Title:
Meeting New Business Challenges - The Next Generation Project Manager

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Summary:
Are you tired being an average project manager, working on average projects,
being passed over for promotion, and getting an average performance review? You
need to understand something right now. There are new challenges and
expectations today that require every project manager to evolve to the next
level. If you do not take action now, you will be left behind.

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Are you tired being an average project manager, working on average projects,
being passed over for promotion, and getting an average performance review? You
need to understand something right now. Being a certified Project Management
Professional (PMP), proficient in the PM knowledge areas and having successful
projects under your belt, is not enough to be a top performing project manager.
There are new challenges and expectations today that require every project
manager to evolve to the next level. If you do not take action now, you will be
left behind.

New Challenges

Think of all the challenges you face on a daily basis: Motivating teams who are
harder to mold and direct than those in the past. Introducing new services more
swiftly to keep up with competitors. Managing change in all its variations from
new company regulations, methods, policies, etc. Managing higher customer
expectations. Managing higher company expectations.

Being a project manager with a traditional "tyrannical management and control"
management style does not succeed in this new business environment. This is one
of the reasons why there have been so many project managers, from all
industries, let go in the past 3 years. Business executives realized their
traditional project managers were not adding value to the organization. They

could not meet new challenges and expectations. Traditional project managers are considered dead weight and on the endangered species list.

Meeting these challenges demands leadership. Why would you want to change your management style? Well, let's see. Who is the best motivator? A Leader. Who gets the greatest effort and most insightful thinking from people? A leader. Who always meets stiff challenges and goals? A leader. Who summons from people old-fashioned workplace virtues like loyalty, commitment, and on-the-job exuberance? A leader. Who gets promoted? A leader.

Traditional Project Manager vs. Leader

So why are there so few leaders? Many believe the traditional "tyrannical management and control" management style based on ordering people around, kicking butt, and taking names gets results quicker. This can work, but there is a huge negative impact to employee morale, team performance, and long term success.

Review the following list, A Leaders 13 Core Competencies, and see whether you are a traditional manager or leader. To keep your current project management position or advance your career, you need to understand the difference between the two and which leadership core competencies you will need to work on for future success.

A Leaders 13 Core Competencies

Management Style. Traditional project managers supervise, control and correct. Leaders strategize, inspire, and motivate.

Goals. Traditional project managers focus on short term goals and follow endless series of internal processes to the letter. Leaders think and act like an owner of the company, recognize the importance of long term goals, have vision, and are committed to succeed.

Thinking Style. Traditional project managers are satisfied with incremental gains and follow ideas that worked in the past. Leaders are constantly searching for new knowledge and new ideas, willing to learn better methods and make sure employees expand their knowledge base.

Communication. Traditional project managers engage in one-way communication, give orders, and talk at people. Leaders encourage interactive communication, are receptive to both positive and negative feedback, and listen to employees and customers.

Emotion. Traditional project managers are analytical and coolly detached. Leaders produce emotional energy. They inspire employees and customers to consistently achieve goals.

Trust. Traditional project managers are firm believers in Murphy's Law. They constantly monitor their employees. Leaders maintain a high level of trust with their employees.

Openness. Traditional project managers are closed minded, need everything proven to them, and take pride in saying "NO!". Leaders embrace diversity and are highly receptive to new ideas and people who are different.

Action. Traditional project managers gather good ideas and rarely implement them. They over analyze, resist making decisions and avoid risk. Leaders are self starters and action oriented, they think fast on their feet, come up with solutions to critical situations, and take calculated risks.

Mentoring. Traditional project managers rarely coach or mentor employees. They focus on how things should be done and strictly follow procedures and checklists. Leaders help employees develop the habits they need to be more successful, empower employees to make decisions, observe performance and provide feedback.

Change. Traditional project managers like things the way they are, will do anything to avoid change, and see change as a threat. Leaders stimulate and relish change, adapt quickly to change, do not fear it, and see it as an opportunity.

Attitude. Traditional project managers are pessimistic and not approachable. Their first priority is to satisfy the boss, then customers and employees. They are judgmental and push blame down the line. Leaders realize the impact of a positive attitude, they treat everyone as special, remain objective, apologize and admit mistakes, and maintain a positive frame of mind.

Value System. Traditional project managers do not have personal or team values documented and they don't know their own corporate value system. Leaders document and refer to personal and team values daily, they believe values guide people, and values are something considered worthy in and of itself.

Performance Measurement. Traditional project managers rarely measure or review performance. When they do, the measurements are judgmental, and employees rarely know how they are performing on a day-to-day basis. Leaders are always measuring

data based performance, track employee progress, involve the employee in tracking their own performance, and use the performance measurements as a training tool.

How To Become A Leader

Were you born a leader? Of course not. Can you be a leader? Yes.

Leaders are made rather than born. To be successful and meet the new business challenges, traditional project managers must concentrate on developing the 13 Leadership Core Competencies. Leadership training, mentoring, experience, and daily dedication to the core competencies will be the key to your success in the future.

To get started on your path to becoming a project management superhero, you need to take the first step.

The following is a list of my favorite project management and leadership web sites that will help you take the first step: www.btrconline.com, www.ccl.org, www.pmi.org, and www.business.com.

My favorite leadership books include: "One Minute Manager", "Seven Habits of Highly Successful People", "Who Moved My Cheese", "Not Bosses But Leaders", "The Leader Manager – Guidelines for Action", "Enlightened Leadership", and "First Things First".

Good luck with your future success.