Policies to Improve Project Management

Week 3 Graded Activity

**Purpose**: This assignment asks you to synthesize what you have learned from the presentation on project management and the interactive MIT Sloan Hardware Project Management Simulation. Please do this assignment only after you have completed the material on systems thinking and project management, especially the set of experiments with the simulator. Based on what you learned:

**Write an ~800 words memo for the senior leadership of your organization** presenting your recommendations to improve the way your organization manages projects.

Focus on the type of projects that are typical in your actual organization. If you are not currently involved in project management, note that projects can span any domain, including construction, hardware, software, or any other context—they can be large or small, in for-profit firms or governments or nonprofits, military or civilian, or any other setting where teams of people must work together to generate deliverables that meet certain requirements, budget, and deadline.

1. Describe briefly what is the mission of your organization, the services you offer, and your clients (if applicable) to provide context for your peers to aid them in evaluating your proposals.

2. Consider the following guidelines when writing your memo:

* 1. ***Describe 5 actionable recommendations*** that could be implemented in your organization.
  2. ***Present policies that are applicable to a variety of real-world projects***, not decisions specific to a particular project, e.g.: “Set the workweek to 60 hours throughout the project to increase progress while avoiding excessive worker fatigue” is a decision; “Require your team to work long hours until you are sure they are suffering from fatigue” is a policy (though not necessarily a good one—the choice of policies is up to you). If you chose this policy, explain how, in real life, project managers could determine what workweek would avoid excessive worker fatigue, and how you would determine whether and how burned out they are.
  3. ***Explain each recommendation***, including how and why you expect it would help improve project performance.
  4. ***Avoid technical jargon***. Draw on your experience with the project simulator, but make sure your recommendations are applicable to the real world and presented in plain language suitable for the managers and leaders of your organization.
  5. ***Ensure your recommendations are robust to realistic uncertainties*** you and your organization face. Every project is different and faces different technological, market, human resource, cost, time pressures, and other conditions.
  6. ***Be realistic but not cynical.*** Your recommendations should be implementable in your organization, but don’t assume that change is impossible. Make a case for the value and benefits of your proposals. Consider how you might address resistance to change and increase the likelihood of successful implementation.

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