PROJECT MANAGEMENT: THE EFFECTS OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this paper to investigate the consensus of the requirements imposed on project managers in balancing both the transactional leadership activities of managing a project while having to also provide the transformational leadership functions of directing and motivating the same project personnel (Bass, 1985). From a socio-technical perspective the transition necessary due to the advancement of technological changes in the administration of project management may be difficult on many levels. Individual's knowledge of the uses available through changes in technology can outpace the project manager's understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the technologies. Teams may be able to take advantage of emerging technologies to obviate the need for excessive management or even team management itself (Guinan, Cooprider, & Faraj, 1998). Organizations may have a need to completely change direction in marketing, finance, accounting, and human resources due to advances in technology.

MANAGING TEAMS

Management is the predominate framework of the workforce today. The formalization of this framework began around the 1800's and culminated with the work of Frederick W. Taylor (Taylor, 1911). This philosophy presents management as a rational, linear, analytical process. This process includes the following steps; Planning, Directing, Organizing, and Controlling (Figure 1). Management is often presented as a transactional activity of maintaining the current status, rather than the transformational activity of developing people (Bass, 1985).

Figure 1. Management activities
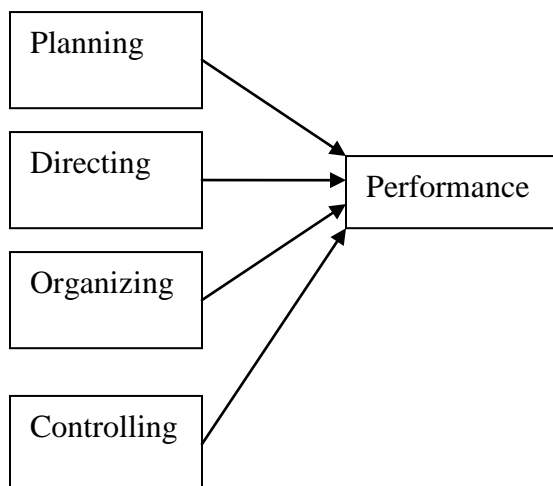
Managing projects is difficult due to people's (teams) different disciplines, uncertainty in project scope, uncertainty in team member abilities and commitment, the influence of culture of the company, and according to recent research, the culture of the project management profession (Wang, 2001). Moving

from a hierarchal culture to a clan culture can evoke issues with command and control during and after the transition. Management functions are highly effective in a hierarchal culture, whereas leadership functions seem to work better in a clan culture.

Not all work related tasks are best accomplished using the linear management model of Taylor's management process. Project requirements often cannot be achieved with the strict division of labor concept present by Taylor and that now are represented in the four activities of management. Leadership and specifically project management leadership concepts is becoming a common tool used by companies for achieving their competitive strategies and goals. Part of the competitive strategies and goals is to be innovative and creative in matching the process with the product in order to be more effective and therefore, cheaper, quicker, and better. Management functions may not be the most effective or efficient process to develop a creative or innovative atmosphere.

LEADING TEAMS

Leadership functions are often described as Coaching, Mentoring, and Facilitating (Figure 2). Current literature describes leadership as a transformational activity in a dynamic environment (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Projects that are run as teams have a need to be able to organize the standard constraints of time, budget, and scope in a relational rather than linear structure (Hacker & Doolen, 2007). Using the construct of leadership as defined by Bass (1985) rather than the management functions described above is a means to incorporate relational structure.

Figure 2. Leadership
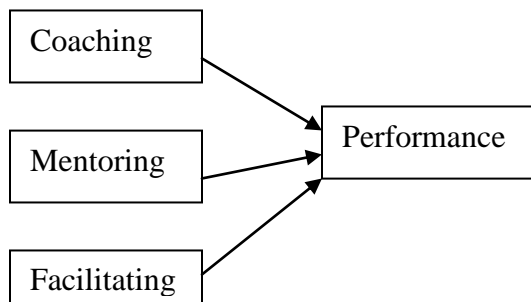
Managing projects appears to require the project manager to be adept at both styles of management, managing and providing leadership. However, both frameworks appear to have conflicting task or at least conflicts that complicate the role of managing. The issue is compounded by the advent of technology which can be used to make the management functions less important from a human perspective, yet more important from a leadership perspective.

SUCCESS FACTORS IN PROJECTS

Success factors for teams seem to fall into two categories which we classify as transactional and relational. Examples of transactional characteristics are planning, lines of authority, feedback (Hacker & Doolen, 2007), and technology tools (Guinan, et al., 1998). Relational issues include interaction with top management (Guinan, et al., 1998; Hacker & Doolen, 2007), culture (Wang, 2001), resistance to change

(Lucey, 2008), relationships with other departments and vendors (Hacker & Doolen, 2007), team skills (Guinan, et al., 1998), and commitment (Guinan, et al., 1998; Hacker & Doolen, 2007; Wang, 2001).

The use of a transactional leadership style (Bass, 1985) means that there is a very linear relationship between the manager and worker (Bennis, 2009). The managerial functions of planning, directing, organizing, and controlling are very linear and therefore make these functions susceptible to software engineering and decision analysis computer programs. However, the functions of a transformational (relational) leadership style of coaching, mentoring, and facilitating the workers will to produce do not lend themselves very well to technological solutions.

CONCLUSION

Project managers have to consider both transactional (managerial) activities of running a project while also providing the transformational (leadership) functions necessary to be successful. Transactional factors of a successful project lend themselves well to technological devices for the administration of project. However, team members' knowledge of the technology can replace the project manager's functions in running a smooth operation. Teams may be able to take advantage of emerging technologies to obviate the need for excessive management or even team management itself (Guinan, Cooprider, & Faraj, 1998). Consequently, Project managers and their organizations have a need to concentrate on leadership functions to become more effective in contributing to a projects success.

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