W8 follow up:making project portfolio management sustainable in an organization

[Business](), [Management]()

Follow Up - Making project portfolio management sustainable in an organization Response The company underwent merger with required careful merger of the culture of my company and the other company that was merged. This required the pre-merger culture features of the company to dominate in a post-merger scenario to ensure future stability of the business operations. Introducing a companywide vision, training of employee and commitment of the senior management were the main driving force behind this effort. Kerzner (2010) views management support and commitment as most crucial for successful implementation of the project portfolio management, where a closed door policy, on the other hand, can develop feeling of " us and them" among the employees. Higher management actively participated to communicate with employees through e-mails and quarter meetings in post-merger scenario to build confidence and trust with the employees. The strategy for project portfolio management implementation was based on four keywords " imaginative, proactive, ambitious and real" to ensure involvement of employees for achieving the common goals. Pinto and Morris (2007) state that " Missions and Goals" shape the strategic choices of the company which, in turn, shapes the business and global strategies. Further, training of employees on project management would enable the company to equip project teams with necessary knowledge and skills n project management. When the portfolio increases in size, a need for project or portfolio management office (PMO) may be realized with responsibility of identifying the best practices in project management and developing the templates and documents to standardize the project management processes. At present, the project management

processes in the company are not defined on a standard format highlighting the importance of creating a PMO. Another factor that presented challenges to the company was " Multiple Organization Agendas" in a post-merger scenario. Although, number of issues were already resolved but there still existed some minor discussions between the departments as a result to diversity in culture of merged organizations. Another important aspect is the management of the multi-cultural teams. Training of project teams in this area to help them understand the culture values and norms of each other can remarkably reduce the risk of misunderstanding and would improve the efficiency of the project team.

McElroy Translation Company

Major cultural challenges faced by the McElroy Translation Company included arbitrary deadlines and project acceleration without proper justification and independent working of different departments as result of lack of standardized project management approach. Besides efforts were made to improve the project management approach, it remain ineffective due to poor communication and inefficient use of resources.

To adopt a project management approach, McElroy Translation Company took following steps that ensured smooth transformation of company's culture towards a project oriented culture.

Acquiring a project management software

Making all project related material accessible to all employees

Centralization of filing and documentation

Development of questionnaire to gain maximum information from the customer

Encouraging an open door policy

Commitment of senior management and financial support

Use of electronic means to ensure effective communication

Involvement of project management teams in determining the project schedule and customer needs

These steps enabled the company to effectively implement project management methodology across the portfolio. This case study highlights the significance of centralized information management and effective communication for developing a strategic framework for implementation of project management.

References

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Morris, P. and Pinto, J. 2007. The Wiley Guide to Program & Portfolio Management. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Response 2

According to West and Wind (2007), corporate culture can be viewed as a set of established values and norms developed over time, accepted and practiced to facilitate the routine working of the company and which distinguishes it from the competitors. Kerzner (2010) is of the opinion that " organizational cultures are designed around the aspiration of senior management" and can be " cooperative, non-cooperative, competitive, isolated and fragmented culture". Wines and Hamilton (2009) view corporate culture as a powerful tool that is invisible and intangible having its own lifecycle.

My current organization has defined a set of values and norms that guide the procedures and processes for interaction among the employees towards achieving the organizational business objectives while maintaining the professional standards. The company invests in training of employees to equip them with knowledge and skills related to project management to improve their efficiency. The company maintains an open office environment with everyone accessible and approachable by others. This approach has helped in accelerating the decision making process, improving the creativity, teamwork and empowerment (Wines and Hamilton 2009). The company has acquired a project management software that allowed dissemination of information to all concerned without any delay.

McElroy Translation Company Case Study

McElroy Translation Company managed its projects with arbitrary deadlines and without the involvement of the stakeholders. In certain cases, projects were accelerated to meet completion date without justifying the reasons for the delay. Departments within the company acted as independent without much consideration and knowledge of processes, procedures, projects and activities in other departments. There was lack of communication and coordination on the client's needs, project plans and project objectives between the project team, departments and sales and operations divisions. This resulted in the project deliverable that were not what the customer required. The project teams were unaware of procedures to respond to unusual customer requests. In addition, incompatibility of the software forced the production staff to develop some workaround to meet customer requirements without much support from higher management. In 1980s,

company made an attempt to adopt a project management culture; however, it remained ineffective due to lack of communication and requirements to meet deadlines and specifications without taking input from project management team.

As a result of current wake of globalization and increased pressure to meet customer specification and tight schedules, the company realized the implementation of project management to sustain its operations with profitability. The company invested in acquiring a project management software that allowed real time tracking of the project, easy access to project information and effective inter-departmental communication and coordination. Through a shared network, company made all project related information available to all employees to understand the customer needs and expectations. Filing structured was centralized in view of earlier department wise management to allow easy access and centralized access to all the project related information. Lengthy meetings were reduced to 15 minute short sessions with main agenda to discuss risks and project related issues which developed sense of team building. The company maintained an open door policy to allow employee feedback in the vertical organizational structure. The company developed a questionnaire to facilitate the sale personnel in getting the maximum information on the client's requirements. Further, an electronic reporting system was maintained to allow effective communication between the employees and management.

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West, P. and Wind, J. 2007. Putting the Organization on Wheels: Workplace Design at SEI. California Management Review, 49 (2), pp. 138-153.

Wines, A. and Hamilton, J. 2009. On Changing Organizational Cultures by Injecting New Ideologies: The Power of Stories. Journal of Business Ethics, 89 (1), pp. 433-447.

Response 3

The importance of project management was never realized in my country until it became a requirement for ISO 9000 Quality Management System accreditation. This requirement resulted in higher management agreeing to development of a consistent approach towards implementation of project management. To do so, company followed the best practices and guidelines described in PMBOK (2008), a standard on project management by Project Management Institute. Although project management emerged out of necessity for accreditation of ISO 9000, high quality of service deliver was one of major aspects that allowed smooth transition of the company towards the project management. In addition, the company relied on team work, mutual trust and communication to manage its routine projects (Kerzner 2010). A major challenge faced by the company was the perception of managers in its SBUs who felt threatened for being answerable to project failure or success, where they were working earlier as independent and autonomous functions. The commitment of higher management and training of personnel on project management has helped in shaping the approach and mindset of the individuals towards the implementation of project management approach. The full use, application and benefits of project portfolio management have yet not been realized in the company; however,

adopting to this approach has allowed to transform the company's culture and organizational behavior towards project management.

McElroy Translation Company Case Study

The cultural challenges faced by the company included

The company primarily managed the projects for its routine clients; however, the deadlines for these projects were assigned arbitrarily and without considering the involvement of the project team.

Projects were often accelerated to meet completion date without providing justification for the unnecessary delays.

Departments worked independently without considering the procedures and processes of other departments due to lack of communication.

Using the one single approach to manage all its project prevented quick adoption to the changing circumstances.

Following were few steps taken by the company to implement project management across its all functions.

Analysis of the market and company's internal business processes

Identification of customer needs and expectations

Investment in project management software to allow better management of projects and project related information

Creation of a database on project materials accessible by all employees through shared network to develop better understanding of customer's intent

Establishing regular short meetings to discuss project risks and problems for identification of the solutions.

Efforts by management to improve the vertical and horizontal

communication across all functions of the organization which helped to promote respect, trust, the sharing of expertise and skills transfer.

The visible commitment and support by the higher management allowed the company to adopt to project management culture and enabled its employees to embrace the project management methodologies in their business processes.

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Kerzner, H. 2010. Project Management: Best Practices - Achieving Global Excellence. 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Project Management Institute. (2008). A Guide to Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide). Pennsylvania, Project Management Institute.