making group decision making more efficient and effective is by training members to follow a set procedure. The **Delphi technique** endeavours to collate the judgements of a number of experts without actually bringing them face-to-face.
- The big problem with this approach used to be that because the experts could be geographically dispersed the process was time consuming.

# Leadership

- Leadership is the ability to influence others in a group to act in a particular way in order to achieve group goals. A leader is not necessarily a good manager or vice versa, because managers have other roles to play, such as those of organizing, planning and controlling. Leadership is based on the idea of some kind of authority or power, although leaders do not necessarily have much formal authority. This power comes from either the person's position (**position power**) or from the person's individual qualities (**personal power**) or can be a mixture of the two.
- **Position power** has been further analysed into:
  - **coercive power**, the ability to force someone to do something by threatening punishment;
  - **connection power**, which is based on having access to those who have power;
  - **legitimate power**, which is based on a person's title conferring a special status;
  - **reward power**, where the holder can confer rewards on those who carry out tasks to their satisfaction.
- **Personal power**, on the other hand, can be further analysed into:
  - **expert power**, which comes from being the person who is able to do a specialized task;
  - **information power**, where the holder has access to information that others do not;
  - **referent power**, which is based on the personal attractiveness of the leader.

# Leadership styles

- Attempts have been made to measure leadership styles on two axes: directive vs. permissive and autocratic vs. democratic:
  - **directive autocrat** makes decisions alone with close supervision of their implementation;
  - **permissive autocrat** makes decision alone but gives subordinates latitude in implementation;
  - **directive democrat** makes decisions participatively but closely supervises their implementation;
  - **permissive democrat** makes decisions participatively and gives subordinates latitude in implementation.
- Another axis on which there have been attempts to measure management qualities has been on the degree to which a manager is task-oriented, that is, the extent to which the execution of the task at hand is paramount, and the degree to which the manager is concerned about the people involved (people orientation).

# Cont...

- Work environments vary according to the amount of control that can be exerted over the work.
- Some jobs are routine and predictable (as when dealing with batched computer output). Others may be driven by outside factors (as in the case of a help-desk) or are situations where future direction is uncertain (for example, at the early stages of a feasibility study).
- Where there is a high degree of uncertainty, subordinates will seek guidance from above and welcome a task-oriented management style. As uncertainty is reduced, the task-oriented manager is likely to relax and to become more people-oriented and this will have good results.
- People-oriented managers are better where staff can control the work they do and know what to do without referring matters to their line managers.

# Organizational structures

## 1- Formal versus informal structures

- While organizational structures can have an enormous impact on the way a project is conducted, it is something that project leaders such as Amanda at IOE can often do little to change.
- The formal structure is the one that is expressed in the staff hierarchy chart. It is basically concerned with authority, about who has which boss. It is backed by an informal structure of contacts and communication that grows up spontaneously among members of staff during the course of work. When the unexpected happens it is often this system that comes into play. Over a period of time, the advantages and disadvantages of different organizational structures tend to even out - the informal organization gets built up and staff find unofficial ways of getting around the obstacles posed by the formal structure.

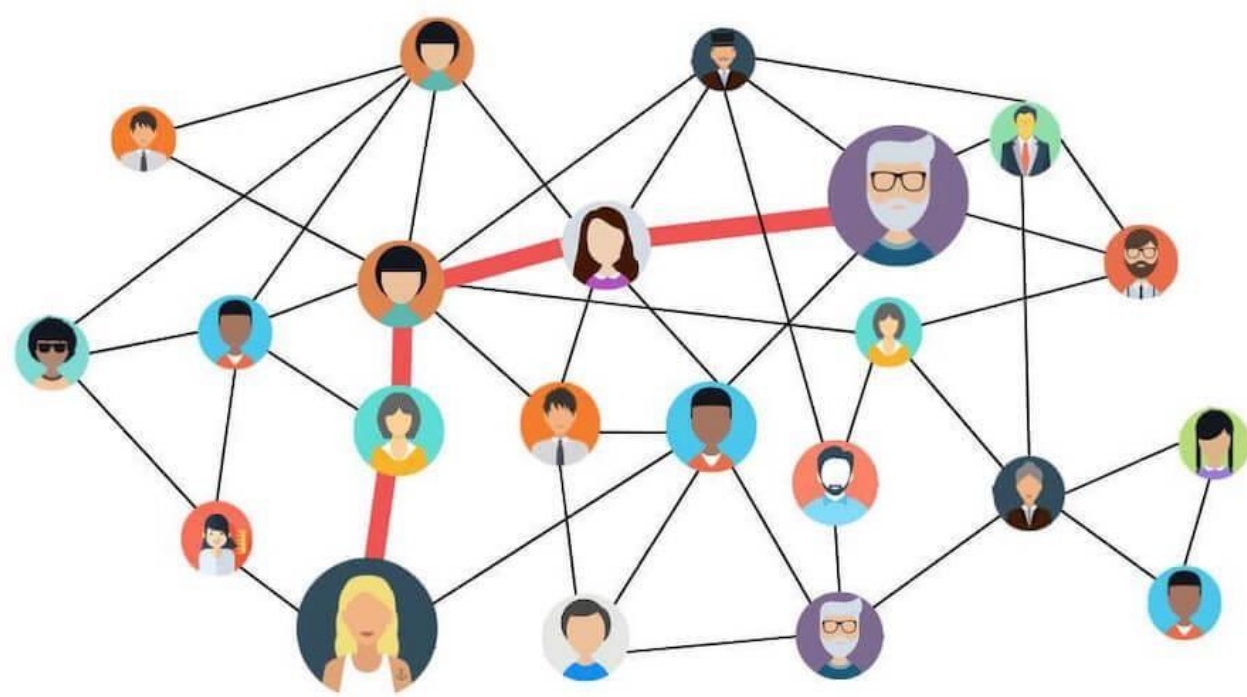
## **2- Hierarchical approach**

The 'traditional' management structure is based on the concept of the hierarchy -each member of staff has only one manager, while a manager will have responsibility for several members of staff. Authority flows from the top down through the structure. A traditional concern has been with the span of control - the number of people that a manager can effectively control.

## **3- Staff versus line**

Staff in organizations can often be divided into line workers who actually produce the end product and support staff who carry out supporting roles. In some organizations that produce software for the market or as a component of a larger product which is sold, the software specialists might be seen as part of the line. In a financial organization, on the other hand, the information systems department would probably be seen as part of the support staff.

- The definition of a virtual team is relatively new to project management and collaboration.
- A **virtual team** is a group of people who participate in common projects by making collaborative efforts to achieve shared goals and objectives. These people perform tasks and jobs in a virtual work environment created and maintained through IT and software technologies.
- This term often refers to teleworking teams or those groups of people who use telecommunication technologies – mobile IoT and Skype, for example – to share information and co- operate and collaborate in real-time.
- **Virtual team management** is the foundation for managing remote/telecommunication-based teamwork.



Virtual team



There are two types of virtual teams, such as follows:

- **Global virtual team.** As a rule, these teams are located in different countries and cities all over the world. They can be employees of several companies which join their efforts and resources (incl. people, technology, money) to perform shared outsourced projects and achieve common goals.
- **Local virtual team.** Members of a local virtual workgroup usually belong to the same company. That company is either big or small, and it has enough resources (technology is essential) to establish and maintain virtual team workplaces and organize its employees into a productive remote group.

### **What is virtual team management?**

The combination of activities for assembling, building, organizing, controlling, and supervising the virtual teamwork is called **virtual team management**. It is an essential part of project team collaboration.

- Virtual team management includes, but not limited to, the following processes:
  - **Assembling**. Probation periods are the first measurements to be applied when starting with remote teamwork organization. The team leader should decide on those people who meet all the requirements of probation periods.
  - **Training**. During this process, the team leader sets expectations as to future virtual teaming and then develops and applies a group training methodology to teach the team members how to meet the expectations.
  - **Managing**. This process means using telecommunication technologies to manage ongoing tasks and jobs of remote group members.
  - **Controlling**. The team leader establishes performance measures to assess and evaluate team performance. This person needs to find out whether the team is on the right track and can achieve project goals on schedule.

# Project communication plan

- A project communication plan is a simple tool that enables you to communicate effectively on a project with your client, team, and other stakeholders. It sets clear guidelines for how information will be shared, as well as who's responsible for and needs to be looped in on each project communication.

## **Why a project communication plan is important**

- As the project manager, you've already mapped out every task and deliverable to get you across the finish line. Why not do the same for project communications? After all, your project plan needs a steady stream of communication to stay on track.
- A communication plan plays an important role in every project by:
  - Creating written documentation everyone can turn to
  - Setting clear expectations for how and when updates will be shared
  - Increasing visibility of the project and status
  - Providing opportunities for feedback to be shared
  - Boosting the productivity of team meetings
  - Ensuring the project continues to align with goals

# Types of Communication

- Completing a complex project successfully requires good communication among team members. If those team members work in the same building, they can arrange regular meetings, simply stop by each other's office space to get a quick answer, or even discuss a project informally at other office functions. Many projects are performed by teams that interact primarily through electronic communication and are, therefore, called *virtual teams*.
- To avoid miscommunication that can harm trust and to include team members in a project culture, the project team needs a plan for communicating reliably and in a timely manner. This planning begins with understanding two major categories of communication.

# 1- Synchronous Communications

If all the parties to the communication are taking part in the exchange at the same time, the communication is **synchronous**. A telephone or Skype conference call is an example of synchronous communication. The following are examples of synchronous communications:

- *Live meeting*: Gathering of team members at the same location
- *Conference call*: A telephone call in which several people participate
- *Audio conference*: Like a conference call, but conducted online using software like Skype
- *Computer-assisted conference*: Audio conference with a connection between computers that can display a document or spreadsheet that can be edited by both parties
- *Video conference*: Similar to an audio conference but with live video of the participants. Some laptop computers have built-in cameras to facilitate video conferencing
- *IM (instant messaging)*: Exchange of text or voice messages using pop-up windows on the participants' computer screens
- *Texting*: Exchange of text messages between mobile phones, pagers, or personal digital assistants (PDAs)—devices that hold a calendar, a contact list, a task list, and other support programs

# 2-Asynchronous Communications

Getting a team together at the same time can be a challenge—especially if they are spread out across time zones. Many types of communication do not require that the parties are present at the same time. This type of communication is asynchronous. There are several choices of asynchronous communications.

- Mail and Package Delivery
- Fax
- Email
- Project Blog
- Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

# How to write a project communication plan

Ready to put your communication plan to paper? Writing a project management communication plan is as simple as following these 5 steps:

- List your project's communication needs. Every project is different. Take the size of the project, the nature of work being done, and even the client's unique preferences into account as you determine which types of communication this project needs to succeed.
- Define the purpose. Bombarding people with too many emails or unnecessary meetings can interfere with their ability to get work done and cause them to overlook important updates. Be purposeful in your plan, and ensure every communication you include has a reason for being. If you're feeling really ambitious, go ahead and outline a basic agenda for the topics that will be covered in each meeting or report.
- Choose a communication method. Do you really need a meeting to share weekly updates, or is your project discussion board enough? Think through how your team works best, so they can stay in the loop while still being productive. If your client prefers the personal touch of a phone call, build that into your plan too.
- Set a cadence for communication. Establishing a regular frequency for communication streamlines the process by setting clear expectations from the get-go. This not only frees you from fielding random requests for status updates. It also enables project members to carve out space for important meetings and reports ahead of time.
- Identify the owner and stakeholders. Assigning ownership creates accountability so your carefully crafted plan can reach its full potential. As the project manager, you'll be responsible for most communications, but there may be some you want to delegate to others. While you're naming names, list the audience or stakeholders for each communication type too. That way key players come prepared to provide updates when needed.

# Example

Communication	Frequency	Goal	Owner
<b>Project team</b>			
Project status report	Weekly	Review project status and discuss potential issues or delays	Project manager
Team standup	Daily	Discuss what each team member did yesterday, what they'll do today, and any blockers	Project manager
Task progress updates	Daily	Share daily progress made on project tasks	Project manager
Project review	At milestones	Present project deliverables, gather feedback, and discuss next steps	Project manager
Post-mortem meeting	At end of project	Assess what worked and what did not work and discuss actionable takeaways	Project manager
<b>Project sponsor</b>			
Project status report	Weekly	Review project status and discuss potential issues or delays	Project manager
Project review	At milestones	Present project deliverables, gather feedback, and discuss next steps	Project manager



END