

Discovering Customer and Stakeholder Need Statements

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Introduction

A project's success largely depends on whether or not the project team can avoid doing the wrong project (Stretton, 2015). If business needs are not clearly learned, the project designed will be futile. That is why acquiring customer and stakeholder need statements is so vital (Siegel, 2019). Stakeholders can be described as the individuals who have a vested interest in project outcome or are impacted by the effects. Customers on the other hand are those who will make use of the project's result for some purpose. The practice of aligning stakeholder and customer needs will contribute to, at the very least, the perceived success of a project and at best actualize a solid product.

Value Proposition

Understanding a product's value is key to unifying stakeholder and customer expectations. The requirements phase of a project is an ideal place to begin. Through requirements management, a project team can ascertain and record the needs of stakeholders (Dalcher, 2014). Further, by establishing a value proposition the project team will know the overall benefit of the product, how it will be experienced, and what makes the company's product desirable. Perhaps the most challenging part of this process is not documenting what a user says they want but instead the exploratory activity of isolating what a user truly wants from a product (Dalcher, 2014).

Finding and Meeting the Need

The project manager and project team should orchestrate the process of customers formulating a more concrete knowledge of their business and business needs and coalesce these needs with the need statements of stakeholders. To achieve

this alignment, the project manager should conduct a needs analysis. The analysis constitutes a needs capture from customers; they generally do not maintain an exact understanding of their needs at the outset of a project. A good customer needs statement centers the customer as the major stakeholder and reframes the project team's mindset to that of the customer's business. A project manager should possess the following skillset to conduct a needs analysis: must be able to communicate with customers and gather a real awareness of their needs; must handle ambiguous information; must be able to propose solutions given inchoate needs; must have the appropriate technical background to inform their solutions (Frame, 1994).

Conclusion

Every project is issued need statements from stakeholders but not every project accurately captures the needs of customers. A project manager is responsible for conducting an effective needs analysis for this acquisition. The manager must learn from and observe customers to locate actual needs and contend with early stage project requirements. With a value proposition that names the customer's problem, identifies the product offerings and details what makes them attractive, and connects the offerings to the problem at hand, the project team can manifest genuine value for customers. Taking the stakeholder need statements into account along with the product value proposition the team will be guided through fruitful project execution.

References

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