

The Role of Talented Employees in Public Projects

Adrian Eugen Dinu
Nicoleta-Valentina Florea
„Valahia” University of Targoviste, Romania
adrianeugendinu@gmail.com
floreanicol@yahoo.com

Abstract

This material aims to bring to the fore, through an empirical approach, corroborating the literature with the authors' view, the main features of key people in public projects, problems in organization planning, team arrangements, on the one hand, but also the directions of use of this information both, against the background of conditions for improving the performance of team management in public projects. This study combines significant elements of economic epistemology: performance management, project team management, organisation planning, role, responsibility, in order to grow the level of public administration capabilities.

Public administration reflects the institutional foundations of how countries are governed. Public administration responds to the needs of society and operates on the basis of organizational structures, processes, roles, relationships, policies and programs.

Key words: administrative capacity, performance management, EMP, key people, public project,
J.E.L. classification: H11, H43, H83, O22

1. Introduction

In today's managerial contexts, the development of a community often requires the completion of various local development projects. Project management continues to grow and to be implemented more and more in this corporate world (Lennon C., 2021), becoming a change agent. Many factors influence the performance of project management implementation, as new technologies, global environment changes (economic, political- energy crises, the wars, competition) or the implication and talent of human resources (Vannie, Rahul, 2021). However, their success is largely based on the human resources involved in the organization that manages such projects (Dinsmore, 1990). Through their inimitable knowledge and skills, engaged human resources provide sustainable competitive advantage to organizations (Guibbert, Veshi, 2004). But it is still necessary to know how to channel all these talents to the execution of projects, which is a delicate work. Indeed, public project management requires a unique management of human resources, which certainly raises many difficulties (Fabi, Pettersen, 1992).

2. Literature Review

The project context is different from other contexts in that it involves a particular organizational structure and that project human resources are subject to the triple constraints of cost-time-goal. It follows that human resource management in this context does not follow the traditional model used in other modes of operations management. Indeed, projects usually rely on a skilled workforce overseen by a body of managers who must coordinate various professionals, suppliers and other organizations whose sporadic involvement will change throughout the project. The fragmentation and dynamism of this process, as well as the need to integrate a wide range of professional cultures, make the application of good HRM practices more complex (Fabi, 1992). Turner determines seven

specific characteristics of project organizations (organizations that operate in project mode) with a direct impact on human resources (Turner, 2003)

The first characteristic refers to the temporary nature of the projects. This reality leads to a change in the human resources configuration of the parent organization every time a project starts or ends, which creates a need for HRM practices adapted to this context and different from those of traditional organizations.

The second characteristic refers to the dynamic nature of the projects. Indeed, the number and size of projects managed by an organization can be subject to continuous change. This makes it difficult to predict future human resource requirements and can create situations where project staff will be exposed to excessive levels of stress and/or be required to work long hours.

The third characteristic concerns the uncertainty of the requirements of a position or job. Since projects are unique and transient, it is almost impossible to accurately determine the requirements of a given job. To this end, Turner et al. (2008) explain that: "You don't define the job and then find the right person; find a competent person and let them define the job".

The fourth characteristic relates to the management "paradigm" specific to project organizations. Indeed, these organizations have a specific management culture that manifests itself in employee empowerment and teamwork, teamwork, continuous organizational change, customer satisfaction, and networking with customers and suppliers. This specific management culture requires human resources to have specific skills and abilities to be able to successfully integrate into this process.

The fifth characteristic relates to the diversity of the organization's project portfolio. This means that an employee can simultaneously work on different projects and play different roles. This can give rise to role conflicts in certain circumstances.

The sixth characteristic relates to employee well-being. The temporary nature of projects, as well as the dynamic nature of their work environment, can put pressure on employees to increase their workload, cause work-family balance issues, and even cause problems. mental health at work (burns, stress, etc.).

Finally, the seventh characteristic reported by these authors relates to the need to retain and develop staff for future projects and the need to match project staff tasks with career development. This is important because project staff members may leave the organization if they feel that their project assignments do not provide the development opportunities they aspire to.

3. Research Methodology

The research is based on the organizational paradigm of social systems theory (Luhmann 1995) and the epistemological paradigm of radical constructivism (von Glasersfeld 2005) which are combined with a qualitative research approach (Cresswell 1994, Yin 2003). In this research project, the following research methods are applied: Literature review, qualitative interviews with project managers, change managers, heads of project management offices and change management offices, case studies and focus group workshops with experts from academia and practice to ensure the viability of research results.

4. Findings

4.1. Key people of organisation and project management

Sustainability of projects is very important in terms of human resources, financial, technological, informational or material (Chawla, Chanda, Angra, Chawla, 2021). Pressure of time, change, and challenges influences employees and efficiency of work (Van den Brink, 2013; Silvius, Kampinga, Paniagua, Mooi, 2012). Projects, must be faisable, according to efficient targets, policies and specific procedures (Silvius, Schipper, 2014), ethics rules (Martinsuo, Killen, 2014), use of nature-friendly materials (Eriksson, Olander, Szentes, Widén, 2014), based on specific key performance indicators and quantifiers for the project life-cycle (Zhong, Wu, 2015), including the support of local and government authorities (Yunus, Yang, 2014), and especially referring to human capital and managers training in order to obtain sustainability of projects

(Martens, Carvalho, 2017) and to have the right skills and knowledge in order to obtain competitive advantage (Florea, 2014). In some of the project-specific organizational structures, hundreds or even thousands of people may work, and it is clear that it is not possible to describe all these job roles in a few paragraphs. For example, the project organization and its manager will often depend on the functions of other managers in other departments, such as engineering, sales, purchasing, accounting, and human resource management. Although it may seem trivial, building a project management team can be a challenging activity. Before addressing the question of structure and organizational chart for a project team and a project management team, it is useful to emphasize a few important points.

First, the project for which a project management team (PMT) is needed must be known. The size and complexity of the project dictates the size and structure of the team. Then it is especially important to know the Life Cycle chosen for the project. From **predictive approaches** (often used in construction) to adaptive approaches there are a multitude of situations, most often there are hybrid approaches for the project. Here it should be noted that the people who will form the Project Manager Team will have to have knowledge, skills and abilities regarding the management of a project that has a certain life cycle, because the groups of processes are different and the approach is specific. Predictive life cycles require a certain set of knowledge and skills, while working in an agile environment (Agile approach) requires completely different knowledge.

After establishing the Life Cycle of the project, another important element is the methodology used. It is worth noting that the actors in the EMP must be familiar with the project management methodology to be used and this can be closely related to the way in which the organization that manages the project has implemented and uses a certain PM methodology, here putting in discussion Organizational Project Management. Now, at this stage the structure of the project management team - EMP can be discussed. The formation of the team must first begin with the establishment of ROLES for each position in the EMP, then defining the chain of command and execution that will be followed, the structuring of the team resulting in an organizational chart of the EMP. ROLE represents the team member's position or function, which could be described as the "part to play" to support the project's requirements. To the main role, that of Project Manager (PM), other roles must be added that can take over:

- I. Programming and management of the project schedule (Project Scheduler),
- II. Cost Management (Cost Engineer)
- III. Quality Management (Quality Assurance - QA and Quality Control - QC)
- IV. Resource Management (material, human, ...etc.)
- V. Communications Management
- VI. Risk Management
- VII. Procurement Management
- VIII. Change Management
- IX. Project document management

For each ROLE the RESPONSIBILITIES must then be identified. They define the work and activities that project team members must perform. Responsibilities help us identify the competencies of future EMP members. Then we will be able to select, evaluate and test them, identifying the skills and competencies necessary to carry out the responsibilities. Defining relationships within the team can be another challenge and without a professional approach it is very difficult to achieve and therefore requires a specialist.

4.2. Organizational planning and project team roles

Organizational planning is the process by which roles, responsibilities and reporting hierarchies are identified, documented and assigned within a project. Roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships can be assigned to individuals or a group of individuals.

Starting from the personnel requirements - competencies required in the project - constraints related to the project team and existing reporting relationships in the company (formal or informal), the process delivers an allocation of roles (who does what) and responsibilities (who decides what) in the project.

A general part of these roles could include the following:

a. The role of the project financial:

- formally accepts the product of the project;
- can impose milestones in the project and create deliverables of the project;
- is not necessarily the one who signs/approves the project for financing,
- provides the necessary financial resources for the project.

b. The role of the executive manager:

- determines the priorities in the context of the triple constraint;
- prioritize projects;
- protects the project from external influences;
- identify risks;
- approve the project plan.

c. The role of the project team:

- participates in making certain decisions related to the project;
- creates the activity allocation structure (WBS);
- contributes to making estimates in planning processes;
- identifies assumptions, constraints and risks that may affect the project;
- performs the assigned activities;
- participates in project team meetings.

d. Role of stakeholders (other than those listed above):

- participate in the evaluation of their knowledge and skills that may be necessary or useful in the project;
- receive information related to the project;
- they are informed about the changes that appear in the project;
- helps to create the project book;
- are involved in:
 - development of the project plan;
 - the change control system;
 - the process of verifying the content of the project;
 - risk management.

e. The role of functional managers:

- negotiation of resources with the project manager;
- allocation of certain human resources;
- are involved in making decisions to continue/stop the project;
- optimal use of resources;
- approval of the project plan;
- support in issues related to the performance of project team members.

f. The role of the project manager:

Since the project manager has the ultimate responsibility in the success or failure of the project, let's define some of his roles in more detail:

- Setting up the objectives: establishing or appropriating the objectives and the general directions of action, their interpretation, the reaction to their modification; clarification of problems and delimitation of problem areas;
- Obtaining resources: identifying resources, negotiating to obtain them, keeping and managing them for efficient use;
- Configuring roles and structures: clarifying and modifying own roles and those of the other members of the project team;
- Establishing good communications: creating links between the various stakeholders who contribute to the development of the project, so that they can show their support and involvement;
- Viewing the overall picture: adopting the "helicopter perspective/picture", managing time and other resources, anticipating the reactions of people interested in the project, detecting connections and unforeseen events;
- Propelling the project: carrying out actions and assuming the necessary risks for the good progress of the project, especially in its difficult phases;
- The project manager must have the authority to say "NO".

5. Conclusions

The trend in recent years has been encouraging, and project management is now widely recognized as a profession deserving of reasonable status and rewards, with its own professional associations and much less job title confusion.

The organizational structures described so far demonstrate that the levels of responsibility and authority given to project managers vary considerably from one organization to another. In some cases, the project manager will have full authority over everyone responsible for achieving the project's objectives.

A complete task force or team can be created for each project as a self-contained unit, with the project manager placed at its head. The project manager is given direct authority over the team and is responsible not only for planning, progress and work allocation, but also for all technical aspects of the project.

6. Recommendations

For institutions-type organizations in the local public administration, unless the organization is too small to bear the additional expenses, it is also advisable to support the project management function by establishing a central group of project management services or an office of Project Assistance (PSO). This group consists of people, not too many, who are able to undertake their day-to-day tasks, which may include the following functions:

- project registration
- planning
- resource scheduling
- cost estimation
- cost reporting and cost control
- the problem of work lists
- progress reporting
- change of coordination
- earned value management
- supervision of the company's project management IT systems
- program and portfolio management.

A project help desk focuses a company's expertise in project management techniques, just as any other functional group can enhance a particular professional discipline. Centralization helps standardize project management procedures across all projects in a company. A project support group can be the logical place in the organization to coordinate all parts of the project cycle, from authorization to closeout. It can perform procedures such as cost estimation, project registration, risk registration, planning, resource planning and change control.

Another recommendation is to use communication methods such as brainstorming which is an effective technique to consider many aspects of risks. A brainstorming meeting of key personnel is a particularly productive method for identifying all possible risks along with many unlikely ones. A lot depends on how the brainstorming session goes. The leader or chairman should encourage an atmosphere of "anything goes" so that participants feel free to propose even the most outlandish risks without fear of ridicule. All suggestions, without exception, must be recorded for further evaluation and analysis.

7. Acknowledgement

This work is supported by project POCU 153770, entitled "Accessibility of advanced research for sustainable economic development", co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Program 2014-2020.

8. References

- Chawla, V.K., Chanda, A.K., Angra, S., Chawla, G.R., 2021. The sustainable project management: A review and future possibilities, *Journal of Project Management*, 3(2018), pp.157-170, DOI: 10.5267/j.jpm.2018.2.001
- Cresswell, J., 1994. *Research design: qualitative and quantitative approaches*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Dinsmore P. C., 1990. *Human factors in project management*, American Management Association, NY.
- Eriksson, P. E., Olander, S., Szentes, H., & Widén, K., 2014. Managing short-term efficiency and long-term development through industrialized construction. *Construction management and Economics*, 32(1-2), 97-108, DOI: 10.1080/01446193.2013.814920
- Fabi B., Pettersen N., 1992. Human resource management practice in project management, *International Journal of Project Management*, vol. 10, no 2, p. 81-88, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0263-7863\(92\)90060-M](https://doi.org/10.1016/0263-7863(92)90060-M)
- Florea, N.V., 2014. *Training, mentoring, coaching*. Bucharest: C.H. Beck Publishing House
- Glasersfeld, E. von, 2005. An Introduction to Radical Constructivism, *Constructivist Foundations* London.
- Guibbert L.-L., Veshi I., 2004. Contribution des pratiques GRH innovantes à la valeur organisationnelle, *La Revue des sciences de gestion : Direction et Gestion*, vol. 39, n° 210, novembre/décembre, pp. 19-33.
- Lennon, C., 2021. *The silver bullets of project management*, Routledge,
- Luhmann, N., 1995. *Social systems*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Martens, M. L., Carvalho, M. M., 2017. Key factors of sustainability in project management context: A survey exploring the project managers' perspective. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(6), 1084-1102, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2016.04.004>
- Silvius, A. G., Kampinga, M., Paniagua, S., & Mooi, H., 2017. Considering sustainability in project management decision making; An investigation using Q-methodology. *International Journal of Project Management*, 35(6), 1133-1150, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2017.01.011>
- Silvius, A. J., Schipper, R. P., 2014. Sustainability in project management: A literature review and impact analysis. *Social Business*, 4(1), 63-96, doi.org/10.1362/204440814X13948909253866
- Turner R. J., Müller R., 2003. One the nature of the project as a temporary organization. *International Journal of Project Management*, vol. 21, p. 1-8, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863\(02\)00020-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0263-7863(02)00020-0)
- Van den Brink, J., 2013. *How Positive Psychology can Support Sustainable, Project Management*.
- Vannie, N., Rahul, V., 2021. *Contemporary challenges for agile project management*, IGI Global.
- Zhong, Y., & Wu, P., 2015. Economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and constructability indicators related to concrete-and steel-projects. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 108, 748-756, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.05.095>
- Yunus, R., Yang, J., 2014. Improving ecological performance of industrialized building systems in Malaysia. *Construction Management and Economics*, 32(1-2), 183-195, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2013.825373>