

PROJECT MANAGER AND HIS/HER COMPETENCIES

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Abstract: Competencies of a project manager are formed by a set of knowledge, skills, related experience, and ways of behaviour and attitudes. It is a way by which a project manager asserts his/her own professional knowledge to terminate a project successfully. There are different ways of a competencies division. Authors of this contribution focused on basic competencies and high performance competencies. Basic competencies of a project manager are comprehended as knowledge and skills that are indispensable for an own performance of managerial work. High performance competencies are relatively stable demonstrations of behaviour, by using them teams leaded by a project manager reach outstanding results. In contemporary entrepreneurial environment that is characterized by a high dynamics of changes, market globalization, strong competition and short time of launching technologies the basic competencies are not sufficient enough for a project manager. High performance competencies enable the project managers to manage effectively in contemporary turbulent environment. The competent project manager performs above standard, excellent performance.

Keywords: competence, basic competencies, generic competencies, project manager, hotel industry

1. Introduction

A project manager is currently high on the agenda as new ideas and various types of assignments are being accomplished as projects. Organizational structures of many companies change and flexible elements, i.e. project organizations, are exploited. Project management becomes a standard tool of managing the organizations of all sizes. It represents work on a single task, atypical for the company. It may include also the projects, which are either regularly or irregularly repeated and deal with the developing and launching of new products and technologies. The quality of project management depends on people in an organizational structure of a particular company. The overall success of project and reaching the set goals depend on cooperation of a whole project team and the leadership of its project manager.

The role of a project manager is irreplaceable. Therefore it is important to define his/her competencies with an emphasis put on high performance competencies.

Boyatzis [1] emphasized the difference between a task to be fulfilled and the capabilities (and other qualities) manager has to have in order to fulfil the task on a required level. He distinguished between an outcome of an activity and a behaviour needed to fulfil the task excellently. Woodruffe [2] uses the term competence as an umbrella comprising all factors directly or indirectly related to working performance. Through distinguishing a process from an outcome we may then define, according to Woodruff, competencies as a set of manager's behaviour he/she has to apply on a particular post to manage the tasks competently.

The following prerequisites have to be met by a manager to become competent and fulfil the tasks excellently. A manager has to be equipped with necessary personality traits, capabilities, knowledge, skills and experience. He/she is motivated, willing to invest necessary energy in the project, and able to behave accordingly in a given environment. Being competent means being in compliance with all the above mentioned preconditions. The competence being in relation to a particular task or post is worth mentioning from a practical standpoint. We are able to identify required competencies if we know demands resulting from a particular post. Both approaches to competencies, i.e. observable behaviour and personality traits, consider performance in a particular working situation to be an assessment criterion.

2. Types of competencies

Competencies are internally complicatedly arranged and therefore, there are different opinions on their division among specialists. Under a concept of competence one can conceive a capability or qualification to conduct according to a certain way. If we discuss minimal sufficient requirements on worker's capabilities to perform a certain kind of work, we usually discuss either basic or threshold competencies. These competencies form an inescapable condition for a manager to hold a certain position. Basic competencies are very specific and they refer to particular work or task. They will differ according to their hierarchical level of management in which a manager works as well as on a kind of organisation. However, they do not give any evidence what will a manager's behaviour in a specific situation be like. His/her behaviour will be a consequence of a personality dynamics which is created by relatively stable characteristics of a manager (attitudes, values, motives, capabilities, knowledge, skills).

What capabilities does a manager have to master to be able to perform his/her job well? Unlike many other professions there

is no unambiguous agreement on this issue. Effectiveness of a manager's work is assessed according to a lot of standpoints. According to a social psychologist Katz [3], it is possible to distinguish managerial skills into the three following groups:

- Technical skills – competencies important especially for a lower management, they consist of a complex of skills being linked with a specific situation;
- Human skills – competencies required for all levels of management, a manager needs them for an effective contact with other workers and to master challenging interpersonal situation,
- Conceptual skills – competencies with a great importance especially for a top management.

A similar method of determining the managerial skills is defined in the form of so-called. Eye of Competencies ICB (IPMA Competence Baseline), which represents the integration of all competencies of the project management as seen through the eye of the project manager when evaluating a specific situation. The eye also represents clarity and vision standard of the project management competence [4], [5].

Kubes at al. [6] began to look for competence, which would not be tied to a specific position or task, but would guarantee a high standard of excellence and performance that would be able to distinguish managers above average from average ones. However, these competencies would be a guarantor of an excellent, above standard performance and they would distinguish the outstanding managers from average ones. These competencies are then called the generic competencies.

A part of authors considers as a competent manager such a manager who performs a better performance than an average one. Above standard, excellent performance is a criterion. In these way the competence is defined by Boyatzis [1]. He understands under this term such characteristics of a manager, which are in causal relationship to above standard working capacity. These

characteristics might be comprised by motive, trait, skill, social role or knowledge that are used by a manager. Hornby and Thomas [7] define a competence as knowledge, skills and qualities of effective managers and leaders.

Spencer and Spencer [8] regard as a competence that distinguishes above average outstanding performance from average one for example the determination and acquirement of higher objectives. According to Schroder [9] organizations that work in turbulent entrepreneurial environment cannot rely on basic competencies of a manager but they have to require them to use the high performance competencies. These competencies are characterized as relatively stable behaviour and due to them the whole teams achieve noticeably outstanding results in entrepreneurial environment. Such environment is characterized by a high dynamics of changes, globalisation of a market, strong competition, and a short interval in launching the new technologies. Goleman, Boyatzis a McKee [10] divided the competencies, based on analysis of more than 500 qualification models, to technical skills (for example accounting, business planning or budgeting), cognitive skills (e.g. information searching, analytical thinking, learning methods) and emotional intelligence traits (e.g. self-awareness, skill to create and maintain relationships). They came to the conclusion that technical and cognitive competencies are threshold competencies but competencies from area of emotional intelligence belong to the high performance competencies. Competencies related to leaders' emotional intelligence are divided as follows:

- Self-awareness:
 - Emotional self-awareness;
 - Accurate self-assessment;
 - Confidence.
- Social awareness:
 - Empathy;
 - Organization awareness;
 - Services.
- Management of one-self:

- Self-control;
- Transparency;
- Adaptability;
- Initiative;
- Optimism.

- Relationship management:
 - Inspiring;
 - Influence;
 - Development of others;
 - Catalyst for change;
 - Conflict management;
 - Cooperation and team goal achievements.

Kubes at al. [6] defines the following high performance competencies which can be understand as causally affecting the above average managers performance:

- Cognitive competencies - mainly relate to work with information its searching, selection, combination, searching for conclusions, making decisions, problems analysing, and problems solving:
 - Search for information;
 - Concept creation;
 - Conceptual flexibility.
- Development competencies – consists of competencies which use a positive motivational effect on managers co-workers:
 - Interaction management;
 - Understanding of others;
 - Focus on development.
- Inspirational competencies – managers inspire others due to these competencies, bring self-confidence and believe in the team success, manage to gain support for their proposals and obtain stakeholder alliances:
 - Influence;
 - Self-confidence;
 - Presentation of ideas.
- Achieving competencies – enable manager to focus on achievements and activities which are required for their achieving and take responsibility to initiate the required steps needed for implementation, he is proactive:
 - Performance orientation;
 - Goal orientation.

3. Czech national standard of the project management competencies

National standard of the project management competence [11] understands under the project manager competence a set of knowledge, personal attitudes, skills and related experience that will enable success in a given position. In this standard competencies were divided into three areas of competence (technical, behavioural, contextual):

- Technical competencies assist as a tool to describe basic elements of the project management competencies (Project management success; Interested parties; Project requirements and objectives; Risk and opportunity; Quality; Project organization; Teamwork; Problem resolution; Project structures; Scope and deliverables; Time and project phases; Resources; Cost and finance; Procurement and contract; Changes; Control and reports; Information and documentation; Communication; Start-up; Close-out);
- Behavioural competencies assist as a tool to describe elements of personal project management (Leadership; Engagement and motivation; Self-control; Assertiveness; Relaxation; Openness; Creativity; Results orientation; Efficiency; Consultation; Negotiation; Conflict and crisis; Reliability; Values appreciation; Ethics);
- Contextual competencies assist as a tool to describe elements of the project management competencies relating to the project context (Project orientation; Programme orientation; Portfolio orientation; Project, programme and portfolio implementation; Permanent organisation; Business; Systems, products and technology; Personnel management; Health, security, safety and environment; Finance; Legal).

4. Conclusions

Quality level of the project management is fully dependent on people who form the organizational structure of the project team

even if the methodologies and the rules developed in detail are implemented. Due to the uniqueness of a project as the original process without any kind of repeating, a role of the project manager is becoming more and more important. The project manager plays a vital role and without his/her involvement any project could not be carried out. He/she bears the brunt of responsibility to meet the project objectives. The success of the project manager is primarily evaluated by an efficient and successful completion of the project within the deadline, while not exceeding the given budget, the fulfilment of all project objectives and using the team members' skills.

Position of a project manager is responsible and demanding profession, with great emphasis on his/her abilities and skills. The reason for the high demands is, for example, time limit of the project as well as a necessity to put together such specialists who have never worked together Technical and professional organizations such as the International Project Management Association, the Project Management Institute, the APM Group, or within the Czech Republic the Society for Project Management CR with the assistance of a number professional project managers have formulated, with the assistance of many professional managers, the quality standards for project management, respectively for the role of project manager. What competencies and at what level should have project managers mastered them is a subject of so called competency models. The best known and most widely used standard in this area is the IPMA Competence Standard, within the Czech Republic used as the National Standard of Project Management Competence. These standards define and describe competencies in general, many are applicable to any manager's work. Project managers are individuals with high endeavour to achieve success, a high degree of flexibility, high conscientiousness and a higher degree of dominance. Therefore, it is important to

emphasize the project manager's competence to help him/her to achieve a high standard and excellent performance. Based on the analysis of the experts' opinions on this issue it is therefore possible to conclude that the current standards of competencies should be

extended by the high performance competencies, especially the competence in the field of emotional intelligence, such as emotional self-awareness, confidence, empathy, adaptability, initiative, optimism, inspiration and influence.

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