Project Management Excellence

Beyond colourful status reports demands much more

~ By Harry Mingail

Project management excellence goes beyond producing project charters, detailed schedules and colourful status reports. Today’s project managers must acquire the skills necessary to combat a myriad of modern challenges. Factors such as downsizing, merger mania, restricted finances, an accelerated business pace, a multidisciplinary world, rising competition and seemingly ceaseless change, acting singly and in concert, demand much more.

Learning to manage time, costs, quality, scope, risks and other traditional practices is a vital foundation of good project management. However, to achieve excellence and smoother-sailing successes, there’s a dozen other competencies you need:

1. **Negotiation**: Negotiation is a vital part of every project manager’s existence, often moment by moment. Whether you’re dealing with suppliers, managing employees or contractors, you’re negotiating. The quality and success of your project can be directly affected by your ability (or inability) to negotiate.

2. **Marketing**: Project marketing methods sustain your project against competing against swarms of other initiatives that jostle for higher priorities, management’s attention and valuable resources.

3. **Selling**: Project managers reluctant to sell may soon find their projects failing. You can never stop selling yourself and your project.

4. **Customer Service**: Without customers, we’d all be hanging a “for sale” sign on our careers. With good customer service, project managers keep customers happy, satisfied and loyal.

5. **Boss Management**: Wise project managers engage good boss management strategies. Boss support, guidance, mentoring and influence will be your reward. After all, bosses are human beings with special roles and authority, as well as the requisite levels of human weaknesses, problems and pressures.

6. **Nurturing Staff**: Hiring the perfect person is not a job that ends with a handshake or a signature on the dotted line. The selection represents but the first step in nurturing your staff.
7. **Accounting:** Your project inevitably entangles itself with accounting. It needs to account for consuming financial, staff and equipment resources while understanding how project results contribute to the interrelated components of financial statements such as bottom-line profits, revenue generation, expense reduction and increased cash flows.

8. **Ethics:** Ethical dilemmas are often most severe in projects on tight time and money budgets. Yet, properly applied, ethics fuel and support the vital element of trust with team members, clients, suppliers and other stakeholders.

9. **Culture:** Organisational culture consists of shared beliefs and values which produce norms for your team’s behaviour. You are responsible for your project’s culture. You need to understand the nature of that culture, how it is created, and how it can be changed to fuel high performance.

10. **Stress Management:** Shouldering the pressures of entrepreneurial fast-paced initiatives can send stress levels to dangerous heights. High blood pressure, insomnia and chronic fatigue insidiously affect project managers and staff. Although there is no "magic bullet" for every situation, learning to manage stress is the answer.

11. **Innovation:** Creativity and innovation are magic wands. They endow projects with enhanced performance and success by allowing the team to eliminate obstacles and hurdle barriers.

12. **Managing Change:** These days, change pounds on corporate doors with disturbing regularity. Disregard for its realities, provokes troublesome and costly consequences. Fostering change to initiate and maintain worthy initiatives, is an art and science.

Shakespeare’s insight “we know what we are, but know not what we may be” eloquently endorses the potential for you to enrich your project management excellence. Empower yourself with the right skills. Cultivate high performance. Delight in the results.

_Harry Mingail strives to address the specific needs for an individuals Professional Development Making a positive difference for each and every seminar participant and applying the most current adult learning techniques._