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The Origin Concept of Project Success

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Abstract

Most of the projects we hear of in the media or from any other sources are either over budget, late or are simply not good enough and still different lobbies of people claim that those projects have been successful but majority of people are not in this belief. Nobody can reject this reality that even in these days by considering progression, improvement, updating and development of project management still there are lots of managing problems in the most of the projects especially about cost, quality, postponement and so on. Therefore needing to a new factor or, on the other word, concept which must assure the prosperity of any project is completely noticeable. Practitioners and the academicians in the field of project management have reached to a concept which has been known as "project success". And the other most important point is the role of project management on project success. But it seems to be a rather elusive and disregarded concept. Hence, project managers need to realize the concept of project success highly. Then this paper attempts to put forth the new points of views by considering opinions of different researchers in this field and assess the role of project management on project success.

Keywords: Project Success, Project Management, product success, organizational goals, success factors

1. Introduction

There is wide divergence of opinions in project success and specially in assessing the role of project management on project success; the only agreement seems to be the disagreement on what constitution 'project success' will work and go on. Some writers distinguish between project success (measured against the overall objectives of the project) and project management success (measured against the widespread and traditional measures of performance against cost, time and quality). The second distinction is also important – it is the difference between success criteria (the measures by which success or failure of a project or business will be judged) and success factors (those inputs to the project management system that lead directly or indirectly to the success of the project or business).

2. Some points of views of different researchers in this field

According to developed study, there are three step procedures for determining which factors contribute to meeting organizational goals. This study reveals that many executives tend to link in terms of "what does it take to be successful"

in their business rather than in terms of purposes, objectives, and goals. Consequently the key question in this method is, "what does it take to be successful in the business?" The three main steps in the process are:

1. Generate critical success factors (CSFs): The key question in this step is, "what does it take to be successful in the business?"
2. Refine (CSFs) into objectives: The key question in this step is, "What should the organization's objectives and goals be with respect to the critical success factors?"
3. Identify measures of performance: The key question in this step is, "How will we know whether the organization has been successful on this factor?" [11].

The Key result areas (KRAs) and critical success factors (CSFs) provide clues that help to answer the question of whether the organization is able to effectively mobilize its resources where there are conflicting sub goals, environmental uncertainty, and internal politics and constraints [12].

It is considerable that project success is meaningful only if considered from two vantage points: the degree to which the project's technical performance objective was attained on time and within budget and the contribution that the project made to the strategic mission of the enterprise [5].

An interesting example of the different points of view of people: "An architect may consider success in terms of aesthetic appearance, an engineer in terms of technical competence, an accountant in terms of dollars spent under budget, a human resources manager in terms of employee satisfaction, and chief executive officers rate their success in the stock market. But by doing review on the project management concept, it is identified that seven main criteria for measuring the success of projects which five of them are more frequently used than others:

1. Technical performance
2. Efficiency of execution
3. Managerial and organizational implications (mainly customer satisfaction)
4. Personal growth, and
5. Manufacturability and business performance [7].

Project success may be assessed by different interest groups—stockholders, managers, customers, employees, and so on. Criteria for measuring project success must therefore reflect different views.

Two distinct components of project success:

1. **Project management success**: This focuses upon the project process and, in particular, the successful accomplishment of cost, time, and quality objectives. It also considers the manner in which the project management process was conducted.
2. **Product success:** This deals with the effects of the project's final product.

It is common in the origin concept of project management to confusingly intertwine these two separate components of project success and present them as a single homogenous group. In order to properly define and assess project success, a distinction should be made between product success and project management success, as they are not the same [1].

After sampling over 650 project managers, the researchers concluded that "project success" is

something much more complex than simply meeting cost, schedule, and performance specifications. In fact client satisfaction with the final result has a great deal to do with the perceived success or failure of projects [10].

It is necessary to be mentioned that instead of using time, cost and performance as measures for project success, perceived performance should be the measure [2].

Also by targeting the main problems and issues using the key success factors as a focus could make a significant difference to the effectiveness of project management. In order to ensure that a project is completed successfully, project plans need to be updated regularly and needless to say that success will be measured more easily when the objectives are clearly stated at the outset of the project [4].

Success factors can be grouped and listed in the concept and be described the impact of these factors on project performance. They grouped the factors into four areas:

1. Factors related to the project
2. Factors related to the project managers and the team members
3. Factors related to the organization
4. Factors related to the external environment [3].

In their second part of the research with a total of 57 responses, many project manager related factors have been found to be critical. In contrast with a previous finding using 91 responses, a noticeable shift in ranking from organizational factors towards factors related to project managers and team members was witnessed with project managers' related factors dominating over the organizational factors. They came out with some important relationships as well. For example, when time is used to measure project success, then a project manager's skills and communication between the team members become critical.

To come up with all possible critical factors that might affect outcome is impossible because of the diversity of projects. But to identify the groups to which the critical factors belong would be sufficient for better evaluation of projects.

There are ten ways to improve project performance if enterprises in general and project teams in particular implement them:

1. Bypass an obstacle
2. Cause people to stretch, not break
3. Focus on the goal
4. Follow a standardized process
5. Learn from the past
6. Maintaining ongoing communications
7. Record the work being done
8. Reuse previous work
9. Seek buy-in from all involved
10. Seek simplicity, not complexity, in goal and path [8].

Nine factors for IT project success that can make or break IT projects:

1. Appropriate senior management levels of commitment to the project
2. Adequate project funding
3. A well-done set of project requirements and specifications
4. Careful development of a comprehensive project plan that incorporates sufficient time and

flexibility to anticipate And deal with unforeseen difficulties as they arise

5. An appropriate commitment of time and attention on the part of those outside the IT department who have requested the project, combined with a willingness to see it through to the end

6. Candid, accurate reporting of the status of the project and of potential difficulties as they arise

7. A critical assessment of the risks inherent in the project, and potential harm associated with those risks, and the ability of the project team to manage those risks

8. The development of appropriate contingency plans that can be employed should the project run into problems

9. An objective assessment of the ability and willingness of the organization to stay the project course [9].

Therefore a major concern of the field of project management and a recurring theme in the concept is that of project success. The factors that contribute to the success of projects are known as success factors and the success on projects is judged by success criteria. On one hand, the competence of the project manager is in itself a factor in successful delivery of projects and on the other hand, the project manager needs to have competence in those areas that have the most impact on successful outcomes.

3. Project Success Criteria

Project success is an important project management issue, it is one of the most frequently discussed topics and there is a lack of agreement concerning the criteria by which success is judged [6].

A review of the concepts further reveals that there is, in fact, a high level of agreement that project success is a matter of perception and that a project will be most likely to be perceived to be an "overall success". The project meets the technical performance specifications and/or mission to be performed, and if there is a high level of satisfaction concerning the project outcome among key people on the project team, and key users or clientele of the project effort [2].

There is also a general agreement that although schedule and budget performance alone are considered inadequate as measures of project success, they are still important components of the overall construct. Quality is intertwined with issues of technical performance, specifications, and achievement of functional objectives and it is achievement against these criteria that will be most subject to variation in perception by multiple project stakeholders.

4. Project Success Factors

According to a sample of 650 completed aerospace, construction, and other projects with data provided primarily by project managers on the factors contributing to project success. Theirs have been the most cited, used; extensive and authoritative research in the area of project success factors. They found ten factors that were found to be strongly linearly related to both perceived success and perceived failure of projects, while twenty-three project management characteristics were identified as being necessary but not sufficient conditions for perceived success.

Researches also did an important work on project success factors in the 1980s. They drew primarily on concept and case study analysis of major projects, based on their findings on the opinions of a usable sample of 418 PMI members responding to questions asking them to rate the relevance to project implementation

success of ten critical success factors and four additional external factors [10].

Therefore, one can conclude that there are umpteen numbers of factors that may have a bearing on project success. They may differ from one project to another. Following section describes also the role of a project manager in achieving project success.

5. The Project Manager as a Success Factor

Research has identified that people management derives project success more than technical issues. Despite this finding, there exists only a small body of research that examines the so-called soft project management, the people side of project management.

The successful project manager should have the following skills and competencies: flexibility and adaptability, preference for significant initiative and leadership, aggressiveness, confidence, persuasiveness, verbal fluency, ambition, activity, forcefulness, effectiveness as a communicator and integrator, broad scope of personal interests, poise, enthusiasm, imagination, spontaneity, able to balance technical solutions with time, cost, and human factors, well organized and disciplined, a generalist rather than a specialist, able and willing to devote most of his or her time to planning and controlling, able to identify problems, willing to make decisions, able to maintain a proper balance in use of time.

Project success factors have largely ignored the impact of the project manager, and his or her leadership style and competence, on project success. This may be because most of the studies asked project managers their opinion and the respondents have not given due consideration to their own impact on project success. Or, it may be because the studies have not measured the impact of the project manager and, thus, not recorded it. Or, it may be because the project manager has no impact. However, that last conclusion is in direct contrast to the general management concept, which postulates that the leadership style and competence of the manager has a direct and measurable impact on the performance of the organization or business. Thus, the authors have been commissioned by the Project Management Institute to study whether the leadership style and competence of the project manager is a success factor on projects and whether different styles are appropriate on different types of projects.

Almost everyone is familiar with projects perceived as successful by those involved in their implementation, while the very same projects have been poorly received by customers [5]. There are other projects that consumed excessive resources and were considered internal failures, but were later hailed as successful by their customers and become a source of revenue for the company for many years [9]. The combination of a changing organizational environment and changing project characteristics make the role of the project leader difficult. Within this environment, a competent project manager is frequently regarded as having a significant impact on overall project success as well as being critical to other project elements, such as the success of the project team, including team members' motivation and creativity. This strong link with success ensures that project manager competencies are of particular interest.

6. Conclusion

Project manager is an important factor leading to project success. As discussed above, many leading authors agree with this point of view and are conducting research to substantiate this grounded theory. This paper has endeavored to bring out the factors associated with project manager's leadership style having profound impact on project success.

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