WBS 3.4 Deliverable: Stakeholder Management Series - Identify Stakeholders

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Introduction

Communication is more than just delivering a message. There are several parts to communication, the sender, receiver, the message, and the response to the message also known as feedback. Too often people place more importance on the quality of the sender when they are considering effective communication. But effective communicators or senders know that meeting the need of the receiver is often more important to real communication.
Timing, the significance of the message and appropriate feedback are about the same level of criticality in effective communications. Meeting the needs of the receiver is partly why we perform stakeholder analysis. Understanding the needs of the stakeholder helps us to tailor the message, its timing, length and material to meet the needs of the stakeholders. To further the success of the project we must ensure popper and effective communication takes place in all aspects of the project.

Identify Stakeholders

One of the preliminary steps in project management is to identify and analyzing the project stakeholder. In order to do that a Project manager must understand what a Shareholder is. Mark Piscopo of the Project Management Docs, website defines it this way, "a stakeholder is a person or group of people who can affect or be affected by a given project." (2014) Stakeholders can be investors, customers, project team members, contractors, government agencies, or people or organizations that the outcome of a project may impact like the local community. As with anything in Project Management documentation is important. Once a PM has identified who the stake holders are they need to list them in a stakeholder registry.

There are several ways to consider who is a stakeholder, start with the easy one. Look at the project charter who are the sponsors for the project, then list your team members, any contractors you will be interacting with and those who will use the products of services created by the project. Then consider subject matter experts, suppliers, inspection or permitting agencies. According to Fahad Usmani consider anyone who can both positively and negatively impact your project. (2013) You need to tie in some significance to the names once this grand list of names is developed in order for it to be useful.

Stakeholder Analysis

This is when the Stake holder analysis begins. There is a reason that each of these people has something to do with the project. Some can be critical to the success or failure of the project. Others can merely make things more or less difficult while working on the project, without necessarily being able to shut it down. Using these two examples you can see the need to communicate differently with some stakeholders. Deciding how, when and what needs to be communicated is part of the analysis process.

When analyzing stakeholders consider four things, first how the stakeholder can impact the project, then, what information do they need and when do they need it and finally what purpose do they need the information. All of this information should be include on your Stakeholder registry and provide you with a quick look at what reports need to be sent and to whom. I can also give you an effective point of contact list for developing a strategy to combat challenge you may face during the project.

PMI Knowledge Area Inclusion

The inclusion of the stakeholder analysis into the Project Management Institutes knowledge areas makes since to me. The negative effects of ineffective communication on a process can nullify the entire process. If a person needs a purple widget not bigger than 1.5 inches at a given time to make some something work; any part of that widget order that gets miss communicated can make the something not work as good or perhaps not at all. The time and money that goes into many projects requires a project manager to effectively communicate. The only way to effectively is to understand how your communication is received, when it is critical to get it out and what feedback your need to look for to make sure your communication was successful. As a professional organization this is a critical part of our effectiveness.

Conclusion

Knowing and understanding the needs of our stakeholders will increase the success of our project. Listing these items in a registry will help to keep track of the information and which improves our effectiveness at developing those communications. And finally as Project managers we need to study different aspects of stakeholder communication and understand the dynamic need of those we interface with. This makes it a critical part of our professional development.

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