HOW TO BUILD EFFECTIVE PROJECT TEAM: PRINCIPLES, ASPECTS OF ORGANIZATION AND TIPS

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Abstracts: The article investigates the key principles and characteristics of building a successful project team in companies. It shows the main aspects of how to organize, manage and build a good project team in order to achieve perfect results at the end of work with the project. It is a pressing issue now, because in every modern organization there are people who need to be organized effectively to work with different kind of projects.

Keywords: project, project team, project manager.

As business in the 21st century becomes more and more project-based, companies increasingly deal with a problem of project management. Nowadays, project management is one of the important parts of activity in any organizations. And, more and more companies that run project teams have to face a difficult task of how to build and manage a project team effectively. Of course, projects can be different in its structure, but for any project there should be a team of people who are ready to work together in order to achieve common goals. Therefore, to organize and manage an efficient project team is a very topical task for top-manager (or for a team leader) and in general for a company.

First of all, let's consider what "a project team" is. For now, project teams are the groups that work together to execute the tasks necessary to meet customer requirements. (Suchan, 2003) Before a project team meets for the first time, before they start performing, or maybe even before they know they will be working together, the project manager begins laying the foundation for effective teamwork. Organizational structure of a project team should consist of leading participants (customer and contractor) and a team leader, a person who has prime responsibility and is going to plan, control and motivate the team's participants.

There are five important characteristics of an effective team that every leader of a project team needs to consider:

- **Goals, direction and leadership.** If a leader of a project team wants to build an effective working team, he/she must inform each of team members about perfect results that are to be achieved at the end. Planning is one of the most important parts in the work of a project team, because it's extremely necessary to formulate and understand the key objectives. So in a project team participants should know what course to follow, how they can contribute to reaching the final goals.

- **Roles, responsibilities and skills.** The team members need to be clear about their roles and responsibilities and skill set they need to possess. (Belbin, 1993) This is an important issue in terms of developing the skills each member of the team requires. It's one of the necessary organizational aspects for building an effective project team. The understanding of their particular role in the team allows each member to concentrate on their work and tasks that in the future will help to achieve the key goal of the whole working project team. It is crucial to know if the project team is composed of part-time or full-time members, to be able to define the responsibilities and role i.e. a technical leader, a business process owner and subject matter expert of each member type accordingly. As a project manager, you should draft the roles and responsibilities and use these notes when discussing resource needs with functional managers. You should also discuss and agree these assignments with your team members. An effective way for project teams to discuss and establish how they will work together is to use a team operating agreement (TOA). The TOA serves as the guidelines and ground rules to help the team work productively together over the course of the project. (Suchan, 2003) If everyone understands everything clearly and agrees with their function in the team, the project team will have good results at the end;

- **Climate and interpersonal skills.** It is important to create the climate or 'atmosphere' in the team and the quality of interpersonal relationships within the team that will help project team members to be efficient. It is not a secret that people tend to work more effectively when they are happy and so an important part of the project leader's role is to make the team 'a good place to be' (Katzenback, Smith, 2005);
- **Methods and operating procedures.** Methods and operating procedures need to be unambiguous and clear to all concerned to avoid misunderstanding;

- **Ways of effective and convenient communication.** All members of a project team should find appropriate and convenient ways of communication. To develop the above tip further it would be advisable to set a schedule of when communication must take place. The project manager should be consistent and hold meetings, exchange emails/ telephone calls with the team members with regular updates regarding the project status. This will keep all parties up to date on how far the project has come and what is further required. Also it is very important to be able to encourage people to think about how their participation may help them achieve personal goals, such as acquiring new skills and knowledge, meeting new people, increasing their visibility in the organization, and enhancing their opportunities for job advancement. Thus, when team members can realize personal benefits while performing valued services for the organization, the members' motivation and commitment to project success will be greater.

An effective project team should have all these characteristics. Of course, a lot of things depend on how the leader of a project team is going to carry out his/her responsibilities. So a good leader needs to:

- Organize the beginning of team working quickly and effectively;
- Coordinate and control works of each members in project team;
- Distribute expediently all the tasks, responsibilities and works between each member in project team;
- Interact with external participants of the project for its effective and timely implementation;
- Control the deviation from the planned progress and follow changes on the project;
- Communicate with team members in order to monitor the project and take decisions while working on a project. (Grigorieva, 2006)

Finally, in order to understand whether your project team is successful or promising it is important for the leader and participants of a project team to answer the following questions:

- Are there the right people on your team? Do you have an agreement from functional managers to dedicate the necessary resources to your project?
- Have you set the goals and objectives of the team? Are they clear to everyone? Is there commitment from all team members to meet them?
- Are team roles clearly defined and accepted? Does everyone know what is expected from them?
- Have you established procedures that team members can follow to work effectively together, such as a team operating agreement?
- Are there influences outside the team that may affect performance, and if so, have you identified and addressed them? (Suchan, 2003)

So, if you (as a leader/project manager) give positive answers to these questions, your project team will achieve the key goal and will be effective and productive.

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