

# Skills for project leadership and team building



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## **ABSTRACT**

This report is based on project leadership and team building i. e. PLTB. The various skills required for PLTB, human resources needs and challenges in PLTB and the role of PLTB in adding the value to the project management scenario. The implementation of self directed teams into the project management has been increased and has replaced the traditional manufacturing ways. According to many experiments done, self directed teams provide the performance effectiveness to the organization. For a successful project management, the organization has to define various key performance contributors like selection of team, clear project objectives, innovation and the commitment of the project team members. All the four aspects are important for the success of any project. First of all the concepts like project management, product life cycle, team building, human resource development theories and innovation for team building are discussed. After that a case study RL Wolfe, a pipe manufacturer, has been taken and the impact of implementation of self directed teams on the organization is discussed. Further the recommendations and conclusion are made.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The scenario today has changed to a kind of frame where the self direction, self motivation are the main concerns. The project management if understood in simple words is nothing but the set of stages where the each stage has got the equal importance. The success of a project is mostly dependent on the project manager or project leader because the leader will have to make the goals, get the employees together and make them as a team and ultimately guide them till the end.

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The team selection or building team in itself is a very tedious and intelligent task because it is always very difficult to understand the capabilities and hidden qualities of the employee and the way to use it for the project. The cross-cultural conflicts are also to be dealt with in order to confirm the success of the project

The report will include the necessary the practical, theoretical and empirical examples to support the statement of the report. The report will be guided with the help of relevant case studies as well wherever needed.

## **MAIN BODY**

### **Project Management**

The project management does not simply means to execute a certain job, rather it is set of activities one followed after the other and in some cases it some activities are not even in the to do list but are instant and demand for prompt response. The project management is supposed to be the set of activities which includes the planning, initiating, monitoring and finishing the project. This is basically the art to get the work done form the various elements involved. As Peter Drucker once said that “ management is doing the things right, leadership is doing right things”, this means there has to be a proper balance in the management and leadership. As it has been a matter of debate since the beginning that what the difference between the leader and manger is, can a manager be a leader or vice-versa. The trait theory has said that there are certain traits which decide whether the particular person is a leader or not and it can be concluded from other theories as well that there are certain traits which are innate and some qualities can be learnt with the experience over the period of time. A per Lock D (2007: 8), “ Project <https://assignbuster.com/skills-for-project-leadership-and-team-building/>

management has got one purpose to foresee or predict as many dangers and problems as possible and to plan, organise and control activities so that the projects are completed successfully in spite of all the risks.” He has also argued further that the role of a project manager is to justify his/her existence by satisfying the stakeholders by cost cutting and successful ending. There has to be particular model for the particular project but general there are the following steps:

- Integration
- Scope
- Time
- Cost
- Quality
- Human resource
- Risk
- Communication
- Procurement

The project leadership is the point which is there to direct and control the task. The leaders are always gaining the trust; there is a relation of trust between the leader and followers. This point is justified by the lecture given by Murray Johannsen that managers are the one which are having the subordinates to help them or to listen to them whereas the leaders have the followers. The difference here lies in the way to get the work done. It is pertinent to mention the fact a follower will never feel uneasy to do any task given by leader but a subordinate will always find the faults in the manager’s work. This is the basic human tendency which the leaders always win upon.

The project management is also further defined as “ Project management is a set of principles, methods, tools, and techniques for the effective management of objective-oriented work in the context of a specific and unique organizational environment” Knutson, J. & Bitz, I., (1991: 2). The common methods used for achieving the targets are PERT, CPM. The main logic of using the scientific methods for project management is to minimize the risk factor and be competitive.

The project leadership is a very important in today’s market place because the team building has grown very critical. The one most important thing is that the project leader should use empowerment and let the employees take some crucial decisions. It has been demonstrated through several scholarly researches that the most important and valuable concept in self directed teams is of empowerment. Empowerment in simple manner can be understood as gaining the power by giving away the power or authority. As per a web source, according to Harvey, L, (2004-9) “ Empowerment is a continuous process comprising a series of conscious steps taken by individuals to gain access resources; to better express and defend their rights and in the process. Empowerment is not about wresting power from an individual or group of individuals and handing it over to another. It is the means to an end, not an end in itself”. Also, the time does not allow today to give the reaction after the action, rather the project leader should be proactive in nature and should try to foresee the changes and should form a team which always gives critical remarks. This will ultimately help in the successful completion of the project. As it has been quoted several a times that leadership is ultimately held responsible for the things. This is also

supported by the article of Dr. Keith Mathis where he says “ Everything rises and falls on leadership. This quote is especially true in running successful projects. You must have strong leadership, or things fall through the crack. Every individual must be committed to do what they say they will do.”

Source: <http://www.projectsart.co.uk/six-ways-to-give-proper-project-leadership.html>

Cited on: 25/03/2011

## **Project Life Cycle**

The diagram below shows the four common stages of the Project life cycle:

Source: <http://www.onestopsap.com/images/project-lifecycle-v2.jpg>

Cited on: 20/03/2011

As per westland, J., 2007 the four stages can be understood as following along with their relevance:

Within the initiation phase, the business problem or any conflict or risk or opportunity is found and further a solution is found. This is followed by the team building.

In Project Planning, is all about creating a framework, assigning duties and taking care of risk issues.

In project Execution, the plan is followed upon, the various measures are employed and it is checked whether some alteration is needed or not

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In project Closure, included the final derivatives to the end consumers in the desired format, some lessons are learnt for the future form eth experience of the whole project.

Now this particular concept has to be related to the self directed teams and the team should be well aware of all the steps. The advantage of using self directed team is clearly understood in the case study of R L Wolfe the pipe manufacturer company, which has employed it in 2004 and the results were seen very soon.

The self directed teams are nothing but the “ Self directed teams – SDT are natural work groups. Each SDT is responsible for a business process that delivers a product or service to an internal or external customer. Each SDT manages its business is continued improvements for the success of the business are the measurements of its performance.” (Wentz, 1998, p. 59)

There is one more thing that counts a lot in terms of the success of project i. e. Project Initiation Document (PID). This is a kind of checklist which reminds of the certain things to be upright at all times which includes the controlling of risk factor, budget factor, deviation control and human factor control.

The project leadership should always keep in mind the critical success factors. Let us understand this with an example from the real estate field. While launching a new project there are several things that can make it a success or sell it at a faster pace. The project manager should employ some special people for the particular projects because the word of mouth marketing plays a vital role in real estate. The flexibility of the prices and the total expenses on the marketing should be kept in mind along with the break  
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even points. The another example can be thought of electronic gaint SONY, whenever SONY launches any new product in the market it has still got the beats and sound system because that is its USP.

## **Scenario of the Question**

Now in this particular section this will be discussed that why the company has hired the group of consultants. On a very simple logical note this can be thought of if the company is working properly why will it be hiring any consultants. Now the situation here arises that:

- there might be some change or a new project, which is scheduled to be taken place
- There is some conflict in the company which needs to be care of
- The company is working fine but it wants to be more competitive because the competitors are more solid on the balance sheets

Also, this can be the case that there are some aspects in the company which can be useful for cost cutting, but the company is not having any expertise on that matter.

As per the scenario it is clear here that the company which is of concern here has recognized some of the facts which are related to the human resource management and development and more specifically to the team building. Here the company thinks and it is logical as well to think that team selection, clear objectives and innovation are key success factors. The company is now moving forward and is ready to invest on the human resource aspect. As said above that the consultants are the group of people which have different



expertise, but in this case more of them will be from the team building or human resource management side.

Now the consultants here will work to form the self directed teams and to train them in the specific context for the success of project. The term which is meant to define is self directed teams, it simply means the group of people working together in order to achieve something on the similar platform but are much focussed and self driven and self motivated.

Normally when there is a team of consultants it includes the people of various expertises like from marketing, sales, finance, operations management etc. so in this scenario as well there will be different expertise working together because the project management calls for collective effort of the human resource

## **Team Building**

Now here comes the main part of the report and the role of consultants. The team building or getting some people along to work is a very tedious task. The reason for this is that the different people have got the different backgrounds, learning, roles or simply speaking the postionality of every individual is very different. The conflict management and cross cultural management is the key factor for the success of the project. The effective leadership has to take care of this, especially in this case.

The company should always take care of all the issues related to the employees, the relation with the employees is the one which needs to be managed. For example, if someone in the morning feels sad about going to the office, that employee cannot be an asset for the company; rather the <https://assignbuster.com/skills-for-project-leadership-and-team-building/>

company should try to make him so enthusiastic that every morning the employees should be willing to go the office. There have been several theories on this that what can motivate an employee or what can foster in to the employee the zeal to work and achieve.

### **Malow's Need Hierarchy Theory**

This model has been a very famous and well applied as far as the needs and motivation factors are concerned for the team building. This should always be kept in mind while team building by the project leadership. For example, a small monetary gift cannot be the motivation for the upper management but is a too much appreciation for the lower grade employees.

Source: <http://www.businessballs.com/images/maslow>

[%27s\\_hierarchy\\_businessballs.jpg](http://www.businessballs.com/images/maslow%27s_hierarchy_businessballs.jpg)

Cited: 25/03/2011

### **Herzberg's Two Factor Theory**

This theory states that motivation and job satisfaction are the factors which if taken care of can result in a very good team building. The project leadership should take well care of the factors that cause satisfaction and which cause dissatisfaction. There are some hygiene factors, which are not the exact satisfaction factor but their absence will cause some de-motivation like fringe benefits', salary hikes and all.

### **HRD/HRM Theories**

Now comes another step in the project management is that how to get the proper people for the project. The project leadership should take this thing

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very carefully otherwise it can result in a disaster. The human resourcing and team building also shows the efficiency of the project leader in ensuring the project. In building the right team it should be taken care of that there is proper communication channel upwards and downward so that the information is exchanged. The objectives and goals are properly inculcated into the team members in to be truly efficient and effective. This can be understood with the example of sports as well. The way the Australian have led their team since last 7-8 years has been marvellous. This has become a case study for the students in various schools. The attitude, response and responsibility have all been the strong killing points of the team. To play and end a series is same as to execute a project. There has to be proper strategy that how to play which players to use, what strategy to employ including everything else. The Austrian team has been famous for the mind game, to handle the pressure and the as the real warrior. The captain and coach in this case work as the project leader and help the whole team to win. They are the people who decide that which bowler to use and how

Now other responsibility of the project manager or leader is to manage the change. The concept which is very important to be taken care of is the change in technology because there is a foremost characteristic of the employee to resist the change but it has to be implemented for ensuring the successful project management.

Hence it is pertinent to mention here that a team of consultants should always comprise of the people from several fields having the proven expertise because this will certainly help the project to in the end. This thing

is supported by the diagram given here that how the various tasks are allotted to various people in the team in order to maintain the accountability.

Source: [http://www.fieldsrecruitment.com/media/img/team\\_structure.gif](http://www.fieldsrecruitment.com/media/img/team_structure.gif)

Cited on: 21/03/2011

The team structure depends from project to project but the team should be built in accordance to the project needs. The fresh talent should always be mixed with the experienced talent.

## **Innovation in Project Management and Leadership for Team Building**

Team Building is a very critical task for the management as it involves getting people along to work together for a particular goal, of different backgrounds, beliefs, religions etc. Team building is main key factor for the success of any project and for a good leadership. Hence there is a need for continuous innovation and positive changes in the project management for the successful achievement of the project objectives and leading a team in a better way. The innovation can be operational innovation, management innovation, product & service innovation and strategic innovation. “

Innovation is front and center on the corporate agenda, according to a global survey. Executives are adding more breakthrough innovations and business model changes to their portfolio to fuel the growth engine.” (Business Week, November 16, 2009). The innovation process into project management and leadership starts with the setting up the stage and defining the concepts and objectives. Then the opportunities are discovered by understanding the needs of the employees. After finding out the opportunities, the ideas are

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developed. The fourth step involves the conversion of the ideas into actual operations. Finally the commercialization of the innovation ideas is done i. e. the success rate, financial impact transition etc. of the ideas.

Various innovation theories can be used in project management and leadership for team building. Diffusion of innovation theory has four main elements i. e. innovation, communication channel, time and social system. Diffusion is a special type of communication that helps a team in spreading the messages within the time limit that pursue the new ideas for team building. The innovation in project management and leadership for team building can involve implementation of new ideas for the improvement in motivation and satisfaction level of employees, implementation of an effective leadership style is also important like entrepreneurial leadership, creative leadership or transformational leadership, removing any kind of discrimination developed into the minds of employees etc. Hence innovation plays an important role in the development of a team and success of any project.

## **Case Study**

In this section the company profile will be studied and the main components of the statement of the question with reference to the company.

### **Company Name – RL Wolfe**

RL Wolfe is a plastic pipe manufacturing company having head quarter in Houston, Texas. The company has a net worth of \$350 million.

PAST – In 2003, when RL Wolfe purchased Moon Plastics which was a small family owned business of customs plastic manufacturer in Corpus Christi,  
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they found an opportunity to implement the concept of self directed teams into their new plant. Surprisingly after the implementation of self directed teams, their reports show around 40% improvement in their productivity and quality of the products as compared to their traditional way of manufacturing products as self directed teams increases the motivation and satisfaction level of employees. John Amasi, the director of production and engineering at RL Wolfe, was the one who suggested the idea of the implementation of self directed teams to the organization. In 2007, an assessment took place for the evaluation of the implementation of self directed teams. And again the productivity level was 82% higher than the other RL Wolfe's Columbus and Austin plants but still they have to achieve a target of 95%. RL Wolfe used to have three shifts per day of eight hours each. In traditional manufacturing way, the work was divided among the foreman, production operators, line operators, downstream technicians, loaders and finished material handlers.

PRESENT - John Amasi has planned for the " Corpus Christi Experiment" i. e. he is planning to get an approval from the board of directors for a long sought concession in health care coverage for increasing the commitment and satisfaction level of employees that further increases the productivity level. Also due to the implementation of self directed teams, the organization is achieving 95% or more design capacity. The leadership style also plays a positive role in productivity level as more than 80% decisions were taken at the ground level by the line operators or material handlers through the directions given by the coordinator. The implementation of SDT's divided the work among two parts i. e. technicians and line operators or material handlers.

PROBLEMS -The assessment done in 2007 i. e. after 4 years of implementation of self directed teams, exposed few problems along with the increased productivity. The implementation of self directed teams provides ongoing tensions to the technicians as the technicians provide the engineering oversight and it is the duty of technician to ensure the workings according to the plans made. Evaluating the performances of the employees is another problem faced due to the implementation of self directed teams. It is only the performance evaluation that shows the positive and negative aspects of implementation of any new ideas or practices. The assessment shows a decrease in absenteeism level for first and second shift while there is no change in the third shift i. e. the night shift. Many employees are not interested in doing the management type work and hence their satisfaction decreases. It also leads to labour turnover as the manager level employees have assigned the lower level jobs under self directed teams and hence they demoralize and leave the organisation.

## **Recommendations for the problems faced in Self Directed Teams**

No doubt that innovation, self directed teams, clear objectives and commitment of employees leads to team building and better project management. The implementation of self directed teams is increasing in today's organizations over the traditional ways of handling teams as its implementation has shown tremendous project effectiveness. Along with the advantages, self directed teams have few disadvantages as well. These problems have in the above paragraph. For minimizing the negative impact of self directed teams, various measures can be taken. As many employees

can't take the management workload, hence the employees should first get scheduled for their own work load and assignments and then further management work can be given to them. Slowly, over a period of time further responsibilities can be transferred to the employees under self directed teams. To decrease the absenteeism and employee turnover because of the dissatisfaction from the type of work given, the employees should be asked first that what type of assignments they would like to do and according the work should be divided.

An implementation of self directed teams increases the employee skills and employees motivation level which further increases the productivity and quality of products and services. The implementation of SDT's without considering the various aspects like effective planning requirements, training needs, coordination with the organization etc. put an adverse impact on the performance of the organization. The cost of implementation of SDT's is quite very high and the organization has to make special budget for the same. Also time to time evaluation is important for knowing the progress of the organization.

## **CONCLUSION**

Project Leadership and Team Building add value to the success of project management. Various factors affect project management like leadership style, innovation, coordination, methods of team building etc. Leadership and team building are the two most important factors that affect the project success. Many surveys and experiments have proved that Self Directed Teams contributes to the effectiveness into the performance of an organization. This effectiveness is in terms of higher productivity, higher

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quality, employee satisfaction, team effectiveness, cost effectiveness etc.

From the case study of RL Wolfe, it is very clear that adaptation of self directed teams is very helpful in success of any project but again its impact on the organization cannot be ignored.