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ACTORS INVOLVED IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: The internal organization of project management implies both the actors that take part in it and other specific connected elements pertaining to the project development. By the manner in which activities within the project are conducted, performance of the system is identified. The actors involved in project management include the project manager, the project team and the secretariat of the project and all of them hold specific competences and responsibilities. The connected elements are identifiable with those people affected by the development of the project results, those that promote the project, governmental agencies, mass media, citizens and others.

Key words: Project, project management, actors involved in the project.

During the course of the project, both private individuals and legal individuals representing firms and organizations participate. These people may influence either positively or negatively the project in motion, as a result of the position they take in relation with the actors or the connected elements.

1. The project management

The project manager is assigned the project by the top management, so that he or she can access and understand the inclusion of the project within the general framework of the primary organization. The project manager's Curriculum Vitae is one of the most important among the documents required for funding; therefore the CV needs to include such elements requested by the funds provider, and mainly proofs of his or her experience in running projects. Thus, it is interesting to present certain pre-activities regarded as projects.

The term 'official' project manager is often used in reference to the project manager who is not the same with the real initiator of the project, due to such credibility and experience issues which may later on enhance the chances for the project to be accepted and funded. Two major threats result from such an instance, and, unfortunately, they are frequently met[1]:

- the 'puppet' manager risks not being able to manage with his/her partner contacts and fund providers because he or she is not updated with regard to the project in motion, or does not know all details, whereas the project initiator is the person who takes care of such details;

- the project manager, after the project is approved, may not accept his or her status of a 'puppet', and wishes to impose his or her authority; in this case a de-motivation of the initiator and of the team occurs; moreover the project manger may not understand the goal of the project since the project is not his or her own concept; as a result wrong research

[1] Irina Manolescu, Managementul Proiectelor, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi, 2005,p. 50

directions may appear, alongside with other types of conflicts.

The project manager's responsibilities include:
- preparation of a budget and an activity schedule on various intervals of time;
- selection of team;
- providing necessary resources;
- other routine details that contribute to the project development.

The description of the manager's responsibilities must be achieved in accordance with the type of project and the organization that selected it. there are differences between the project manager and the 'functional' manager[2]:
- the former focuses on synthesis, whereas the latter stresses upon analysis;
- the functional manager is a direct, technical supervisor; the project manager is a 'facilitator'. The latter detains detailed knowledge in two or three areas of expertise, yet rarely does he know any of them in depth. In conclusion, the project manager is rather a generalist than a specialist. Although he is responsible for the project, the functional manager makes a series of decisions: who the people included in the project are; technical details such as how the project or the use of resources are going to be accomplished. According to the project administration, this functional manager may as well not be directly responsible for the final results.
- the project manager holds greater autonomy upon the top management of the company. The direct superior of the project manager may apply a strict supervision upon any action and may impose on him what exactly he or she needs to do. The entire authority, which normally should be delegated to the project manager, is hold, in this case, by the superior – a situation known as 'micromanagement'. The system blocks creativity and initiative of the project's team, and usually only mediocre results if not a failure are produced. There is not an efficient method for annihilating micro-management.

The project manager's responsibilities are divided into three main areas[3]:
- in relation with the organization he or she belongs to; administration of resources; meeting terms and a correct communication, as well as a careful management of the project;
- in relation with the project; the manager has to make sure that the integrity of the project is secures, despite conflicting requests made by any of the interested parties;
- in relation with the members of the project's team; since the team works for somebody who is not their direct boss, thus, the relationships among the team's members are tighter than expected, especially in situations when the team members are full timers in the project. The project manager's responsibility toward the team is dictated by the finite nature of the project and by the specialized nature of the team.

The key abilities of the project manager are[4]:
- communication (listening to and persuasion);
- organization (planning, establishment of objectives and analysis);
- team building (empathy, motivation);
- leadership (energy, delegation of authority, positive attitude);
- adaptation (flexibility, creativity, patience, perseverance);
- technical skills (experience, project know-how).

The project manager may be elected and named as soon as the project has been selelcted for funding, but in most cases the manager is selected prior to this moment. Sometimes, during the last stages of the project, the manager is changed. The transition is difficult and the results are sometimes unsatisfactory.

The most desired attributes of a project manager are: a complex professional experience; maturity; availability; good relationships with the top management; motivating for and able to keep the team united; prior experience in working with more than one departments.

[2] Idem, p.51

[3] Idem, p.51-52
[4] Idem, p.52

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The selection of project managers often implies such criteria as[5]:

- credibility – technical and administrative;
- sensitivity – in both political and technical acceptance;
- leadership – in tight connection with the ethical component;
- ability to face stress.

The success within a major project may promote the project manager to one of the top management positions of a company.

2. The project's team

The project's team consists of selected personnel, in relation with their project responsibilities; its members belong to a variety of fields of expertise and specializations; the team is subordinated to the project manager. The members of the team need to be motivated, involved in the project, to possess aptitudes for working in a team, to have communicative competences, to be creative, and to display strong personalities so as each may contribute to the project's successful accomplishment.

The project manager needs to bear in mind that, usually, a team is established ad-hoc, but its members must possess knowledge in specific areas. Within new teams, there is an evolutionary process made up of specific stages, as follows[6]:

a. Stage I – Orientation; characterized by: limited engagement in relation with considerable expectations; a lot of fears (what is expected from an individual; which is his or her role in the system etc.); exploration of the environment; individuals depend largely on authority and hierarchy; the need of belonging to a group/team and to occupy a specific position.

b. Stage II – Frustration; consists of actions of the kind: discovering discrepancies between hope and reality; dissatisfaction caused by own dependence on authority; arguments on objectives; tasks and action plans; the feeling of lacking orientation and competence; negative reactions related to leaders and participants; competition for key positions and/or drawing attention; manifestation of some polarized feelings – dependence and independence.

c. Stage III – Taking a new path; includes reception of dissatisfactions; building a new bridge over the gap between expectations and reality; annihilation of polarization and discovery of guilt; development of harmony, trust, availability to provide help and respect; development of self-trust and optimism; open relationships among the team' s members and gradually increased feed-back; distribution of responsibilities and control; establishment and use of a team's own communication.

d. Stage IV – Production; aims at establishing co-operation within the team; collaboration with the entire team and sub-teams; living the sensation "together we are strong"; the feeling of own value (accepting duties without fear); alternative management; pride of having accomplishing tasks successfully; an increased level of production.

During the on-going process of the project, the project team is subjected to a series of perturbing factors that slow down its evolution. Among the perturbing factors, we can mention cultural, organizational and

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[5] Idem, p.53
[6] Wolfgang Lessel, Managementul proiectelor-cum să planificăm eficient proiecte şi să le transpunem cu succes în practică, Editura Bic All, Bucureşti, 2007, p.90-91

individual factors, grouped according to the following statements[7]:

- lack of communication or defective communication; the team members that hold weak rhetorical skills cannot communicate and abandon their attempt at expressing arguments, thus leading to the information and justification loss;

- inadequacies related to authority; attention is paid in accordance with the speaker's position; if issues are not clearly and objectively stated, the decision-making process deteriorates, whereas motivation and communication are inhibited;

- troublesome relationships; if relationships between the team's members are not based on reciprocity principles, information and arguments may not be accessed or taken into consideration;

- decisions; sometimes, attention is focused on decisions that are less important, to the detriment of essential ones;

- stating creative opinions; futuristic opinions and genial ideas are often mocked at by the members of the team; thus leading to a lack of motivation in their initiators and further decreasing the creativity potential; occasionally conflict may emerge from such instances.

A presentation of the perturbing factors highlights the fact that steps must be taken at the level of the project's team, in order for simple rules of engagement and co-operation to be established.

3. The project's secretariat

By the term 'secretariat', one understands "an office within an institution, company or political or mass organization meant to deal with and solve current issues pertaining to its management"[8].

The secretariat is a direct and indispensable auxiliary part of the management, whose major role is to ease the management in its evolution, thus creating its proper conditions for accomplishing its main tasks: planning-organization-command-coordination-control.

The specialized literature defines the secretariat as a nucleus (a grouping of positions and personnel that occupy them) involving complex activities, characteristics and individual tasks. This group of specialized people are gathered under a hierarchical authority (secretariat directors, heads of departments, chiefs of secretariat), which is, in its turn, directly subordinated to the management and whose duties implies tasks specific for the secretariat job. Inside a secretariat, work is related to complex activities such as:

- activities specific to the secretariat (taking and transmitting telephone messages, shorthand writing, photocopying of materials, typing of documents dictated by chiefs, documents classification, correspondence administration);

- activities leading to tasks and duties accomplishment, as they were stipulated in one's job description (documentation, correspondence, protocol, organization of events etc.);

- activities decided on and initiated by secretariats (training of subordinated secretaries);

- activities on behalf of the managers (official guests, participation at talks with business partners etc.).

Activities include specific tasks and tasks need specific skills to be achieved. The task represents one department's area of responsibility and accomplishment of tasks by a department implies the competence of the department's members to fulfill duties resulting from these activities.

The secretariat holds global tasks that are further detailed for each of the person working there. The secretariat activity includes the following tasks and duties[9]:

- executing general recording activities (sorting, recording, dating, and distribution of documents) whenever there is not a specialized department of records;

- correspondence activities, for both received and sent documents; reading of received correspondence, notification of

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[7] Rupert Eales-White, Cum să formezi echipe eficiente, Editura All Beck, Bucureşti, 2004, p.21-32
[8] Secretariat-definition/DEX online

[9] ebooks.unibuc.ro/StiinteADM/secretariat/8.htm

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management regarding the correspondence, its recording, distribution and monitoring received correspondence, drawing of replies based on prior analysis, their typing, presenting replies to chiefs for signatures, preparation of correspondence for mailing, its delivery to the department of records or sending it, and wherever the case is, facilitating correspondence transportation by organizing the couriers' tasks;

- documentation activities: detection of internal and external sources; selection of materials; presentation of resulting materials in tables, charts, statistics etc., classification of documents, organization and ensuring the well functioning of the project archives;

- shorthand writing of the minutes of meetings, conferences, business meetings, transcription of dictated materials, either orally or over the telephone;

- multiplication of materials: typing using either a typewriter or a computer (using the blind method), use of a printer or photocopiers, correcting typing errors, familiarization with error correction systems for editorials;

- translations in and from the language of specific documents, correspondence, documenting materials, knowledge of a foreign language in its written and verbal form;

- protocol and public relations issues: drawing of plans for the well going of meetings with people other than the institution's personnel, reception of guests and business partners, knowledge regarding behavior specific to the visitor's country of origin, preparation of protocol correspondence on occasion of various events;

- keeping record of necessary secretariat stationery articles and personnel (record of supplies for the secretariat department), record of extra-hours, leaves, business travels, delegations and professional events;

- preparation of business travels, booking of tickets, hotel rooms, obtaining visas, documents preparation, establishing contacts with people whom the manager is supposed to meet and drawing the schedule;

- knowledge of and use of modern office devices (computers, photocopiers, fax machines, recording-classification devices, interphone etc.) ; good skills for computer typing and computer's programs destined to such operations;

- organization of the informational system: reception, administration and transmission of data;

- drawing basic accountancy of the project;

- reception and transmission of telephone messages;

- organization of meeting and materials to be used for meetings;

- following labor rules;

The project secretariat is an ad-hoc organism meant to manage activities and documents resulting from the project in motion. The secretariat is subordinated to the project manager or to the department assigned to monitor the on-going process of the project within the primary organization. The activity performed within the secretariat of the project may lead to an increased efficiency of activities of the whole project or may foresee possible drawbacks. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the organization of the secretariat's space, equipment and quality of personnel.

The secretariat focuses its attention on the following main activities:

- a centralized administration of documents;

- a centralized monitoring of costs;

- drawing reports.

The project secretariat may be established within an already existent secretariat, in case of small projects, or by setting a distinct secretariat, able to serve one (in case of large projects) or more than one projects.

For a normal development of activities within the project, it is imperious for the project to be well documented. By this, we understand "the totality of data and documents with regard to a specific aspect or a specific area"[10]. The project documentation refers to the totality of documents and data that was or will be available for one or more people from the project's managerial team or their hierarchically positioned superiors.

Data and documents include: an exchange of correspondence with customers or suppliers; an exchange of correspondence between the company's departments; contracts and annexes to contracts; specifications; goods orders; notes of telephonic conversations; minutes; graphics and technical documents. For a good preservation of the projects' documentations, the company's archive should be used; in the absence of such a department, other organizations of this type may be contracted.

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