Different leadership styles and project management

Engineering, Project Management

As defined by Kerzner (2004), a project is an endeavor that has a definable objective, consumes resources, and operates time, cost, and quality constraints. The Association of Project Management identifies two main features of the project: the projects are unique, where specific people come together temporarily focusing on the project objectives (APM, 2011).

The project management has evolved through the years to plan, coordinate and control the complex and diverse activities involved in modern industrial, commercial and management change and also IT projects (Lock, 2007). Lock (2007) also specifies the common characteristic that is shared among the different projects is the delivery of new ideas and activities in order to achieve new endeavors.

This report focuses on the major factors affecting the success of the project with respect to the leadership and management of the project.

Project success

The success of a project can accessed in terms of different groups that are concerned with the project like the stockholders, customers, etc (Shenhar, Levy & Dvir, 1997). However it is not an easy task to assess the success of the project from different dimensions. Hence Pinto & Slevin (1988; as cited in Shenhar, Levy & Dvir, 1997) explain that the projects are frequently measured as successful if they are within the expected budget levels and schedule and also achieved an adequate point of performance. This criterion for success measurement is considered as valid as it is easy to assess and exists within the projects scope.

According to deWit (1988) recognizing the factors of success are useful not for analyzing the success or failure of a project but also can be useful to measure the extent to which the project was successful. The main criteria to be considered for the projects success are the time, cost and quality referred as Iron Triangle (Appendix 7. 1) (Baker, Murphy & Fisher, 1983; deWit, 1988; Atkinson, 1999; Westerveld, 2003) with regular trade-off between the three criteria. However, according to Slevin & Pinto (1984) the critical factors can be categorized into six broad categories: personnel. Technical task, client acceptance, monitoring and feedback, communication and trouble-shooting (Appendix 7. 2)

A project success depends on firm's issues like the organization strategy and also the project structure, and also issues concerned with personnel like the expertise of the manager and the team members and the communication and controlling techniques (Shenhar et al, 2002).

Leadership and success factors

As described by Briner, Hastings & Geddes (1996) a project leader is mainly responsible for the achievement of project goals and is required to be dynamic. The project leader should have good negotiation skills to allocate resources successfully and requires support from both within and outside the firm. The project leader has to look at six directions in particular and the tasks involve managing the stakeholders, project lifecycle and the performance in terms improving their own performance and also of the project team (Appendix 7. 3).

The theory of needs

According to Maslow (1987), every human has five different types of needs which when satisfied leads towards growth (Appendix 7. 4). The hierarchy of needs includes the basic needs like food, water, sleep and also the needs concerning self respect, confidence, etc. If these needs are not met every individual feels discomfort and unmotivated. An effective leader should able to cater to the needs of his team members to maximum extent and motivate them in order to get the task completed.

Adair (2005) points that all working groups address three types of needs at a time: the need to maintain the working unity (group needs), the needs which each individuals bring into them by virtue of being embodied persons (individual needs) and the need to achieve the common task (task needs) (Appendix 7. 5). In order to achieve these three needs in a group an effective leadership is required whereby certain functions like planning and controlling have to be performed.

Leadership styles

Bass (1999) explains the two different leadership styles; the transformational and the transactional leadership and mention that over the years the leadership has shifted more towards the transformational in order to be more effective and successful in their work. The transformational leader focuses on uplifting their followers confidence, motivates the team members; while the transactional leaders focus mainly on their self interest. This was further explained by Barber & Warn (2005) using the firefighter- firelighter leadership model (Appendix 7. 6). The model focuses on the different

maintenance actions for initiating structure, emotional consideration and contingent rewards to highlight the various combination of leadership style that supports the firefighter leadership style. The model represents various leadership styles ranging from being ignorant about the problem (laissez-faire as defined by Bass (1999)); reacting to the problem when it becomes unavoidable (firefighter) to maintaining and leading the project towards its goal by controlling cost, quality and time.

Different leadership styles are appropriate for different situations in routine organizational context (Muller & Turner, 2007). They have formulated two hypothesis based on Crawford et al (2005) explanation that different project management techniques are necessary for handling different project and moreover the different leadership is also appropriate. The hypothesis relates the leadership style to the project success and in addition to this it also explains that different combinations of leadership competency are correlated with different projects success. To test the hypothesis they have developed a research model (Appendix 7. 7) to test the hypothesis.

Motivational factors

A successful leader should be self motivated to be a project manager and have the potential and ability to motivate his team members (Slevin & Pinto, 1988). This requires the project manager have an in-depth knowledge about bringing the team members to do the work also make effectively make use of them to enhance the project performance.

A good leader should be able to align their personal beliefs along with the values of the group, organization and the society (Bass, 1999). The leader should focus on the development of the group and achieving the project by aligning the team's growth and self-interest along the development of the project. Successful leadership requires a project manager to have the ability to represent a strong role model to his team members. However to improve the project performance the project manager should also exhibit flexibility in his leadership actions towards his team members (Prabhakar, 2005).

Management and success factors

PRINCE2 defines project management as " the planning, delegating, monitoring and control of all aspects of the project, and the motivation of these involved, to achieve the project objectives within the expected performance targets for time, cost, quality, scope, benefits and risks"(OGC, 2009).

Success dimensions

The project success can be visualized by the management using four main dimensions (Appendix 7. 8). The dimensions suggested by Shenhar, Levy & Dvir (1997) are hierarchical and varies for different projects types and different time outlines. The goals of the project must be set by the management at the earliest stage and should direct the project team including the manager's attention towards the outcome of the project. Moreover focus should be made on the projects long-term and short-term benefits equally.

Many writers have described the attention in project management towards the techniques involved as the hard issues which mainly involves notions of cost and time. The issues involving the personnel are also aligned alongside these factors and are termed as the soft issues of the project management (Munns & Bjeirmi, 1996). In order for a project to be a success several factors related to the management of the project has to be considered:

The project must be planned with the main focus towards the goal completion

Skilled project manager has to be recruited for the task

The activities within the project has to be defined correctly and every stage within the activity will have to recognized

Appropriate mode of communication and correct flow of information has to be ensured

Periodical changes in the activities of the project have to be considered in order to improve the outcome of the project. Hence the project planning stage should be done in such a way that it should be flexible to changes

Identifying possible interruptions during the project implementation and finding appropriate solution to them. Also when faced with a problem having the ability to rectify them and proceeding with the project activities

Critical factors affecting the project management

A successful project manager will have to continuously update himself with the new trends in the project management and also should be able to take decisions regarding the changes so that will bring improvement in the project (Maylor, 2010). The project may result in a success with continuous small changes and examining the improvement periodically. Morris & Hough (1986; as cited in deWit, 1988) suggested in one of the methods to measure the project success that project management is one of the main factors that act as the base for the measurement. The criteria under the project management factors are the time, budget and the technical requirement for the project. Managing the time can be achieved by dividing the task into a number of activities and fixing a time scale for the completion of the activity. In addition the budget of the project can be placed in alignment to the time frame in order to manage the cash flow accordingly.

All the organizations should implement management techniques specific to the project. Shenhar (1998) suggest that before implementation of the project it is necessary to identify the project type in order to provide base for settling with a particular management style, selecting the right project managers and the team members, opting the appropriate managing technique and for creating the proper project structure (Appendix 7. 9). It is also essential for the project manager to have the basic knowledge of the operational and strategic aspects of the projects in order to prevent mistakes and also reduces the managers learning period.

Project goal

Project managers are required to constantly focus on the desired outcome of the project during the project management process (Shenhar, Levy & Dvir, 1997). The manager should adapt the project expected performance in accordance with the stakeholders needs. Avots (1969) illustrated the some of the main reasons for the project to management to fail which might indirectly result in the failure of the project. A project management might fail if

There is no proper base for the project however this can be corrected with time by adapting to a different project style

The management appoints a project manager who is unable to lead the team in the right direction and arrange the tasks in the project in the right way

The organization management does not provide the required support to the project manager

The project are not identified and defined appropriately

Wrong management techniques are used which does not fit with the project's overall specification.

The termination of the project is not identified

Accordingly it is very necessary to focus not just on the basic factors of management but the organization needs to look at the wider aspects of the

project management in order to avoid the complications at the later stages of the project.

Conclusion

The success of a project depends on both the successful leadership and the successful management of the project. Effective leadership is important in order to lead the project team towards the expected target and also to motivate and improve the team's confidence, authorizing activities in the project and direct the team's goal towards the project goal. Management of the project is significant with respect to the critical factors of the project: time, cost and quality. With proper management of the resources and personnel the project can be completed within the allotted time schedule and within the budget and also maintain the overall quality of the project to the customer standards.

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