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Week 5 – Ethics and Closing out the Project

Essential Skills for Success

In the past few years, the understanding that project managers' need to excel at 'soft' human-centric skills as well as traditional 'hard' project management skill, has moved from a whisper to a roar (Milligan, 2017). Traditional project management organizations, like the Project Management Institute (PMI), are now incorporating softer human-centric skills into their curriculum (Milligan, 2017).

In 2015, the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2015) formally put these ideas together with the PMI Talent Triangle®. The Talent Triangle® shows the three essential skills project managers need to succeed, these skills are (PMI, 2015):

1) Technical project management skills -This category includes domain specific knowledge and 'hard' project management skills. For example, managing a construction project requires knowledge and the material specification used to build a floor. 'Hard' project management skills include tasks such as creating project scope, work breakdown structures, earned value management analysis, risk management, schedule management, and more.

2) Leadership skills - This category includes skills to lead and motivate project team members. In most cases, project team members do not formally report to a project manager, so the project manager needs to possess many of the 'soft' and leadership skills, including emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, team building, problem-solving, conflict management, and more.

3) Strategic and business management skills - This category includes business-oriented skills necessary to manage projects with the organization's overall strategy in mind. These skills include strategic planning skills, market condition analysis,

strength and weakness analysis, compliance, legal requirements, and more.

Managing projects and managing a team that does not actually report to you can be difficult, but those who bring together their technical project management skills (hard or technical skills) with leadership 'soft' people skills, while keeping the organization's objectives and long-term consequences of the project and actions in mind are the ones who are successful.

You may be wondering why we are talking about the PMI Talent Triangle® during this week when the focus is on ethics. The simple answer is integration. Before a project manager can act ethically, he/she needs to be familiar with all three attributes of the PMI's Talent Triangle®. When technical, leadership, and business management skills are ethically implemented, a project manager can motivate and lead the project team from concept through completion, achieving organization's strategic goals.

Ethics

Ethics are principles that guide how decisions are made using personal values of what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' (Schwalbe, 2017, p. 24-25). Just as many professions, like doctors, lawyers, and public accountants, have their own set of professional codes of conduct that guide their professions, The Project Management Institute has its own Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for its members, volunteers, and who have obtained PMI certifications. The PMI Code of Ethics enables stakeholders, employees, vendors, and taxpayers to sleep at night knowing project management professionals (PMPs) are held to strict and high standards when they make decisions or act on their behalf to execute on projects (Alexander, 2017).

Remember though, that a standard code of ethics will not have all the answers to every ethical issue; it is simply a guide that can help someone when they are faced with dilemmas. Wood (2016, para. 2) noted that there are many grey areas when it comes to

defining ethical behavior. As with any decision, rationalization supporting the decision made is a key part of the process. Wood (2016) identified several common rationalizations that are often used to support decisions but may not be ethical in certain situations. Look at the rationalizations and see how many you recognize.

Ethics and Project Management

Due to the nature of project management, project managers are natural 'connectors'; while managing project, they interact with people from all over the organization, as well as with people from outside the organization. Effective project managers have contacts everywhere, and usually know someone who knows someone, who knows someone *else*, who can get a job done. This ability can be invaluable during projects, since one never knows what kind of challenges will arise during a project. It can mean the difference between meeting or missing a deadline. However, using one's contacts to get things done is not without risks.

Building a reputation for trustworthiness, honesty, and being able to handle issues in a calm and emotionally intelligent way is critical to a project manager's career. Project managers are given responsibility for managing budgets and resources and are responsible to appropriately managing any confidential and/or intellectual property (IP) information they have access to along the way. Think about disclosing company's gross revenue when applying for a construction permit or knowing that successful outsourcing project in one area of an organization will result in job losses in another area. Project managers are also responsible for effectively managing the project life cycle to satisfy the requirements of the sponsors and stakeholders. All of these activities are subject to the ethical standards set out by PMI. Project managers are entrusted with managing the resources allocated to a project. Resource management is critical and is often a factor affecting the timing of task completion. Managing

resources appropriately and in accordance with ethical practices is critical to a project manager's reputation.

Closing out projects

As you learned from your text, closing out the project and documenting the lessons learned is an important part of project management. Closing out phase includes several key components, including notification of formal completion of a project, project sponsor's final acceptance of the project's deliverables, update documentation, closing out contracts, final payment distribution to all the contractors and subcontractors, and opportunity for celebration.

Lessons learned

The lessons learned part of the closeout process captures the elements that have been learned by the sponsor(s), primary stakeholders, and members of the team as a result of doing the project. This documentation is important to future project planning as it can give guidance to project managers who may be in the initiating stage of a similar project. Knowing what went wrong and what went right can be a valuable planning information.

Project Management Resources

On December 14, 2016, President Barack Obama has signed into law S.1550, the Program Management Improvement and Accountability Act of 2015 (PMIAA), which will enhance accountability and best practices in project and program management throughout the federal government (PMI, 2016). Passing of PMIAA confirms how standardized processes along with project management framework can maximize efficiencies. Those entering the field of project management may want to get certified in project management. One valuable certification is the Project Management Professional (PMP®). The PMP® certification signifies that you have a certain amount of experience and speak and understand the global language of project management. The PMP® Certification can also provide a significant advantage when it comes to salary and earning

potential. For more information on obtaining your PMP®, visit www.pmi.org

(Links to an external site.)
website.

If you are looking for project management related tools, tips, news, and resources then www.projectmanagement.com

(Links to an external site.)

, PMI's sister site is an ultimate source. While you either need to be a member of PMI or have a subscription to access premium content, anyone can access thousands of resources at no cost. PMI also has local chapters in every major city around the US. Membership and involvement in PMI's local chapter(s) are excellent resources to learn more project management profession, to take PMP® exam preparation classes, to find a mentor, and to network with others in the industry. PMI offers discounted rates for students to join their organization. Lookup 'PMI membership' in your browser and follow the link on pmi.org to learn more about membership options.

Final Project

Your final project will result in a project management training manual for your project. It will leverage the knowledge you have gained over the past five weeks of the course and give you the opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned. You can also use your final project as a portfolio example to demonstrate your learning to future employers.

It has been a pleasure to have you in class! Best of luck to you in your educational goals and in all your future career endeavors!

Key Terms This Week:

Close project or phase is defined in the 6th Edition of the PMBOK® Guide as the “process of finalizing all activities across all of the Project Management Process Groups to formally complete a project or phase” (PMI, 2017, p.701).

Lessons learned are the knowledge gained during a project which shows how project events were addressed or should be

addressed in the future with the purpose of improving future performance.

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