

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF EMPLOYEE- ORIENTATED ASPECTS

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Abstract: This article analyses the diverse and extensive range of tasks that a project manager must master in a complex and dynamically changing project environment. Project-related and project team-related areas of responsibility are analysed in detail in order to derive the necessary technical, methodological, social and personal skills of the project manager. In addition, recommendations for action are developed as to how the project manager's workload can be reduced so that he or she is able to lead projects to success, taking into account time-limited resources.

Keywords: Project management, project manager, tasks of project manager, requirements for project manager, Project Happiness Officer.

Introduction

The role of the project manager is often decisive in determining whether a project can be completed on time, with the available resources and with the required quality. A successful project manager must be able to oversee, plan and manage functional and project-orientated tasks as well as employee and team-orientated tasks. In a dynamic environment, this can lead to challenges and bottlenecks that jeopardise the success of the project in complex, extensive projects with rapidly changing conditions and in consideration of the time available to the project manager. The question therefore arises as to what demands the individual areas of responsibility place on the project manager, how they can fulfil these demands and which personnel relief options would be suitable if these are required given the given competencies and time restrictions.

Research methodology

The areas of work for project managers are examined and systematised on the basis of an extensive literature analysis. The requirements that project managers must fulfil in order to successfully master their tasks are then derived from this. These are supplemented by practical examples. Finally, suggestions for action are developed which can help to relieve the project manager. This includes the author's own ideas and professional experience.

Results

Responsibilities of a project manager

When implementing a project, the project manager has to deal with a wide range of partly complex tasks. A project is understood to be an undertaking that is essentially characterised by the uniqueness of the conditions as a whole, such as special, one-off objectives, time, financial, personnel or other limitations, a demarcation from other undertakings and a project-specific organisation. Projects are usually characterised by their high level of complexity. Project management encompasses the totality of all (management-) tasks that are necessary for successful project realisation. It therefore includes the planning, management and control of all systems and processes required to solve the problem [1].

Figure 1 shows the areas of responsibility that a project manager has to deal with. Each individual task area can be highly complex and involve an comprehensive workload. Based on the consideration that the project manager has to perform extensive tasks in managing and motivating his project team in addition to his actual project- and subject-specific tasks, the author proposes in this article a subdivision of the tasks into subject- and project-orientated task areas as well as employee- and team-orientated task areas.

Responsibilities of a project manager		
Subject- and project-orientated areas of responsibility		Employee- and team-orientated areas of responsibility
Assignment clarification	Stakeholder management	Selection of project team members
Project planning	Knowledge management / Documentation management	Onboarding of project team members
Project management and control	Quality management	Team building and team development
Resource management	Change management, if nessesary	Motivation of the project team members
Cost or budget management	Crisis management, if nessesary	Communication and feedback in the project team
Risk management	Sustainability management, if nessesary	Conflict management in the project team

Requirements for a project manager

Fig. 1. Areas of responsibility of a project manager leading to requirements (own figure)

The functional and project-orientated tasks of the project manager begin with clarifying the assignment. This involves defining the objectives, expectations, requirements and framework conditions of the project and agreeing these with the client. Careful clarification of the assignment is crucial for the success of the project, as it creates a common understanding of the project and avoids misunderstandings [2].

As part of project planning, it is the project manager's task to break down the agreed objectives into sub-objectives and work packages, to which milestones are assigned. Project management and control includes the ongoing monitoring of project progress, comparison with the previously defined project plan and, if necessary, adjustment measures by the project manager in order to achieve the milestones or project goals and to be able to react to risks and problems as early as possible [3].

Resource management focuses on the efficient planning, allocation and utilisation of the required resources, such as personnel, technology, materials and time. Effective resource planning and control must ensure that the required resources are available in the right place at the right time and are optimally utilised. Cost or budget management focusses on the financial aspects of resource deployment [4]. Careful planning, allocation and monitoring of the project's financial resources is required in order to utilise them efficiently, avoid cost overruns and ensure financial stability.

As part of risk management, the project manager must identify and analyse potential risks for achieving the success of the project, recognise them at an early stage and assess their probability of occurrence and impact [5]. In order to protect the project from potential risks, the project manager must plan and initiate measures to minimise or avoid risks in good time and with foresight.

In stakeholder management, it is the task of the project manager to identify and analyse all relevant interest groups in the project, to include their requirements in their planning and to take them into account accordingly in the associated project communication. The aim is to take the interests and expectations of the stakeholders into account as comprehensively as possible and to achieve good and cooperative collaboration with all those involved with the help of transparent, systematic communication [6].

The implementation of knowledge management can also be one of the tasks of a project manager. Systematic knowledge management can contribute to the success of projects by collecting and sharing knowledge generated within projects or within the organisation in a targeted manner and using it in current and future projects. Closely related to knowledge management is documentation management, which focusses on documenting individual project steps, e.g. for warranty reasons [7].

As part of quality management, it is the task of the project manager to ensure the quality of the project results and to continuously improve them. The

aim is to avoid errors and failures in the project as far as possible and to increase stakeholder and principal satisfaction [8]. The project manager is responsible for defining quality standards and implementing suitable methods and instruments for quality assurance.

In some projects, change management may also be necessary if, for example, requirements and organisational, legal or technological conditions change during the course of the project [9].

In the case of unexpected events that could significantly affect the project or jeopardise its success, it may be necessary for the project manager to take over crisis management [10]. The project manager must be able to react and communicate quickly and purposefully in order to limit any damage in crisis situations, stabilise the project and, if possible, lead it back to success.

Sustainability management may also be required if the project is to be implemented taking into account the associated environmental, social and economic impacts [11]. The project manager would then have to incorporate sustainability aspects into project planning and management by reducing the use of resources and environmental impact as well as taking social aspects into account.

In addition to these diverse factual- and project-orientated tasks, the project manager is also responsible for a wide range of employee- and team-orientated tasks. These are management tasks that relate to the organisation and maintenance of the human aspects within the project team. This area of responsibility is particularly important as projects are carried out by people whose cooperation, commitment and development must be encouraged and geared towards achieving a common project goal. The selection of project team members plays a key role in the effectiveness of the team. Project members should be found who have the skills and experience required for the project. In addition to professional skills (e.g. specialist knowledge, technical skills in implementation), this also includes social skills that support the success of the project (e.g. ability to work in a team, organisational talent). A balanced and diverse project team is helpful for the achievement of goals because it brings together different perspectives, knowledge, experience, working styles and approaches [12].

The onboarding of project team members is an important task in order to make it easier for new team members to integrate into the project. The project manager should ensure that all team members receive suitable information on the project's objectives and conditions at an early stage and are introduced to their work tasks in a planned, fast and thorough manner. In addition to professional integration, social integration into the project team should also be promoted. Well-structured onboarding enables new project staff to integrate quickly and effectively into the team and successfully complete their tasks.

They also achieve higher productivity or can achieve it more quickly, which benefits the success of the project on the one hand and increases the satisfaction and motivation of the new project team members on the other. Positive onboarding experiences can help to increase the loyalty of new employees to the project and prevent early turnover from the project team. During team building and team development, the project manager must bring the project group together and support the individual employees in finding their roles within the project team.

The project manager must be able to deploy employees according to their aptitudes and, if necessary, provide them with further training. As soon as deficits in technical, methodological or social skills are observed, the project manager must take appropriate measures to bring about changes in behaviour, personnel deployment or the qualification profile [13].

Another key task of the project manager is to promote and maintain the motivation of the project team members. A good understanding of individual motivational factors is helpful here. To this purpose, the project manager should have knowledge of motivation theories in order to understand which factors motivate employees and which demotivate them. This knowledge can enable the manager to take motivating aspects such as opportunities for self-realisation, recognition and appreciation, social integration, group affiliation and the provision of development opportunities into account. This can contribute to an improved working atmosphere and higher productivity among team members.

Appropriate communication with the project team members and systematic feedback within the project team are important preconditions and foundations for successful collaboration and the success of the project. It is necessary for the project manager to define a communication concept for the project. Among other things, he or she must plan who must provide which relevant information to whom and at what times. Another task is to determine which communication channels and communication tools should be used, taking into account both the preferences of the team members and the appropriateness for the relevant project phase. It is important to ensure regular communication and information distribution. Unnecessary information overload for team members should be avoided, but it should also be ensured that the right people receive the information they need. Regular feedback opportunities and the active involvement of team members in the planning and organisation of communication can help to promote an atmosphere of trust, active participation and productive collaboration in the project [14].

Conflicts can arise in project teams, which can affect the working atmosphere, motivation, cooperation and productivity of team members. In order to prevent conflicts from arising and spreading as far as possible and to counteract the negative effects of conflicts, it is necessary for the project

management to actively address the issue of conflict management in the project team. Project managers should be able to recognise conflicts at an early stage, address them and contribute constructively to their resolution [15].

With so many tasks for the project manager, it is important to bear in mind that they must also maintain an overall view of the project (“big picture”) within the working hours available to him. In other words, the project manager must not focus too much on individual tasks.

Requirements for the project manager

Numerous requirements that a project manager must fulfil can be derived from the areas of responsibility of a project manager. In accordance with a classification of professional requirements and qualifications into technical, methodological, social and personal skills [16], the specific requirements for the project manager, based on their diverse and complex tasks, are analysed below and assigned to this classification (Figure 2).

Responsibilities of a project manager			
Requirements for the project manager			
Professional competences	Methodological competences	Social competences	Personal competences
Subject-specific knowledge	Leadership competence	Teamwork skills	Self-confidence and decision-making skills
Project management knowledge	Organisational skills	Conflict and conflict resolution skills	Resilience and resistance
Industry and company-specific knowledge	Analysis and negotiation skills	Motivational skills	Assertiveness
(IT) technical knowledge	Change management competence	Communication skills and empathy	Adaptability
Language skills	Expressiveness, moderation and presentation skills	Intercultural competence	Criticism ability and reliability

Fig. 2. Requirements for a project manager resulting from his areas of responsibility (own figure)

Professional competences refer to the specific knowledge and skills that a person possesses in a particular field or industry. These competences include both the theoretical knowledge and the practical skills required to carry out a profession or activity. Methodological competences describe the ability to use

various methods, techniques and tools in a targeted and effective manner in order to solve problems, make decisions and fulfil tasks. Methodological competences are not limited to a specific specialist area. They can be applied across all sectors and include, for example, the ability to approach tasks and challenges in a structured and efficient manner, to obtain and process information, to plan and implement processes and procedures or to make decisions systematically. Social skills refer to the ability to interact and work together successfully and constructively with other people. This includes various aspects of human interaction, such as the ability to respond to other people, to understand the concerns and interests of others, to resolve conflicts or to work constructively as part of a team. Social skills are crucial for professional success, as most professional activities and tasks take place in a social context and therefore require good co-operation with colleagues, superiors and further stakeholders. Therefore, the project manager particularly needs the ability to teamwork, conflict resolution skills, motivation skills, communication skills and empathy in order to be able to master this range of tasks. The intercultural competence of the project manager is also relevant, as cooperation with team members from different countries and cultural backgrounds in projects is increasing due to migration and increased international cooperation. Personal competencies describe the individual characteristics, values and attitudes that shape a person's actions, decisions and behaviour in their professional and private lives. Personal competences are relevant to success as they form the basis for dealing with challenges, changes and stress in everyday life and can influence a person's professional and personal development. Based on the diverse areas of responsibility of the project manager, the following personal competences in particular are required to successfully manage projects: Self-confidence and decision-making ability of the project manager, resilience and resistance, assertiveness, adaptability, Criticism ability and reliability [17].

Recommendations for action

The large number of task areas that a project manager has to deal with can lead to challenges, particularly in the case of extensive and complex projects, and may even jeopardise the success of the project. In addition, the demands on the project manager derived from the areas of responsibility can be so extensive that they are very difficult or impossible for the project manager to fulfil. Consideration should therefore be given to how the project manager's burden could be reduced in such cases, while retaining overall responsibility for the project.

The author suggests that one solution could be to assign an employee to the project manager to take care of employee- and team-oriented tasks so that the project manager can focus more on the fact- and project-oriented areas of

responsibility. This activity as support for the project manager would be comparable to the activity of a “Chief Happiness Officer” (CHO) in organisations and companies, also called a “Feel-Good Manager”, but in relation to a project. A Chief Happiness Officer is a relatively new concept in which the CHO acts as a link between the management level and the workforce and has the task of promoting and maintaining the working atmosphere [18]. If this role is transferred to a project, the author suggests that the CHO could also be called a “Project Happiness Officer (PHO)”. In coordination with the project manager, the PHO would be responsible for focussing on maintaining and increasing the well-being and satisfaction of the project team members, which in turn can have a positive impact on productivity and employee retention.

Another solution suggested by the author is to find a support person for the project manager who has (different) complementary skills compared to the project manager. The skills of the project manager and this employee should complement each other as far as possible, so that any weaknesses or dislikes of the project manager with regard to one area of responsibility could be balanced out by the strengths and preferences of the support person. By combining different skills, interests and knowledge, greater efficiency and effectiveness could be achieved in the processing of projects.

Conclusions/discussion

It was shown that a project manager must understand, organise, plan and manage a variety of fact- and project-oriented as well as employee- and team-oriented tasks. It was derived in detail from the task areas that the project manager must have a comprehensive set of professional, methodological, social and personal competences. The quantity and complexity of the task areas to be mastered by the project manager and the required competences have a significant influence on the success of the project. This is particularly relevant in a dynamic project environment, for larger projects and in view of the time restrictions. Recommendations for action have been developed in the case that the project manager's workload needs to be reduced. In addition to analysing the literature, the author's extensive professional experience in project management and as a project manager has also been incorporated into the derivations and recommendations for action. Furthermore, interviews and discussions were held with project managers. The work could be deepened with the help of a comprehensive quantitative or qualitative study. The proposals for new organisational structures in this article could be the subject of further (qualitative and/or quantitative) empirical research.

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Estella Francois graduated a master's degree in human resources management after graduating in Business Administration. During her PhD studies at ULSIT, Prof. D.Sc. Gosho Kirilov Petkov is her supervisor. She has experience in various professions for example as an entrepreneur, an onboarding manager, a research assistant. She currently works as a project manager for the digitalisation of government processes in the federal state of Hamburg. In addition to her project management tasks, she organises and holds training courses and workshops on various software systems. Prior to this, she was a research assistant at the Technical University of Hamburg in e-assessment. Her main tasks there were to consult academic staff and provide technical support regarding the implementation of electronic examinations.

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