PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY-A PARADIGM SHIFT

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ABSTRACT:

This paper studies the business process known as project management. This process has exhibited a remarkable growth in business interest over the last 15 years, as demonstrated by a 1000% increase in membership in the Project Management Institute since 1996. This growth is largely attributable to the emergence of many new diverse business applications that can be successfully managed as projects. The new applications for project management include IT implementations, research and development, new product and service development, corporate change management, and software development. The characteristics of modern projects are typically very different from those of traditional projects such as construction and engineering, which necessitates the development of new project management techniques. We discuss these recent practical developments.

Key words: *project management, service development, new project management techniques,*

Introduction

Project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements. Project management is accomplished through the use of the processes such as: initiating, planning, executing, controlling, and closing. The project team manages the work of the projects, and the work typically involves:

- Competing demands for: scope, time, cost, risk, and quality.
- Stakeholders with differing needs and expectations.
- Identified requirements.

It is important to note that many of the processes within project management are iterative in nature. This is in part due to the existence of and the necessity for progressive elaboration in a project throughout the project life cycle; i.e., the more you know about your project, the better you are able to manage it.

A Paradigm Shift:

Project management competencies are becoming more about delivering best value outcomes, allowing real benefit realization and the best possible returns within the constraints of scare resources, tighter budgets and time frames, higher expectations, higher market uncertainties, and the need to achieve more with less. New technologies, revelations in behavioral science and changing cultures are generating exciting advances in the world of project management. This article emphasizes on the latest concepts that are creating buzz in the project management community, why they are important and what difference they're making in project work today.

1. Rolling-Wave Planning

Rolling-Wave Planning is the process of planning a project in phases as it proceeds rather than completing a detailed plan for the entire project before it begins. The concept is based on the realization that too much detailed planning at the outset of a project is wasteful. Imagine planning every work item of a six-month project that involves 20 people – it is naïve to think that is would be possible, let alone successful. Planning is dependent on speculation and the further out you plan the more quickly your plan will become obsolete as conditions in the project change. In Rolling-Wave Planning, you build your plan over time as the details in the project become clearer. Rolling-Wave Planning is becoming the default approach and is here to stay in the project management world.

2. Lean & Agile

The concepts of Lean and Agile are based on best practices in product development or project management and have been developing for decades. The goal is to maximize efficiency – to increase or maintain perceived customer value with less work. Despite being around for decades, these concepts are on my list of buzzwords because over the past few years, modern behavioral science can explain why Lean and Agile are effective: they create more empowerment and engagement among collaborators. Key components of Lean and Agile include (a) Last Planner Rule: The ones who execute the work should be the ones planning it. People have great brains with a lot of capacity. If they plan together they will find better ways of working than any computer program or expert planner can do and (b) Control through transparency: If all work and workflow is visible to everyone, the

project manager will be in control without the need for commands. The result is transparent collaborative planning that reinforces accountability and enables individual initiatives.

3. Customer-Centric

The theoretical framework of project management is focused on the triangle of cost/resource – schedule/time – scope/quality. Reducing a project to these three components suggests the project is a mechanical system that can be optimized by fine-tuning in a software tool: you add more resources and the project will finish sooner. But in practice, we know this doesn't really work.

Today, project management academics and practitioners are moving towards defining project success as the delivery of perceived customer value. After all, project stakeholders are the ones who get to decide what 'value' actually means. This is called customer-centric project management and it is about continuously engaging stakeholders. No matter how you optimize time, cost or quality, the customer service you provide every day will increase the perceived value of the project.

Our view is that if you invite stakeholders into your project team and make them visible to the team members you'll see more engagement from the team and you'll foster more discussion about the purpose of the project and the deliverables. Collaborative technology makes this level of transparency possible. It may make some project managers nervous, but research shows that if you invite stakeholders into your project it will be more successful.

4. Activity Streams

New technologies are creating a culture of real-time information sharing, feedback and transparency that previously only existed in the physical world. In behavioral science this is explained as Osmotic Communication and Ambient Awareness but it is more commonly known as eavesdropping. Let's say you work in an open office and you hear a discussion about a problem. You realize you can help and, as a human being, you're wired with a need to help and share so you contribute your feedback. Now, technologies enable you to observe and participate in conversations happening all around you in the virtual world. Tools within many popular Project Management proapplications are applying this technology to project management for more effective and collaborative ways of working, communicating and problem-solving.

5. Social

In the past 10 years we have learned more about the human brain and the human species than in the previous 1,000 years. A scientific revolution has occurred. We know how people learn. How people are motivated. How to shape efficient behaviour in high-performance teams. And what is critical for creating perceived customer value by coordination of commitments to succeed with projects.

In society we are seeing this as the final stage of understanding the human nature. Behavioral science is meeting neuro science and we are coming to understand the importance of new technology and how that is related to the way we can organize work. We have learned that (a) All organizations exist to provide value by creating and sustaining human relations (b) As human beings we are made for collaboration (c) We are born altruistic and have a need to belong, help and share and (d) Management is all about shaping behavior; there is no other way of succeeding with a project

There is no turning back to traditional views on project management. In the future our project management theories and best practice will be even more based on human behavior-science and available collaborative technology. And even if it is not labeled as "social" it will be more social than ever. A new breed of project manager is continuously evolving and project management is becoming a key element in strategy implementation, investment decisions and portfolio prioritization and selection. Understanding these trends in project management and reflecting them in job descriptions and selection criteria is the next paradigm shift this fine profession needs.

Today's project manager is no longer the technical expert delivering a technical solution as per specification, or managing the basic aspects of planning, scheduling, controlling cost, and resource allocation. To undertake projects today, the project manager is expected to possess a mix of technical, business planning, leadership, commercial, and delivery skills.

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Conclusion :

It has been concluded that project management has of very much importance for the organization's success and growth. Organizations that do not implement the practices of project management have to suffer a lot in terms of resources, time and money. In such a competitive world, organizations have to do anything that reduces their costs and resources on any given task. Project management is one of the tools from which one organization could use its resources efficiently and minimize costs. It has very tangible and intangible benefits, therefore every organization have to think about it and implement it.

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