

Bridging The Generation Gap: Project Management For Facebook Generation

Arun Pandey, PMP

HCL Technologies



Leveraging project management for excellence, growth and transformation



Contents

1.1	Abstract	3
1.2	Keywords:	3
1.3	Introduction.....	3
1.4	Mirror- Mirror:.....	4
1.4.1	Closing: In this phase.....	5
1.4.2	TPM will focus only on:	5
1.5	Trust through Transparency:.....	5
1.6	Value Zone Creation:	6
1.7	Project Organization.....	6
1.8	Inverting the Organizational pyramid:.....	6
1.9	Conclusion	7
1.10	References:	7
1.11	Author(s) Profile	7



1.1 Abstract

If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.

Project Management is an integral part of any business and need to be aligned with business objective. Now businesses are changing their model as per new requirement and technology. Facebook is based on the concept of transparency, sharing and connectivity. The next generation project managers will be facebook generation. With the penetration of social networking the attitude towards life, privacy and transparency are likely to become more liberal. This is certainly is going to influence future management style, which is currently based on hierarchal organization structure and process oriented concepts. We need to find out ways to blend these concepts with facebook. This paper will address which area of the project management needs to be addressed to incorporate the concepts of facebook. In this way project management could be more interesting for the future facebook generation

1.2 Keywords:

TPM: Traditional Project manager, FPM: Facebook Project Manager ,
PMI: Project Management Institute


1.3 Introduction

Management style is evolved along with the generations; during Mahabharata time Lord Krishna who is the Greatest manager of all taught; how to achieve a goal, how to motivate a team and how to build strategies to achieve the target. Our Mahatma Gandhi who was management Guru during the time of India Independence taught how we can achieve our target on the basis of Non-violence.

Project management can be characterized as the discipline that develops tools and processes to achieve a single goal. That goal is "to deliver a quality system that meets the needs of the user". As per PMI "Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to a broad range of activities in order to meet the requirements of a particular project". This discipline is started with industrial revolution and evolved through 19th and 20th centuries and various tools, processes and techniques were developed to help identify and control business functions. The main focus of the project management is meeting the user requirement by controlling business functions.

The current business requirement in the era of facebook generation is require more than just fulfilling the user requirement. Just think about motivating the team member, who does not follow traditional command-and –control approach to deliver a work product, customer whose expectation is higher and they want value along with current requirement fulfillment, company expectation which is multiple times higher than earlier.

This means there is gap between traditional project management and project management needed by this facebook generation.



Now the question arises how to fill this gap “Are we going to change all the tools and processes developed throughout project management evolution. The answer is no, we are not going to change tools and processes. To fill this gap we need to adapt a new management style which is based on following concepts:

- ✦ Mirror - Mirror
- ✦ Trust through transparency
- ✦ Creating Value zone
- ✦ Inverting the Organization Pyramid

Project life cycle describes what we need to do the work; the project management process describes what we need to do to manage the project. Project Life Cycle includes:

- ✦ Initiating
- ✦ Planning
- ✦ Executing
- ✦ Monitoring and control
- ✦ Closing

Now we will see how the above new management style can be mapped in the project management process to manage the project and fill the gap between traditional and facebook generation project management.

1.4 Mirror- Mirror:


Traditionally, we project managers are very benevolent and do not understand the reality of the current situation and what are things we need to focus to achieve the target. We directly start working on creating project charter with the help of given SoW (Statement of Work).

The new facebook generation project manager wants to be aware of the reality of the situation, he would like to know what the shortcomings he has are and need to focus on those to improve upon and achieve the target.

In this scenario Mirror-Mirror concept helps a project manager to analyze what is the starting point, what are the areas to be focused on to improve upon and achieve the target point. First they will define starting point and then find out how to reach the target point..

This concept can be implemented in all the five phases of the project management life cycle:

Initiation phase: In initiation phase the Traditional Project Manager (TPM) focuses on the objective of the project and the signed SOW; whereas Facebook Project Manager (FPM)’s focus is on the main stakeholders of the project in addition to project objective. FPM believes that project success is in winning all the stakeholders’ confidence.



Planning Phase: In planning phase TPM can only have short term goals but a FPM thinks like a owner of the company and think about the long term goal, has a vision and commitment to succeed. FPM includes more people in the planning phase to create more transparency.

Execution Phase: In execution phase TPM is satisfied with incremental gains and implements one solution, whereas FPM finds out various solutions for the same problem and takes the best solution for the implementation.

Monitoring and controlling Phase: In this phase

FPM will be more transparent with the stakeholders to create the trust among them. How to create this trust through transparency is explained under the next sub heading.

FPM will follow collaboration and delegation approach to get the work done in stead of traditional command and control approach.

FPM uses EVM (Earned value management) tool which is the best tool to know the project performance by measuring planned and actual effort.

1.4.1 Closing: In this phase

1.4.2 TPM will focus only on:

- ✦ Closure of the project with respect to the requirement

Whereas FPM will focus on following also:

- ✦ Additional value created in the project
- ✦ Retrospection and learning from mistakes

1.5 Trust through Transparency:

To succeed any project trust among all the stakeholders is very important. Trust cannot be created just saying that we should trust each other. Trust can be created through transparency by showing facts to the stakeholders and taking their opinion and making them part of the decision.

In traditional project environment a team member is a mere worker in that organization. Whereas in the facebook generation this worker is changed into a **Knowledge Worker** and we can say them as **Knowledge Technocrat** in future days. They have all the information and tools readily available with them. Therefore, this generation believes in transparency and wants to go in detail of any work which they want to do, they believe sharing information to each other and collaborate to achieve the target.

Considering this paradigm change in the mindset of the new generation project management in the all phases of the project management cycle can create trust among stakeholders by showing facts of the project and getting regular opinion of the stakeholders by using latest technology and concepts.



How increased transparency can create the trust:

- ✦ Through Sharing information:

In traditional project management style project management information is shared with help of project status report and project meeting.

In the era of facebook generation following technology can be used for better transparency:

- ✦ Blogs
- ✦ Wiki Portal
- ✦ Knowledge management portal

The paradigm change in using this technology is that in traditional project management project information is limited to only project team, in this new environment project management team can interact with larger audience and can get their feedback and suggestion to improve upon and deliver a better product or services.

This also encourages project management team to be more accountable and responsible to the project deliverables when they see that their work is visible to outside of the project team.

1.6 Value Zone Creation:

In traditional project management value zone is lost somewhere in the management hierarchy. Our TPM believes in delivering the product and services as per the contract. Outside of the contract is considered as gold plating and not encouraged.

In today's market there are various product and services available for the same purpose. The customer will select only those product and services which will create value for their business along with solving the business problem. In this new changing environment project management also needs to evolve to find out how to provide value to the customer in addition to delivering product and services.

For example a project team which is providing services for maintaining a website by fixing bugs which are reported to them. While doing this work if this team finds out how to reduce cycle time for a given process by few seconds and this process is executed 100 times in a given month. In this way company's website performance can be increased and attracts more customers. Company can offer this cycle time reduction work to the project team by enhancing their role in the company's business and can be benefited by attracting more customers.

In the facebook generation project management value generation can be implemented by:

- ✦ Identifying value zone
- ✦ Identifying the value creator

This value zone is interface between project team members and customer and project manager can find out this zone in the project team by identifying customer pain points and solution for these.

Value creator cannot be on the top of the organization, but he will be the person who is in the contact of the customer. The person who interacts daily with the customer only can know the customer pain points and contribute to the value creation.

Project teams who can create value along with the product and services only can survive and create a long lasting impact on customer mind.

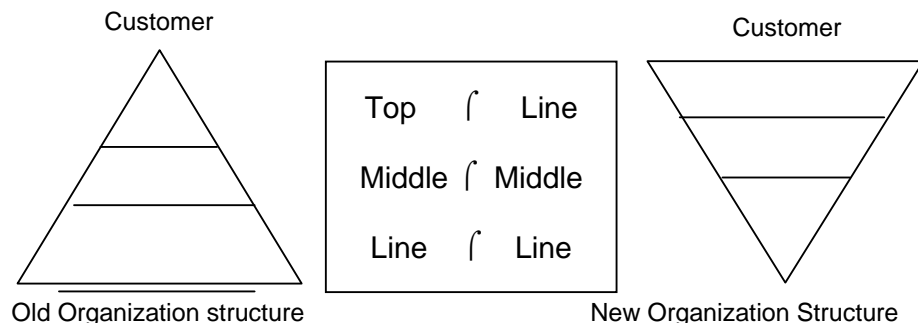
1.7 Project Organization

Traditional project team is based on hierarchal model with command and control approach to control the team members and get the work done. There is one person at the helm of the team decides all the processes and policies which rest of team will follow. This type of model is only useful in traditional large organizations for centuries for example manufacturing industry where similar kind of product is manufactured and delivered.

In the facebook generation which deals with knowledge economy and team members are knowledge worker, would not follow command-control approach to complete a given task. This generation believes in collaboration and creating value to the customer.

1.8 Inverting the Organizational pyramid:

Thinking of facebook generation can be implemented in a new way of implementing the organization structure; in this we will invert the organization Pyramid.



In the new organization structure which is based on collaboration and value creation, the value creator will be on top of the project organization structure. Each layer of the organization will have its own roles and responsibilities.

The new organization structure will facilitate more people in the organization are in value creation zone [interface between customer and employee] which will differentiate the project team from other team.

1.9 Conclusion

Project management which has taken different style in different era needs to evolve to fulfill the expectation of the new generation which is called facebook generation. This generation believes in collaboration, socializing, information sharing and providing value to the stakeholders.

We have different management processes and standards to handle management challenges for example PMI PMBOK, which tells about standards and processes to handle different scenarios. These standards need to be blended with the mindset of the upcoming generation to make them more useful. For example we need to incorporate value creation and transparency in all 5 phases and 12 processes of PMI PMBOK to equip them for the new facebook generation project managers.

This paper has discussed some of the new management traits which need to be included in the standard project management framework to make them useful for the new generation project managers which is called facebook generation.

1.10 References:

1. Employee First and Customer Second (EFCS) by Vineet Nayar, Harvard Business Press Boston Massachusetts.
2. PMBOK

1.11 Author(s) Profile



Arun Kumar Pandey, Group Project Manager in HCL Technologies has 17 years of experience and worked on various domains like Aerospace, Telecom, Life Sciences and Retail. He has PMP certification, and delivered training session on various topics on PMBOK

E-mail: arunpandey@hcl.com