What are the habits of successful project managers?

Duy Thanh Phan[1]

[1] Concordia University, Montreal QC, Canada
`duythanh.phan@mail.concordia.ca`

Abstract. Good project managers possess people-oriented skills and develop effective professional relationships with colleagues. Project leaders need to embrace interacting with people via effective communication. That means they should welcome interruptions positively and reschedule their work strategically. Successful project leaders also have certain leadership, interpersonal, and professional qualities.

Keywords: Project management, people-oriented, time management, ethical qualities, leadership, interpersonal skills.

1 Introduction

In contemporary society, the global economy has become project-oriented more than ever due to the expansion of project management within less project-focused industries, such as healthcare, publishing, and professional services [1]. As a result, the project manager has a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the projects. However, while there is a shortage of project management workers in various industries [1], it is unavoidable that not every project manager possesses the necessary mix of competencies to succeed. This paper, based on the scope of the course SOEN 6841 Software Project Management, will attempt to synthesize, and analyze the given reading article to expand the topic of successful project leaders on two items: people-oriented leadership and necessary qualities for successful leadership.

2 Key Themes in the Passage

2.1 Time Management in Project Management

Time Fragmentation.

The impact of interruptions on project managers and project outcomes.

Strategies to manage time and interruptions effectively.

2.2   People and Communication Aspects for Project Managers

People Orientation

The importance of creating effective communication and relationships with team members.

How paying attention to team members can improve project leadership.

2.3   Attributes of Successful Project Managers

Trustworthy
　Content

Loyal
　Content

Helpful
　Content

Friendly
　Content

Courteous
　Content

Kind
　Content

Obedient
　Content

Cheerful
　Content

Thrifty
　Content

Brave
　Content

Clean
   Content

Reverent
   Content

3   Practical Application and Case Study

TODO: Find a case study, analyze the relationship between it and the introduced topics, discuss the potential benefits and challenges in adopting the approach in real-world situations.

4   Discussion

The article mentions two important themes for project managers: working style via time management and important qualities for leadership.
   Regarding time management, …
   On the subject of crucial qualities for a good project leader, the article presents an extensive list of leadership, interpersonal, and professional qualities. While the list contains key ideas for building a successful project manager, it is not completed due to the abstract and complex nature of leadership, where human interaction may have different impacts based on various demographic criteria such as age, gender, culture, and so on **[reference?]**.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the list of qualities for good project managers mentioned in the article is incomplete. Firstly, the author gets the list of qualities from only one workshop from a long time ago. This brings many uncertainties as the sample size is not representative of all demographics, and the results may be out-of-date. Secondly, the author draws a connection between the list of items and the Scout Law [reference] and considers it as the single source of truth (?). While it is important to realize the relationship between them, using an unrelated framework to draw all the necessary qualities for project management means that the list may include redundant facts while missing other important factors.
   We also have to be aware of the issues when trying to apply behaviors. [reference] mentioned that just possessing the skills is not enough; practitioners need to also apply the skills in the correct behavior for them to be effective.

It is also important to know that the relationship between good leaders and the list behavior is unidirectional. Good project managers would be more likely to have the mentioned behavior, but possessing those behaviors does not necessitate one to become a good leader automatically. For example, … [example here] If a project manager is seeking to improve their leadership skills, they will need to look beyond the aforementioned behaviors.

5   Conclusion

TODO: summarize, emphasize the significance of time management, effective communication, leadership in project management. Offer final thoughts for incorporating those elements for better outcomes.

The methodology is not perfect: only a workshop, don't know the demographics, small sample size -> not representative.

Missing: technical skills

Project teams are no longer made up of nationals from just one country. It is quite common that global project teams have nationals from several countries as serving project team members. It is therefore essential that project managers have a better and deeper understanding of the values and beliefs people from other countries hold if they wish to deliver their projects successfully in these working environments. Effective people project managers show an open optimism about cultural differences and show views, through their behaviours, that they see cultural diversity as an enhancement to their own values and beliefs. They adapt their own home country behaviours when managing people from diverse cultures. Cultural awareness skills and behaviours are an important part of the repertoire of skills and behaviours that make an effective people project manager. Not all people skills will necessarily be applicable and effective in all projects anywhere in the world. Different cultures place different values on, for example, what is important to them. This necessitates the need to adapt some of the suggested behaviours to fit the local cultural environment, relating to both people and companies. The adoption and application of people skills are not a panacea for success. Technical competences and knowledge of the application of tools and techniques are as important. To be effective, project managers need both technical and people skills to deliver their projects successfully.

The findings of this paper are surprising. Existing theoretical and practical project management frameworks such as APM Body of Knowledge (2006) and PMI (2004) consider what makes an effective people project manager in their respective sections on the people side of project management. They suggest a number of skills project managers should have or adopt if they wish to manage the people in their projects well (the what). Associated behaviours (the how) are not discussed and yet practitioners from this research placed a very high level of importance on these based on the strength of evidence from their own extensive practical work experiences. This suggests that people skills without associated behaviours are perhaps not as effective as previously thought and that there is a need, for example, to improve existing Bodies of Knowledge, as a starting point, to reflect this new knowledge and to strengthen these for the benefit of practitioners and academics. Knowing about and acquiring competences, in itself, is no guarantee for success. Project managers need to apply these, observe the outcomes and likely changes the application has on people and then consider whether to modify them to make them work even better. This is a continuous process that the focus group recognised as being as important as the competences themselves. Without the focus group meeting, the validity of the suggested outputs form the face to face interviews could have been doubted by opponents of the phenomenological research approach. New insights and results data would not

5. Conclusions

Considering all the challenges project managers are facing it is evident that one area where project managers need to make big improvements, is in the area of people management. Skills on their own, including their applications, do not make an effective people project manager. Behaviours drive outcomes. Specific behaviours for each skill need to be applied by project managers to make these skills truly effective. It is the application of these that is of paramount importance and is the catalyst to being an effective people project manager. This paper contributes to a better understanding of what practitioners consider makes an effective people project manager. In a practical sense and as a direct result of this paper, a set of six specific managing people skills and associated behaviours have been presented (Table 2). Theory played a major role to identify what was already known about effective managing people skills such as managing emotions, influencing others and effective communications. It was also possible to compare the contributions from this paper against well-respected project management frameworks such as the APM Body of Knowledge (2006) and PMI (2004). This was crucial in two respects. First, it confirmed that the contributions from this paper can be used in future editions of these Bodies of Knowledge as their current editions do not discuss what the associated behaviours are that underpin the people skills. Secondly, it confirmed that the main research questions were answered. The impact changes in attitude have on behaviours was not considered here. This topic might be covered by future research based on the existing work of Fisher (2006).

References

APM Body of Knowledge, 2006. Body of Knowledge, Association for Project Management, Fifth Edition. Published by the Association for Project Management, United Kingdom.

Barkley, B.T., 2006. Integrated Project Management. Mc Graw-Hill. Snr.,.

Blackburn, S. (2001).Understanding project managers at work, Henley Management College/Brunel University, DBA Thesis

Blake, R.R., Mouton, J.S., 1964. The Managerial Grid. Gulf Publishing, Houston, Texas, USA.

Byrd, T.A., Turner, D.E., 2001. An exploratory analysis of the value of the skills of IT personnel: their relationship to IS infrastructure and competitive advantage. Decision Sciences 32 (1), 21–54.

Cicmil, S., Hodgson, D. (Eds.), 2006. Making Projects Critical, Management, Work and Organisations. Macmillan, Palgrave.

Cleland, D.I., 1994. Project Management-Strategic Design and Implementation, Second Edition. McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Crawford, L.H. (2000). Project management competence: the value of standards, a thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, Henley Management College/Brunel University, United Kingdom.

Dainty, A.R.J., Cheng, M.-I., Moore, D.R., 2005. A Comparison of the Behavioural Competencies of Client-Focused and Production-Focused Project Managers in the Construction Sector. : Project Management Journal, Vol. 36, No 1. Project Management Institute, pp. 39–48.

All versions of this report is accessible via GitHub at https://github.com/thanhpd/soen6841

Compare   with:
- PMI Code of Ethics
- APM Body of Knowledge: David Cleland, Roland Gareis - Global Project Management Handbook_ Planning, Organizing and Controlling International Projects, Second Edition_ Plannin

-

Personality Characteristics, Attitudes, and Behaviors

Although there is strong guidance on what project managers need to know and to do in order to be considered competent, there is far less guidance available in terms of personality characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. There are a number of reasons for this. One reason is that different people with different personality characteristics can use knowledge and practices differently but still achieve satisfactory results. Another is that it is ethically questionable to establish standards for personality characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. Competency models are designed specifically for identifying the personality characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors that are found to be causally related to superior performance in particular organizations, but there is no expectation that there is one competency model that will be applicable to all organizations. Further, studies of personality characteristics of project managers have found only weak correlations between personality characteristics and successful performance. This can be explained in part by the difficulties surrounding judgments concerning success. However, although inconclusive and in most cases based on assumptions rather than research, there is some information available concerning the personality characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors that are expected to be associated with competent performance as a project manager.

The IPMA Competence Baseline includes a section on the expected personality characteristics for a certificated project manager. These are the same as appeared in the *APM Body of Knowledge* (version 3.0). They were developed in a series of practitioner workshops or meetings conducted by the APM. It is understood that they have no basis in research. These characteristics are

- Attitude
- Common sense
- Open-mindedness
- Adaptability
- Inventiveness
- Prudent risk taker
- Fairness
- Commitment

-

Can be counted on to follow through
MAINTAINING A TRUSTWORTHY LEADER IN THE ORGANIZATION

6

knowledge and does not have the necessary leadership and management skills. As a result, the behavior of leaders by top management is considered untrustworthy due to incompetence in business and leading people. This is reflected in the actions of the leader, which raises suspicion and mistrust among employees. Inability and unethical behavior by company leadership. This causes distrust in the organization. Over time, mistrust pervades the organization and results in decreased welfare and a low level of commitment to the organization.

An interesting finding in company X is that, despite the lack of trust, employees are still confident in their own competencies and skills, but feel that the organization is not feasible for them. They still have confidence in themselves and believe in the future outside the organization. It is also somewhat contradictory that people are very confident with the continuity of work and feel physically fit, even though their level of mental well-being is low. The general manager's trust and distrust are represented by his leadership style. In contrast to company X, the leadership style in company Y is very democratic and participatory, thus stimulating interaction and creation together with employees. Internal communication flows and often; this is supported by a flat organizational structure. This structure also allows open communication and high morality in the care of coworkers.

VI.   Conclusion

In the case study, the behavior of the two leaders clearly shows the difference between the behavior of the leader that is trustworthy and cannot be trusted and their consequences for employees who then need to be maintained. In these cases, there are some important lessons to be learned. First, we can influence the workplace atmosphere by demonstrating trust through competence, integrity, virtue, and certainty. In the case of company Y, a climate of trust prevails, along with evidence of enthusiasm, a high level of commitment, effective communication, and knowledge sharing. In contrast, case X's company revealed an atmosphere of suspicion, fear, low levels of commitment, and lack of willingness to collaborate and share knowledge. Second, employees are socialized by the good or bad habits of a leader and the style of action of their leader who is trustworthy or untrustworthy.

g Take care of their teams

g Willingly assist and mentor others

g Are sociable and get along with nearly everyone

g Are respectful and polite

g Remain even tempered, understanding, and sympathetic
A PROJECT MANAGER'S OPTIMISM AND STRESS MANAGEMENT AND IT PROJECT SUCCESS

To create a realistic level of optimism and to manage stress effectively, the key themes extracted from the stories to assist the I.T. project manager can be summarised as:

- Establishing a project with adequate executive support, a committed sponsor and an appropriate project plan increases optimism in the project team. Using the project plan and establishing tactics to remain on schedule and reduce risk/uncertainty increases optimism and reduces stress.
- Ensuring that successes and accomplishments are realised and celebrated in a timely manner reinforces optimism.
- Building professional relationships and acting professionally increases team optimism.

- Motivating a stable team and understanding and managing individual needs reduces stress.
- Developing strong general management techniques and project management techniques assists in handling stress.
- Developing an ability to keep a "calm head" during difficult times is an important reducer of stress.
- Minimising external interferences to the project reduces stress.
- Finally, ensuring that there are specific stress outlets during project execution improves overall performance.

g Can follow instructions and processes
https://www.simplilearn.com/importance-of-ethics-in-project-management-article

g Stay positive and upbeat

g Understand and manage costs

g Are willing to "speak truth to power"

g Act and dress appropriately

A PROJECT MANAGER'S OPTIMISM AND STRESS MANAGEMENT AND IT PROJECT SUCCESS

easily foresee their ability realise success in an otherwise daunting undertaking.
The creation and management of positive perceptions was the technique that the project managers found to be most effective in establishing an optimistic project environment. Many of the managers, particularly those that were undertaking the project as an external consulting firm, believed that it was important to consistently portray the perception of competence and optimism to the client or sponsor. One manager created this perception through his attire and general appearance when meeting with clients:
"I really believe that dress makes a difference; it makes you have a powerful effect. When I go to a board meeting I always put on a tie. I may be the most overdressed person in a room, but I would rather be overdressed than under dressed, and I do believe that it gives me some power in delivering my message. Even if the message is sometimes a bad one."   *OPM-1*

References

1. PMI (2017). Project Management Job Growth and Talent Gap 2017–2027, https://www.pmi.org/learning/careers/job-growth, last accessed 2023/11/10
2. Author, F.: Article title. Journal **2**(5), 99–110 (2016)

3. Author, F., Author, S.: Title of a proceedings paper. In: Editor, F., Editor, S. (eds.) CONFERENCE 2016, LNCS, vol. 9999, pp. 1–13. Springer, Heidelberg (2016)
4. Author, F., Author, S., Author, T.: Book title. 2nd edn. Publisher, Location (1999)
5. Author, F.: Contribution title. In: 9th International Proceedings on Proceedings, pp. 1–2. Publisher, Location (2010)
6. LNCS Homepage, http://www.springer.com/lncs, last accessed 2023/06/20