

Leadership Core Competencies

Leadership

Leadership means motivating and inspiring people to keep the project moving toward successful completion even in the face of the physical demands of aggressive project schedules and the emotional demands of discouraging developments. Successful leaders:

- Have people volunteering for their projects
- Establish and communicate their vision for the project
- Speak of "our project" rather than "this project"
- Exhibit a "can do" response to problems
- Demonstrate a positive attitude
- Stay calm under pressure
- Command the respect of the entire team and accept responsibility for mistakes

Customer Relations

Customer relations involve managing the interactions between the customer and the rest of the project team. When the customer is external to the performing organization, it also involves managing the interactions between the customer and the performing organization. The result of good customer relations is that both parties are enthusiastic about both the relationship. Successful leaders:

- Work to understand the customer's point of view
- Advocate for WUSM (Stewards) – understand Stakeholders & Owners
- Are accessible, available, and responsive to the customer
- Seek customer feedback about project performance
- Create mutual interest in repeat business
- Show respect for others at all times

Project Planning

Project planning means devising and maintaining a workable scheme to accomplish the need that the project was undertaken to address. Successful leaders:

- Develop written plans for all significant undertakings
- Document and seek scope endorsement (with details)
- Document and distribute the project plan
- Update and revise the project plan as needed
- Insist on clear, complete statements of both product and project scope
- Know what the project will really cost, how long it will really take

- Use available planning tools effectively
- Get the team actively involved in the planning effort

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement involves collecting and analyzing project information to determine where the project stands and to predict future status and progress.

Successful leaders:

- Actively monitor project status
- Insist on constructive analyses of variance
- Use the plan to manage the project
- Hold regular status review meetings
- Encourage an attitude of "no surprises"
- Measure (and report) performance against the plan
- Submit status reports on time

Communication

Communicating is the exchange of information. The sender must make the information clear and unambiguous. The receiver must make sure the information is complete and understood. Communicating has many dimensions: written and oral; listening and speaking; internal and external; formal and informal; vertical and horizontal. Successful leaders:

- Send clear messages
- Choose the form and timing of the message for their audience
- Create communications that look professional
- Use language carefully (grammar, tense and spelling)
- Confirm the accuracy of information sent and received
- Explain things well
- Listen carefully to others

Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is the ability to "get things done." It requires an understanding of the formal and informal structures of all the organizations involved.

Successful leaders:

- Know who to go to for help
- Win approval of requests for support
- Show respect for individuals regardless of position
- Maintain a network of contacts from whom to get assistance

- Know which resources are scarcest and manage them most carefully
- Show empathy and kindness at all times

Team Building

A team is a group of individuals who depend on each other for success ("no one succeeds unless we all do"). Team building means encouraging and enabling people to work together as a team to accomplish the project. Successful leaders:

- Define the team to include all the stakeholders
- Share management responsibilities with the team
- Talk about process as well as results
- Work hard to achieve consensus on all major decisions
- Insist on the best the team can do
- Call attention to team achievements
- Develop good team players
- Build teams that perceive themselves as teams

Team Development

Team development is the process of encouraging professional growth among the members of the project team. Successful leaders:

- Insist on the best that each individual can do
- Demonstrate knowledge of team members' personal and professional goals
- Value the individual's growth and achievements
- Give credit promptly and sincerely
- Provide constructive criticism promptly and in private
- Provide timely and useful performance reviews
- Delegate appropriately for the person and the situation

Perspective

Having perspective is the ability to elevate one's view; to take a broader organizational view rather than a narrower project or personal view; to discern how the project relates to a hierarchy of larger undertakings; to sense and assess potential interactions with outside conditions and events; to connect seemingly unrelated events or conditions to the project. Successful leaders:

- Demonstrate awareness of the organization's vision and mission
- Demonstrate awareness of competitors' strengths and weaknesses
- Encourage the team to consider "big picture" issues
- Avoid getting immersed in unnecessary detail
- Actively seek to acquire new knowledge
- Read widely
- Step back and think before acting

Negotiating

Negotiating means working with others in order to reach an agreement. A successful negotiation is one where all parties are satisfied with the agreement. Successful leaders:

- Advocate for interests rather than positions
- Seek agreements that satisfy the interests of both parties
- Work to keep personalities out of the negotiations
- Are open to innovative and creative solutions
- Use objective criteria to evaluate proposed agreements & negotiate needs

Risk Management

Risk management means identifying, analyzing, and responding to risks over the course of the project. It includes both minimizing the consequences of adverse events and maximizing the results of positive events. Successful leaders:

- Consider both the impact and likelihood of risks
- Use contingency and management reserves appropriately
- Distinguish between risks (always in the future) and problems (in the present)
- Take prudent risks and exploit unexpected opportunities
- View past problems as current risks and plan for them

Problem Solving

Problem solving is a combination of problem identification (what is the problem), solution assessment (what can be done), and problem response (implementing a solution). Project problems may be technical, managerial, or interpersonal. Problem solving may lead to decision making when a problem has many possible solutions. Successful leaders:

- Use a structured approach for all significant problems
- Look for root causes, not just symptoms
- Seek (and listen to) both facts and opinions
- Encourage innovative and creative solutions
- Involve the team in problem solving
- Ask perceptive questions
- Follow up to ensure that the problem remains solved

Decision Making

Decision making means making the best choice from among many alternatives. Decisions can be "gotten" (from the customer, from the team, from other managers) as well as made. Decision making has a time element to it < the "best" alternative may not be the "right" decision if it is made too early or too late. Successful leaders:

- Use a structured approach for all significant decisions
- Seek (and listen to) both facts and opinions
- Make decisions when needed
- Document important decisions
- Delegate or escalate decisions when appropriate / close the loop