Project Management and Communication

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Communication

- VERY IMPORTANT for any project!
- People with unique histories -> unique interpretations of the world
- Information misinterpreted/completely missed
- Try to be cooperative – understand AND be understood

So what IS a project anyway?

▶ *"A sequence of finite dependent activities whose successful completion results in the delivery of the expected business value that validated doing the project."* - Robert K. Wysocki from their book, *Effective Project Management: Traditional, Agile, Extreme* (7th edition)

▶ Activities = collections of work

▶ Finite = fixed deadline and budget for completion

▶ Sequence = specific order

▶ Dependent = outputs some activities becomes inputs of other activities

▶ Deliver expected business value = enable the client to achieve a goal (justification for the project)

Some Context for Project Management

1. Growing customer expectations
2. "Doing more with less"
3. Increasing workplace diversity
   a. Culture
   b. Demographics
4. Employee expectations changing
   a. More flexible work hours
   b. Working remotely
5. Shorter employee tenures
6. Rise of the "gig economy"
7. Faster and faster rate of change for organizations
8. Globalized market

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Overview

1. Scoping/Initiating

2. Planning

3. Launching/Executing

4. Monitoring & Controlling

5. Closing

► Traditional Project Management(TPM)

  ► Each process group completed ONLY ONCE in sequence

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Overview (cont'd)

1. Project Scoping/Initiating
2. Iteration Planning
3. Iteration Launching/Executing
4. Iteration Monitoring & Controlling
5. Iteration Closing
6. Project Closing

- Agile Project Management (APM)
  - One scoping/initiating process group for the whole project
  - Each iteration with their own planning, launching/executing, monitoring & controlling, and closing process group
  - One final closing process group for the whole project

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Scoping/Initiating Process Group

▶ Overarching question: "What business problem will this project address?"

▶ Identify stakeholders

▶ Assign the Project Manager (PM)

▶ Eliciting and documenting requirements and needs from the client representative

▶ Generating a brief description of the project

▶ Getting the approval to proceed with the next process group: project planning

Stakeholders – Who are they?

- These can include...
  - Those who will be affected by the project
    - Community residents
    - Environment experts
  - Those who can contribute to the outcome of the project
    - The project sponsor
    - The project manager
  - Those who will be associated with the final deliverable of the project
    - The owners of the final deliverable
    - The users of the final deliverable

Ethics

- How to go about conducting yourself (at least in a project)
- Really a "gray, fuzzy" issue (context matters here)
- Some actions to consider:
  - Passing blame on to someone else
  - Hiring a friend/family member instead of a more qualified candidate
  - Withholding bad news from a teammate to "save face"
- There can be a lot of uncertainty
- Guidelines I like to follow
  - Respect people and their personal boundaries
  - Don't do unto others as you would not have them do unto you

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Planning Process Group

▶ Overarching questions: "What will be done, and how will it be done?"

▶ Define all work for the project

▶ Estimating…

  ▶ How much time is needed to complete the project

  ▶ The resources needed to complete the work

  ▶ The total cost of the work

▶ Determining the necessary sequence for work to be done

▶ Establishing, analyzing, and revising the project schedule

▶ Generating a risk management plan

▶ Generating a communication framework

▶ Documenting the project plan

▶ Getting the approval to proceed with the next phase: project execution

Risk Management

▶ Risk = any event that can impact a project if that event were to take place

▶ Risks happen (and that is reality)

▶ Risks can be good or bad

▶ Bad risks can be addressed early on as part of a group meeting

  ▶ Third-party experts

  ▶ Insurance policies

  ▶ Payment structure included in contracts to limit losses

Risk Management (cont'd)

1. **Guideline for Unforeseen Risks - New Risk Management Plan**
   a. Assemble relevant people
      i. Subject matter experts
      ii. Those likely to be impacted by the risk
   b. Identify the risk
      i. Perception?
      ii. Legitimate risk?
   c. For legitimate risks, determine the following:
      i. Probability of occurrence
      ii. Impact of occurrence
      iii. Root causes
      iv. Timing
      v. Frequency of the risks
   d. Determine course of action
      i. Make changes to prevent risk from occurring
      ii. Transfer responsibility of risk to an expert
      iii. Mitigate impact of the risk should it occur
      iv. Create a contingency plan within constraints on key resources - time, labor, or money
2. **Plan documented, shared, implemented, and periodically reviewed/updated**

Conflict Management

- Conflict = a situation where someone has a need of another person, and that need is not being met by the other person
- Sources of conflict:
  - Differences (temperament, understanding, ideologies, problem-solving methods)
  - Poor communication
  - Personal agendas
  - Rivalries
- Conflicts happen (this, too, is a reality)
- Conflicts can be managed
- Conflicts can lead to benefits
  - Increased understanding
  - Improved team cohesiveness

Conflict Management (cont'd)

- Guideline for managing conflict
  - Express the need
  - If the need can be satisfied, then the conflict can be resolved
  - If the need cannot be satisfied, then the people involved should negotiate
  - Toxic behaviors associated with unresolved conflict
    - Sulking
    - Shouting
    - Gossiping
    - Backstabbing
  - Consider enlisting a neutral mediator if relations are really bad between the people involved

Communication Framework

- Important for aligning people and resources
- Differing communication preferences
  - Modes
    - Synchronous – meetings, phone calls, online chat
    - Asynchronous – postal service, email, fax
  - Timing – quarterly, monthly, weekly, daily
  - Detail – overarching summary, fine details
- Various technologies available for communicating
- Do your best to communicate with all relevant parties

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Launching/Executing Process Group

- Overarching question: "Who will do what needs to be done?"
- Recruiting members for the project team
- Generating project description document
- Setting up rules of operation for the team members
- Coordinating communications among team members
- Wrapping up the project schedule
- Documenting work packages
- Setting up procedures for managing changes in project scope

Organization Structures

- "Spectrum" of organizational structures
  - Functional organizational structures
  - Matrix organizational structures
    - Weak matrix
    - Balanced matrix
    - Strong matrix
  - Projectized organizational structures
- Each structure with their own pros and cons
- The choice of structure will depend on upper management
  - How important is this project?
  - How many projects are there altogether?
  - How much of the staff can be allocated to projects?

Team Building

- Staffing is very important
- Ideal qualities
  - Qualified
  - Understand role
  - Team players
  - Strong communicators
  - Integrity
  - Motivated

- A more realistic view
  - The most-available people on your team
  - Best-fitting members somewhere else
- Making the most of this reality
  - Build psychological safety
    - Active listening
    - Equal time among teammates to communicate

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Monitoring & Controlling Process Group

▶ Overarching questions: "How do you know you did what needed to do?"

▶ Establishing and utilizing the system for tracking and reporting performance

  ▶ Manual or automated tracking and reporting

  ▶ Some important report details: names, overall objective, a health report, completed tasks, tasks to do for next time, any issues/roadblocks, upcoming milestones

▶ Tracking risk

▶ Process any changes in project scope

▶ Finding and resolving project problems

Leadership

Transactional

- Focus on supervision, organization, overall performance

- Clarify job roles and task requirements

- Exchange rewards for performance

Transformational

- Focus on change within the organization

- Shift from personal agendas to group agendas

- Team-building, motivation, collaboration across different levels of an organization

Project Management Life Cycle (PMLC): Closing Process Group

▶ Overarching question: "How well did you do what you needed to do?"

▶ Acquiring approval from the client with respect to requirements being satisfied

▶ Installing the final deliverable

▶ Performing an audit of the overall performance of the project

▶ Generating the final project report

Upcoming Trends

- People
- Business Operations
- Technology
- Social Media
- Workplace Perks
- Human-Centric Designs

Thank you!

And best of luck with your projects!