
The People Side of Project Management

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Preface

This report can be read either by newcomers to this topic or people who are already used to managing projects.

If you are already familiar to project management, it may be a good idea to look at the questionnaire in the appendix at first. After that, it should be easier to pick the appropriate and for you most important information out of the first three chapters.

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1.1 Introduction:

Common problems within the world of project management

Throughout the history of project management, project managers have managed their projects according to three criteria: cost, schedule and quality. They treated all other considerations as subordinate.



Ironically, following this approach has not proven too successful for any of the three criteria.

In addition, each criterion seems to go in different directions. Meeting the schedule often means paying less attention to budget and quality considerations. Concentrating on quality may lead to ignoring budget or schedule objectives etc.

All this occurs although project managers have a wide array of project management tools and techniques at their disposal. In addition, these tools and techniques have become more sophisticated and automated. So what is the reason for these problems?

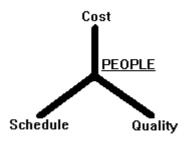
1.2 A new definition of project management

The answer for the negative results described above is that schedule, budget and quality are not enough. One other important criterion is missing: people.

What many project managers fail to realize is that their handling of people affects schedule, budget and quality - and therefore the outcome of their projects.

A wise people management can also bridge the gap between the other three criteria. A motivated collaborator will work more effective and even longer in order to keep schedule. The more he is interested in good results, the better are his solutions for improving or maintaining quality. On the whole, a content employee will not waste his energy in being annoyed or bored.

Embedded in an environment of mutual agreement, the usage of all the given tools and techniques will then provide the success of your project.



- new definition of project management -

1.3 The major players and their tasks

In order to show the importance of our new criterion 'people', it is necessary to list and explain the major players involved in every project. Dealing effectively with all these people is the precondition for meeting all the objectives your project has. If you know how to handle the major players, you can use their might for the success of your project.

The senior management

- Determine project's fate (proceed or stop)
- Allocate project support resources including money and manpower
- Identify favoured or preferred projects
- Continued participation throughout the life cycle
- Provide strategic guidance and direction

The client

- Pays for the project/product
- Coordinates with project manager for project/product clarification
- Uses the product
- Approves the product
- Dedicates resources to the project including people, time, and money
- Communicates with many of the major players

The project team

- Supports the project manager
- Provides requisite skills and creativity
- Operates as a unified team
- Works with the client to obtain requirements, feedback, and approvals

1.4 Overview of your own tasks as the project manager

The project manager

- Orchestrates successful delivery of the project
- Enables interactive communications among senior management, client, and project team
- Coordinates effective and efficient participation
- Develops project plans, including estimates, work breakdown structure, and schedules
- Provides mechanism for monitoring and tracking progress regarding schedule, budget, and technical performance
- Creates infrastructure for managing the project team

2) How to deal with the major players

2.1 The senior management

First of all it is necessary to fulfil the major expectations of senior management. If they are convinced of your abilities, they will value your arguments and interfere less. Consequently, it will be easier for you to ask them for help in special situations.

Senior management expect you to:

-be honest

That means, that you have to report about positive and negative news. If senior management are differently informed by others, they will lose their trust in you.

- take decisive action

A project manager should deal with the daily affairs without help from outside.

-possess expertise

It is expected that you know enough about the project to have a good overall view of the present situation. This is necessary for the communication with the client, team members and people from outside.

-do a good job

The project manager should concentrate on getting the job done without adding things which are not necessary. The main goal is to complete the project on time, within budget, and to the highest quality.

-commit to project

Closely allied to the last expectation is that senior management want project managers committed to the success of their projects. If your project runs into trouble, you can even raise your reputation by showing committment in solving the problems.

-communicate

Senior management expect project managers to inform them regularly at least about schedule, budget, and quality. It is important to present this information summarized and meaningful, making it easy to understand the main facts.

If you satisfy the demands of senior management, you will then find it easier to obtain support from them.

So you can encourage senior management to review and approve the project plan or topics of similar importance. By this, you get guidance and direction where wanted, without touching your autonomy in other tasks. In addition, senior management is informed about the actual status of the project.

In general, this is a good way to combine senior management's expectations with your own's: Try to encourage their participation, while they feel being very well informed. This will always work if you don't ask them too often for help.

Basically, the objectives of senior management are similar to your own's. If you present your plans as a solution for their aims, they will rather support you then if you only talk about YOUR thoughts. Simply make your goals to theirs.

2.2 The client

The expectations of the client include:

- Being honest
- Knowing the business
- Having technical expertise
- Keeping current
- Being cooperative
- Communicating
- Providing the best output

The guideline for the project manager should again imply to understand the client and to fulfil his expectations as well as possible.

Furthermore, one of the most important points is communication. As long as you can talk about problems and suggestions of both sides, the client will be content because he is involved into the forthcoming of the project.

In addition, it is much more likely to get agreement from the client, if he understands the teams' problems and some details around it.

2.3 Individuals of the project team

Following areas have to be considered:

Getting the right people

The four most important factors for the right team members are:

- technical proficiency
- education
- experience
- personality

Otherwise it may happen, that a team member with technical proficiency e.g. does not have the education to understand how his expertise fits into the entire project and so on.

-Knowing which incentives to use

There are positive and negative incentives:

Positive incentives cover measures like praising somebody for good work, sending people on training courses, providing more challenging work assignments, participation of team members in the decision-making process, switching people to more challenging tasks etc.

Negative incentives include termination of somebody's participation on the project, talking to the employee's functional boss, assign the team member to a less challenging task, reducing attendance at seminars etc.

The former incentives should be used more often than the latter, which tend to have worse effects. However, the use of too many incentives in general will decrease their positive sides.

Dealing with "difficult"people

There will always be 'difficult' people in a number of forms. This may be the rebellious type or, at the other end of the spectrum, the quiet person who has resigned from the project. It is important to know that the latter may be hard to make out, because he never complains. As a consequence, it is necessary to have a close look at all the team members, otherwise you may oversee low effectivity of some people.

No matter, in which way they show a 'difficult' behaviour, you have to identify the source of the problem at first. If you are not the cause, it will be impossible to change the person's attitude totally. Next, meet in private with the person and use effective listening skills. Third, be honest and straightforward. Inform the person about the impacts his behaviour has on the project. Cite specifics, not generalities. Fourth, do not hesitate to use incentives (sparingly). Fifth, try to direct difficult people's energies into tasks appropriate to their personality. Sixth, apply peer pressure. Quite often, difficult people will alter their behaviour when they feel pressure from you and the group.

Encouraging creativity from individuals

One way is to give an individual sufficient job autonomy.

Another way is to generate an atmosphere of 'freedom to fail' rather than a 'freedom to succeed'. The project manager should encourage team members to experiment with different ways of tackling tasks. If they fail, encourage them to learn from their experience.

You can also encourage creativity by involving individuals in decision-making or by giving them challenging tasks.

The use of incentives is also worth thinking about.

Delegating effectively

As a project manager cannot do everything himself, there is a need to delegate work effectively.

When delegating, the personality of the person who will do the work should be considered. Always delegate tasks that match a person s personality.

However, delegations do not absolve the project manager from his responsibilities. He should follow up on what he has delegated, e.g. by demanding a report about the progress of the work.

Taking advantage of training

Viewing training as a vacation for the employee is harmful both for the individual and the entire project. It rather is a mechanism for incresing employee growth and productivity.

The training should relate to the people's work, otherwise it is not very effective.

In order to minimize the short-time loss of productivity while the employees are not there, you could send them to training in slow periods. While in training, people can improve themselves, whereas, if they sit idle for any time, they become mischievous and disrupt busy team members.

People should never be sent to training following bad performance, otherwise good employees see themselves as being taken advantage of, whereas bad employees see it as reinforcing bad performance.

Remember:

Your people are your most important ingredients for a successful project. How you lead them will have a powerful influence on the outcome. Remember, you manage activities but you lead people. Too often, project managers manage people like objects such as a schedule or a microcomputer. That is unfortunate because it is people who make the project happen.

2.4 The project team ingeneral

In order to motivate your team positively, you need to:

Recognize sources of team dissension

Sources of team dissension may be for example if there are no leaders appointed for the project. If more than ten people are assigned to your team and you appoint no leaders, team dissension becomes more likely.

In addition, it is important to allocate the resources in a right way. If for example a microcomputer can help a team member to finish work much faster, he should be allowed to use one.

Become attuned to indicators of poor morale $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left($

Common indicators for a poor morale are:

- argumentative sessions at meetings
- low productivity
- poor quality of workmanship
- outright refusal to perform
- insubordination
- excessive absenteeism
- power struggles (formation of groups with concurring attitudes)
- spread of negative rumours
- sabotage of other people's work

Understand the characteristics of an effective team

The project manager should try to do whatever necessary to create an atmosphere with the following characteristics within your team:

- little or no dissension
- mutual trust among members
- well-defined roles and responsibilities
- good communication up and down the chain of command
- assigned backups for each other's tasks
- appointed leadership
- equitable distribution of resources

Know how to build espritde corps

Clear communication and clear objectives, for example, build up a higher morale. The team members should be well informed about the overall goal. In order to inform them about the work accomplished by the project, you may hand out a mission statement at the beginning.

If you are a good listener rather than a good talker, you will find it more easy to notice problems of individuals. It is obvious that you can only solve problems by first finding out what and where they are.

Generate commitment and accountabilityamong employees

In order to do this, it is necessary to assign responsibilities right at the beginning of the project.

Moreover, if you let team members participate in decision-making, they are less likely to criticize the decision.

Another way to generate commitment among the team is to give visibility to exceedingly well performance of an employee.

Understand your impact on team performance

If the team notices that you are clear, concise, well-organized, they will value your ideas, suggestions and instructions much more than otherwise.

Furthermore, the project manager should also show that he values the people and their well-being by establishing a positive work environment.

Improve the physical work environment

Following a list of problems with a negative impact on productivity:

- crowded desks
- constantly ringing telephones
- insufficient number of photocopiers
- poor lighting
- antiquated equipment
- unreliable equipment
- air too cold, hot, or humid
- heavy pedestrian traffic
- excessive noise
- inadequate facilities (e.g.,no cafeteria or bathrooms)
- insufficient supplies
- poorly designed equipment
- depressing wall colouring
- lack of windows, plants etc.

If you as the project manager follow these rules, you will find your team to create synergy, a term describing that the work done by the team exceeds the sum of work all team members could deal with, if they were working on their own.

3) You, the project manager

3.1 Knowing what is going on

The project manager should always follow the plan. This plan should also cover measures to detect deviations. If you then detect a variance to your plan, you can react faster. Many managers only try to follow their plan, thinking that they can go into the problem when it arises. This would be a management by crisis, only reacting to new circumstances instead of (at least roughly) trying to foresee them.

In order to know what is going on, the project manager has to be aware of the reliability of information he gets. This also implies to know the people who give this information.

Moreover, a good communication system is necessary. The team members should report about the status and forthcoming of their work. Meetings should be held to collect relevant data.

3.2 How to behave in special situations

First of all, it has to be pointed out that in many situations there is the need to use psychological measures in order to compete with opponents and other major players. Those who try to totally avoid them will often fail.

Before you can use one of these tricks, you always have to assess the atmosphere, to look at more than the physical environment, to acquire as much information as possible.

Notwithstanding, the physical environment often reveals information about your 'political' environment.

One thing a good project manager always has to look at are the expectations others have about your behaviour. The client probably expects you to behave in a self-assured manner, always knowing what to do. Team members may want to perceive you just as a peer, whereas senior management often expect you to have a very dominating influence on the team. If you contradict those expectations, you can experience very serious problems, so try to play at least roughly your role according to the others' expectations.

To survive politically, keep the initiative all the time, maintain momentum. Find people ('friends') in every important group, like senior management or clients, who support you when problems arise. Always portray the image of success, even if the project is close to failure. Avoid revealing panicky feelings. This does of course not imply not telling the truth, but the truth can be said in many ways.

Strategies for survival are the following:

Divide and conquer

This means, for example, assigning a 'difficult' team member with one or two other employees to complete tasks or assigning the team member to a task, where others depend on the output.

You can also try to make friends with members of important groups. When one person of the group complains about something, you may tell him that he is not speaking for the entire group.

A disadvantage of this strategy could be the loss of synergy within your team. You have to be aware of the fact that $divide\ and\ conquer$ only transfers a problem to another person without solving it.

Cooption

Cooption simply means to make friends with opponents by finding common goals. You can also handle out a 'deal', for example, to enhance the career of a team member in exchange for cooperation. But never promise too much, especially if you cannot be sure to deliver in the end.

Alliance building

This strategy is similar to cooption but with one difference. You build a strong relationship with friends. Although an alliance is a very good idea, it may also prove hazardous, when an alliance is too close, thus restricting your scope.

Powerbrokering

Here, you are taking advantage of the circumstance where two or more parties are fighting against one another. As a project manager, you can exploit this in several ways.

One possibility is to create the image that your project is in the interests of the company, whereas two other fighting project managers seem to fight only for their own interests.

Powerbrokering may lead to an alliance of the fighting parties, now attacking you. Thus, it has to be used carefully (like all the other strategies).

Spread responsibility

A common way to spread responsibility is by sharing resources with another project. Such resources may be people, equipment, and data. If something doesn't work, you can attribute part of the problem to the other project using your resources.

Still another way to spread responsibility is to encourage more participation in the decision-making process.

Scapegoating

Scapegoating means blaming the other person for your problems, thereby absolving yourself from any responsibility.

Although often quite effective, scapegoating can reveal your weakness and create enemies. It should be used only if absolutely necessary or at least partially true.

Cooperation

Here, you help other project managers to succeed if they help you.

A project manager might consider lending a team member to a project that requires a certain skill. Or he might give the other project manager's team access to data, machines, facilities, etc. for a short period.

Cooperation is a very good strategy, if it is not used too often, as it may lead to mediocrity.

Filibustering

With this strategy, you delay progress of your project as much as possible until the delay itself becomes to your advantage or no longer becomes advantageous. For instance, you may delay your project to secure greater funding for the next fiscal year. Or you may delay your project to hurt or embarrass another project manager needing your project's output. Another reason is to avoid prematurely terminating your project, such as appearing to finish the project earlier than expected and, consequently, finding yourself seeking another project.

Filibustering works only to a point and can cause real trouble, so it should only be used for a short time or if absolutely necessary.

Sacrifice the future for the present

This strategy means fixing the current problem by dealing with the consequences later (respectively let your successor deal with them).

You may make everyone work extensive overtime to meet a schedule date, knowing that later on the budget will overrun and employee turnover will rise. Or you may not provide resources to adjust to budget constraints and simply disregard the long range impact of your decisions.

'Quick fixes' are common on projects, although the project manager can face serious problems by pursuing this strategy.

The presence of politics is inescapable in any business. The project managers who succeed are not always the best and the brightest but the ones who work smarter and not necessarily the hardest.

The right way to proceed is to be honest and direct as much as possible, without forgetting the above mentioned strategies, which can be used in 'bad' times.

3.3 Epilogue

To manage a project successfully, project managers need an appropriate blend of skills. These skills can be divided into two categories, 'hard' and 'soft'. Ideally, a project manager should have a mixture of both hard and soft skills. In addition, personal characteristics like seeing the total picture, having a vision of the results of the project, being decisive etc., are also important.

Hard skills

Hard skills are ones that project managers acquire through training and experience.

Good project knowledge is one hard skill. Sometimes people become managers only because of their technical expertise, thus having been promoted to their level of incompetence because they lack many other important skills.

Excellent planning skills play a major role in the hard skills of a good project manager.

Good public speaking skills are also required, as well as writing skills for giving presentations.

These skills are termed soft because project managers can learn about them but still require considerable experience in using them before they really succeed.

One soft skill is being an effective listener. This is necessary since you must interact with the client and all the other major players within a project. Successful project managers try to listen to all the feedback they obtain, may it be positive or negative.

Another soft skill is running effective meetings. Running them instead of holding them means providing leadership by addressing the important issues efficiently and effectively.

Therefore it is important to have time management skills and effective negotiation skills.

You will find some guidelines for effective use of hard and soft skills in the appendix.

4) Appendix

4.1 Some checklists for hard and soft skills

Qualities of good documentation

- Has title
- Signatures and date Clear
- Concise
- Readable
- Complete
- Concrete language
- Organization
- Continuity
- Logical flow
- Consistent
- Uniform
- Modifications and updates separately identified
- Version controlled
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- Glossary
- Index
- Acronyms list
- Illustrations
- Good spelling and punctuation

Delivery	Material	Preparation
Audience involvement Eye contact Voice propagation Body language Question and answer period Duration Equipment usage Maintain interest Maintain control Enthusiasm Language Credibility Confidence Good listener Influence audience attitude Encourage feedback	Organization Visuals Conclusion Closing and wrap-up Opening statement Identify key points Spelling / punctuation Complete Consistent Uniform Logical flow Readable (large type) Avoid clutter Restrict number of lines pe Restrict number of words pe Implementation specialist Maintenance specialist	

Characteristics of an effective listener

- Maintains eye contact

- Communicates verbally
 Communicates non-verbally
 Appears attentive, alert, interested, and involved
 Encorages talking through use of questions
 Provides recognition and constructive feedback

- Focuses attention to talker
- Listens to understand
- Does not dominate the conversation

Guidelines for conducting an effective meeting

- Agenda used and followed
- Everyone has a chance to speak
- No one dominates
- Chairperson conducts, but does not overcontrol
- All relevant persons present
- Minutes are recorded
- Irrelevant topics not addressed
- Large enough room used
- Adequate supplies and equipment available
- Comfortable environmental conditions exist

Guidelines for effective time management

- Act now; avoid procrastination
- Plan, allocate, and prioritize your time
- Create and maintain a time log
- Delegate tasks when appropriate
- Challenge yourself with positive stress
- Create to-do lists
- Categorize work as urgent, important, busy or file
- Provide and expect clear communication
- Make time available for uninterrupted concentration
- Leave some personal 'free' time for yourself
- Use time effectively first; rank efficiency second
- Say 'no' when necessary

Guidelines for effective negotiation

- Understand that negotiation is a process, not an event or happening
- Play a poor hand skilfully
- Analyse and understand the other side's position
- Avoid striving for zero-sum results
- Use your power sensibly
- Take calculated risks
- Know your options
- Exude self-confidence
- Determine the other side's power (of legitimacy)
- Share in the overall risk by gaining others' commitment
- Try to gain control over others' behaviour
- Strive for a win-win, not win-lose, result
- Be persistent and persuasive
- Use flexible deadlines
- Do your homework; information is power
- Seek common ground with the other side

4.2 Questionnaire:

Where do I have to improve my management abilities?

After having read this report you can now test yourself:

In which area do I have to improve in future? Which aspects do I have to pay attention to in particular?

To what extent is one of the following statements true of you and your team? Try to make your judgement honestly and put a cross at what you consider is the appropriate point on the scale (1 = Not at all true; 5 = Very true).

A	Not at	Very true
1. I can confidently say that I keep fully 1 2 3 4 5 informed everyone who wants to be.		
2. My team is good at making invisible team- 1 2 3 4 members feel they belong.	5	
3. Both I and all members of the team are 1 2 3 4 very clear about our targets.	5	
4. I have ensured that my project has appropriate mechanisms for measuring progress.		
5. My team members would say that I 1 2 3 4 provide them with a lot of support to enable them to do their jobs better.	5	
6. I have clearly demonstrated to my senior 1 2 3 4 management that I understand the full impact of my project organization.	5	

В Not at Very alltrue true 1. I know how to get things done informally 1 2 3 4 5 in the organization. 2. I am honest with myself. 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 3. I don't get caught out by not having enough resources when I need them. 4. I feel fine asking my sponsor for help. 1 2 3 4 5 5. I review individual performance and 1 2 3 4 5 progress with team members regularly. 6. We are good at keeping everyone 1 2 3 4 5 informed honestly about our progress. С Not at Very alltrue true 1. My team genuinely regard key people 1 2 3 4 5 outside the organization as part of our team. 2. I take active steps to manage my stress. 1 2 3 4 5 3. Team members share with me the 1 2 3 4 5 responsibility for planning and anticipating. 4. When things go wrong, we are good at 1 2 3 4 5 taking effective action to put things right quickly. 5. I help my sponsor to help me by keeping 1 2 3 4 5 him/her fully informed. 6. I put time and effort into developing our 1 2 3 4 5 effectiveness in working as a team.

D Not at Very alltrue true 1. I am constantly trying to anticipate the 1 2 3 4 5 problems that lie over the horizon. 2. I communicate conviction and confidence 1 2 3 4 5 about the project to others. 3. We have a clearly developed strategy for 1 2 3 4 5 marketing the project within the organization. 4. All my team are fully aware of the 1 2 3 4 5 project's importance to the organization. 5. I fully understand the expectations of all 1 2 3 4 5 my project's stakeholders. 6. My project team never repeats the same 1 2 3 4 5 mistake. E Not at Very alltrue true 1. Much of my information for planning 1 2 3 4 5 comes from members of the team or even outsiders. 2. I make conscious decisions about changing 1 2 3 4 5 my priorities at each stage of the project life cycle. 3. I understand the politics at the top of my 1 2 3 4 5 organization. 4. Team members share with me the 1 2 3 4 5 responsibility for managing important external relationships. 5. I am aware of the personal strengths and 1 2 3 4 5 weaknesses of my team members. 6. Team members share with me the 1 2 3 4 5

responsibility for keeping things on track.

Very alltrue true 1. I am seldom caught out by unforeseen 1 2 3 4 5 2. I seek regular feedback from others about 1 2 3 4 5 how to improve my performance as project leader. 3. I am successful at persuading other 1 2 3 4 5 departments to give me the resources I need. 4. I bring members of the team together 1 2 3 4 5 regularly. 5. I feel confident in confronting and trying 1 2 3 4 5 to resolve disagreements at a senior level that affect my project. 6. There's always a good feeling throughout 1 2 3 4 5 the team when we pass an important landmark in the project. G Not at Very alltrue true 1. I take time out to think about how 1 2 3 4 5 effectively I am leading the project. 2. I can always get access to senior 1 2 3 4 5 management when I need it. 3. I am good at imagining what might happen 1 2 3 4 5 in the future. 4. We have reliable sources of feedback 1 2 3 4 5 about how we're doing. 5. My project's team members are clear 1 2 3 4 5 about the performance I expect of them. 6. I have all the contacts I need both inside 1 2 3 4 5 and outside the organization.

Not at

On the following table, mark in opposite the relevant statement your score on the 1-5 scale – i.e. if you scored yourself as 4 on statement A6 then record 4 against A6 below, and so on. Then add up your score for each element. You are best at managing the element with the highest score, and need to work at improving your management of the element with the lowest score.

Score A 6. B 4. C 5. D 5. E 3. F 5. G 2.	LOOKING OUTWARDS Score A 2. B 1. C 1. D 3. E 4. F 3. G 6.
TOTAL	TOTAL
Score A 4 B 6 C 4 D 6 E 6 F 6 G 4	C 3 E 1 F 1 G 3.
TOTAL	TOTAL

LOOKING DOWNWARDS Score	LOOKING INWARDS Score
A 5 B 5 C 6 D 4 E 5 F 4 G 5	A 1. B 2. C 2. D 2. E 2. F 2. G 1.
TOTAL	TOTAL

4.3 Reference of used books

- The PEOPLE SIDE of Project Management, Ralph S. Kliem and Irwin S. Ludin; Gower, ISBN 0-566-07363-3
- Project Leadership,
 Wendy Briner, Michael Geddes, Colin Hastings;
 Gower, ISBN 0-566-02794-1
- Project Management, Dennis Lock; Gower, ISBN 0-566-02441-1