Minor Assessment #01  
  
ENGG3500

Managing Engineering Projects

**1 Belbin (250 words)**

Belbin is a behavioural evaluation tool that is used to provide a qualitative description of an individual’s traits. The analysis is orientated towards team building for project management. Nine team roles are defined and have been determined through research. The listed roles are resource investigator, team worker, coordinator, plant, monitor evaluator, specialist, shaper, implementer, completer/finisher (Belbin 2018). Each of these rules can be described as fitting into a super-category; people, thinking or action. Any process of a project’s development is relevant to one of these super-categories.

Belbin can be used to analyse the traits of each member of a team and return their proclivity for a given role. Each role is integral to the completion of a project therefore it is best to have a diversity of roles within your team. It is not advantageous, for example, to have a team with no leaders as this would lead to dysfunction. Similarly, it is not advantageous to have a team of only leaders. Belbin allows you to determine a team’s trait distribution in an impersonal and effective way.

In a professional setting the productivity and effectiveness of a team is vital to a business’ success. As a project manager a relatively small capital investment in a Belbin report of each of your team could see massive returns paid in productivity and effectiveness. To find that you have a dysfunctional team due to behavioural incompatibility half-way through a project could be disastrous but could be avoided using Belbin.

**2 How to work with team members remotely (200 Words)**

To maintain productivity in a team that is not able to physically meet, communication must be maintained. Due to the advent of the internet this is not difficult. There are many ways to remotely communicate with one another and each of these best serves a unique function.

For formal matters that concern the whole team, such as significant project alterations or deadlines, *emails* can be sent out by the team leader. To collaboratively work on documents or project components, services such as *Google Drive or Microsoft SharePoint* may be employed. Where discussion is required social media such as *Facebook* can be utilised and can be used for one on one interaction or addressing the whole group. If something requires speedy explanation or conveyance, *phone calls* are always an option and if the entire team should be included video conferencing such as *Skype or Google Hangouts* are powerful tools.

Not being near team members is limiting in emergency scenarios where the team needs to be quickly assembled, and a problem addressed/solved on the spot. The aforementioned solutions substitute the need for geographical proximity that existed in the past and with reasonable organisation should be work well with any team dynamic.

**3 Project management of Alstom in Romania (450 words)**

*The following is information gathered listening to Bill Sidwell’s presentation at the University of Newcastle in 2017.*

Bill Sidwell was employed by Alstom as a project manage. He was required to lead a team in Romania to retrofit Soviet Era coal fired power stations and reduce their emissions. Alstom is a French multinational company that undertakes projects throughout the world.

The structure of project management endorsed by Alstom follows a lifecycle of Prefeasibility, Feasibility, Tendering, Capital, Project, Operations and Maintenance. For each step of this process, from initiation of a project to its close, there is a standardised process. This allows anyone who knows Alstom’s policies to work within any of their project’s and understand what is going on. The standardisation of their processes has likely contributed to their international success. Though this may cause inflexibility in some situations it ensures consistency and reliability in every project and thus outweighs its rigidity.

Alstom’s leadership style of project management is called a “strong matrix” and operates such that members of a project management team have multiple bosses. This is advantageous in that there is an extensive chain of command monitoring projects and ensuring their success. It is disadvantaged in that employees are able to manipulate bosses easily by playing them off one another. That is, they can claim they are busy with assignments from other bosses. The reason an employee would do this is that often Mr Sidwell was working with part-time contractors that were working for many companies at once on many assignments and so to buy themselves time would do this.  
  
Mr Sidwell had difficulty in Romania as it has a strict hierarchical culture in the workplace. This meant that his Romanian team members did not readily accept the idea of multiple bosses. The rigidity of this culture was such that no one would ever question the actions of the person above them in hierarchy. This was advantageous in that there respect from those under him in the chain of command but disadvantaged because no one would question the actions of their boss even if they were clearly incorrect. This blind obedience can lead to great losses as one of the strengths of a team is many eyes watching for problems but in the case of Mr Sidwell’s experience in Romania, this was wasted as he would never be questioned.

Mr Sidwell found that the autocratic style of project management he had to employ to illicit productivity from some of his team members was difficult to reconcile with his beliefs and Australian values. None the less to successfully operate as a project manager in Romania he found it necessary.

**4 Bibliography**

Belbin (2018). “Belbin Team Roles| Belbin”. The Nine Belbin Team Roles, <http://www.belbin.com/about/belbin-team-roles/>, (Mar. 11, 2018)