

Achieving an Effective and Functioning Project Team

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An effective performance by a project team is achieved if professional project managers, as a whole, can adequately implement the project plan as defined--solving the daily issues in a timely manner to achieve the committed objectives regardless of the methodology applied.

Projects without a focused strategy for an effective project team will be disordered and made up of professionals who lack the required motivation to achieve optimum effort and results. It must also be noted that these professionals will not realize their fullest potential and will have to withstand pressures to perform their duties and achieve project goals.

If the functioning of the project team is inaccurate, the project will be wrong no matter how well the knowledge areas from *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)* are handled, and will have a direct impact on the project goals.

While every project should be approached with the appropriate methodology and management, the latter is directly related to the way in which the team operates and is essential for the success of all the projects executed across the organization. Therefore, the more efficient the professionals and the wider their integration, the higher the efficiency achieved by the project team. To reach this goal, a project team should be based on two building blocks:

1. **Efficient professionals** should have the appropriate competencies and be highly motivated and focused in order to meet the responsibilities assigned to their role.
2. The **optimum functioning** should meet three critical success variables:
 - The *structure* provides the management strategy that should be aligned to the project strategy.
 - The *cohesion* integrates and consolidates the team to achieve continuous fluidity across the team functioning. This critical-success variable is achieved through efficient management and the related professional responsibility.
 - The *character* brings to light the personality that every team should have to face planned activities and resolve day-to-day issues.

For the project team to achieve effective integration and building block maximization, it must apply the *cohesion* critical success variable through professional management and responsibility that ensures optimum team functioning. Management implies integrating the existing human and material resources

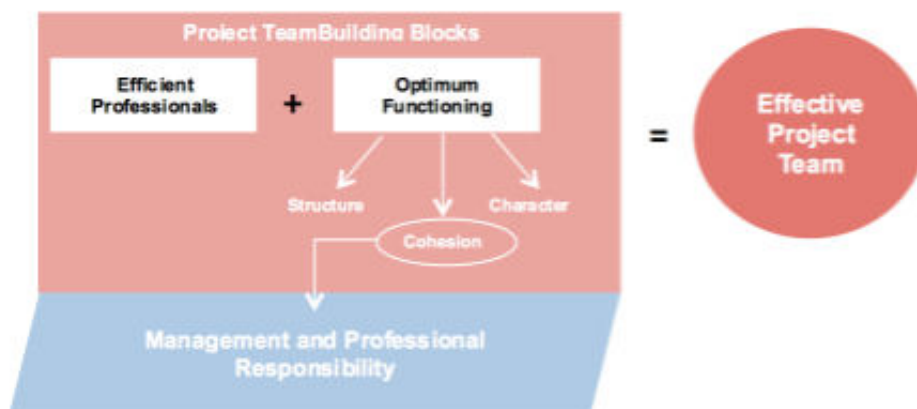
through clear and precise communication in order to achieve the defined goals.

It is directly linked to the professional responsibility that involves each professional's commitments for the results of his/her actions--and the consequences and the impact of the professional decisions made on the project, the company and society. It means putting into practice the responsibility assumed with the profession and the project assigned, and with certain values and behavior principles such as honesty, sincerity, seriousness, expertise, keeping your word and solidarity.

Professionals must have ethical criteria to define the actions to be taken. To this end, organizations and projects must develop a culture to train professionals with soft abilities and professional responsibility to ensure an exemplary management--a key point to achieve *cohesion*.

As an example, let's take the case of a large IT project that was planned together with the senior and junior resources in the project team. However, these sources only knew the planned activities and were unaware of the activities of other team members. What do you think happened? When the execution process group started, the team's performance started to show its weaknesses as some professionals required help from other team members whose activities were directly related to the former.

As a result, the project's schedule had a 15% deviation from its baseline--forcing the project manager to reschedule the plan, adding integration activities to enable the team members to understand their peers' activities, and work from an integrated perspective on those activities that required it.



The adequate allocation of professional resources and the achievement of success-critical variables will provide the project team with identity, robustness and management capabilities. This will leverage the team's interaction so that the links established ensure the team's proper functioning and the ability to solve problems--all in order to encourage joint teamwork in favor of an effective performance.

Finally, if the project team is based on the appropriate building blocks, the project will ensure an effective functioning that will be translated into a positive impact on the organization--boosting a pleasant work environment, maximizing professional retention and, above all, meeting the objectives.

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