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Introduction to Project Management
Week 7 Paper 7
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According to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK 3rd Edition), the PMBOK is the sum of knowledge within the profession of project management. As with other professions such as law, medicine, and accounting, the body of knowledge rests with the practitioners and academics that apply and advance it. As I have learned throughout this course, while the PMBOK includes proven traditional practices that are widely applied; there are innovative practices emerging in the project management profession. Having the opportunity to learn from the Harvard Business Essentials text, Harvard Business Review text, and personal experience and perspective of my professor and cohorts has really broadened my knowledge and provided me with a bigger tool box.

Within project management process there are generally recognized as good practices, but I want to acknowledge, though not the focus of my paper that there are other standards, principles, and practices on Project Portfolio Governance and Management that are tightly integrated processes critical to the successful delivery of project related services.

For purposes of this paper, I will highlight some principals and practices that I feel are necessary to effectively manage projects such as integration management, communication management, risk management, change management, and product closure. I will conclude the paper with two core values that I feel are the foundation to my success.

The foundation of my principals and practices lie with the Project Management Body of Knowledge and the integration of processes and activities needed to identify, define, combine, unify, and coordinate the various processes and project management activities within the project management process groups.

Project integration management entails making choices about resource allocation, making trade-offs among competing objectives and alternatives, and managing interdependencies among the project management knowledge areas and it is only through effectively integrating project management processes will a project be successful.

Integration project management starts by guiding a project team through successive levels of definition beginning with the Project Charter and culminating with a set of formally approved deliverables is crucial. A key concept for success is connecting the customer's high level objectives or needs to a set of business requirements for the project to a work breakdown structure and ultimately, to a set of deliverables that are all formally approved. The primary output of the approved Project Charter is a detailed Project Plan Document.

As part of the project planning process, a series of workshops are held, which is an extremely useful mechanism for defining the approach to managing the project, the requirements, the scope, the schedule, and the cost baselines in a collaborative manner with the customer and other Stakeholders. Planning sessions and workshops can be used to frame the Project Sponsor's definition and expectations for the project with the intention to reach consensus with the customer and the project team. This approach to planning is fundamental to the success of any project and when done right does not require re-planning. The output from these sessions and workshops is a detailed project plan document, the single most

important project deliverable produced, is a roadmap of sorts for how the project work will be planned, performed and controlled. This project plan document is used as the input to each of the nine project management knowledge areas such as scope, time (schedule), cost, quality, human procurement, communication, risk management, and integrated change control management plans.

As part of integration project management, sound communication management planning is essential and ensures timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and archiving of project information. Adequate information flow among all the project stakeholders is necessary for successful communication. The objective of communications processes in any project is to keep stakeholders informed, to create an environment of trust, to provide an opportunity for feedback, and to manage expectations. A component of communication planning is managing stakeholder communications to satisfy the demands, expectations, needs of, and resolve issues with, project stakeholders. Actively managing stakeholders increases the likelihood that the project will not veer off track due to unresolved stakeholder issues, enhances the ability of persons to operate synergistically, and limits disruptions during the project. Successful stakeholder management should result in solid expectation management, resolved project issues, approved change requests, and corrective actions, as well as a robust lessons-learned process that relies on stakeholder feedback about the performance and delivery of the project.

I am firm believer that every project must spend time on risk management. Identifying, analyzing and prioritizing risks are essential to every project's success. Failure to implement a good risk management will inevitably result in project failure. Risk management is the process

through which a project manager and the project team identify project risks, assumptions, action items, issues, dependencies and definitions and manage them throughout the engagement. RAID Management is a continuous process by which these items are identified for a project, responded to and controlled. Within a project, managing risk is the method of minimizing the chances of occurrence and corresponding consequences of adverse events and maximizing the probability and outcome of positive events. Identification of appropriate risks and effective management of issues leading to prompt resolution are key activities for successful execution of projects.

Another important practice is the integration of project configuration and change management. Project integrated change control is a necessary evil and without proper change control, a project will fail. Integrated change control involves recognizing and managing all proposed changes to the baseline scope, schedule, and cost of the project. The change process is “integrated” because a change in one of these areas of the project will almost always impact the other areas. Change control is necessary because projects seldom run exactly to plan. Priorities change or business drivers change that were once strong influencing factors for the project, and often progress does not occur according to plan for various reasons. Change control is the basic mechanism for preventing and controlling scope creep, a known factor that leads to project failure. Change Control works to thoroughly control scope creep by recognizing additional scope, ensuring that the project sponsors understand the impact of the additional scope, adjusting baselines to handle the additional scope, and obtaining approvals for the additional scope prior to implementation of the additional work.

Project closure is just as, if not more important than any of the project management principles and practices. Project closure begins after all project execution activities that are associated with project deliverables have been completed and encompasses completing a project, verifying that the customer has accepted all project deliverables, and transferring operational control, if appropriate. During this activity, final customer acceptance that the project has been completed is received and project records are added to the document repository for archiving. A key practice to the project closure phase is conducting a post project review, a collective exercise with all key stakeholders, which focuses on lessons learned and determining a project's successes and failures, and identifying the reasons for the achieved results.

As part two of this paper, I am going to answer the question, "what areas of project management do you feel you excel" a little differently. I excel in project management because of two key values that are important to me, which are communication and professional development. These values shape the way I manage projects because communication is vitally important in every aspect of daily life and professional development allows me to continually grow my skill set and has provided me with opportunities to do and try different things over the course of my career. As a result, I have developed into a well-rounded project manager with a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience in various industries. My desire is to continue to do what I love in my chose profession while continually growing and developing professionally.

Communication is an essential part of human interaction. In my opinion, the best leaders are first rate communicators. Their values are clear and solid and what leaders say promotes those values. Their teams admire them and follow their lead.

As I have said before, our job as project managers is 90% communication and is an essential skill to have in our toolbox. However, good communication is more than a communication management plan, project meetings, status reporting, change management, etc. Being effective communicator means providing timely and concise information to others, and using clear and thoughtful oral and written communications to influence, negotiate, and collaborate effectively. In a culturally diverse society and global economy, communication becomes even more important to get a point across clearly and concisely, listening attentively to concerns expressed by others, and clearly expressing ideas and concepts. Communication skills carry over into every aspect of project management including being able to think critically, seeing the “big picture” and being able to get things done in the face of ambiguity.

My second value is professional development, which allows me to continually grow my skill set and provides me with opportunities to do and try different things. It’s more than just a process – it’s a mindset. Not only does it include formal training and conferences, but also discussions among work colleagues, independent reading and research, observations of a colleague’s work, or other learning from a peer. Continuing my professional development is important because I want to continue to be competitive and competent in my chosen profession. In my opinion, professional development is a career long obligation. I am passionate about every project I am assigned because it’s a new experience and endeavor. It’s

important that I am continually aware (if not ahead) of changing trends and that I am always able to make a meaningful contribution.

By being a great leader with first rate communication skills and a professional who is ahead of changing trends in all industries including my own and continually strengthening my practice throughout my career -- my opportunities are endless and my contributions are filled with meaning, purpose and passion.

In conclusion, learning about project management, being exposed to other points of view, styles, and approaches to delivering projects on time and on budget, and practicing and refining my skills will inevitably help me to grow professionally in my project management career.