



# Project Management for Development Organizations

Doing the Right Projects,  
Doing the Projects Right

## The Project Team

Project team management includes the processes required to make the most effective use of the people involved with the project. The project team includes the project manager and the project staff who have been assigned with the responsibility to work on the project.

Managing a project team is quite different than managing other types of staff; the project team has a start and an end in terms of duties assigned to the project. Team members come to the project with different skills and experiences, and in many cases, it's the first time they are working together. Due to the high level of uncertainty, roles and responsibilities change more frequently and the team needs to be flexible enough to adapt to new challenges. Due to time constraints there is more stress working on a project caused by the inherent uncertainty of working on new areas or with new groups of stakeholders, or in solutions that no one has done before.

Team management includes the processes required to make the most effective use of the people involved with the project. The first step is

identifying the roles, responsibilities and reporting relationships. The second step is getting the people that will be assigned to the project. These can come from within the organization or hired through the Human Resource function of the organization. This is where the project manager needs to be heavily involved and participate in all interviews with possible candidates; the success of the project will depend on the quality and commitment of the team.

Once people have been assigned to the team the next step is to develop the team. Most projects do not have the luxury of time to fully develop a team, but the creation of a development plan, that defines the development strategies and goals, can help the project manager build the right team which helps the team implement the project activities with the right level of skills. Team development includes hard and soft skills. Hard skills include technical training to learn new methodologies or practices; and soft skills include time management, communications, facilitating and negotiation skills.

Some organizations also include an induction process that describes the mission, norms, guidelines, culture, and other internal processes for new hires. This process helps new staff to navigate through the organizations policies and procedures. Another good method to help new staff is a formal mentorship, where a project member is assigned to guide a new member to help navigate and understand the organizational culture and procedures.

Once the team has been identified, the project manager develops the project organization chart which illustrates the structure that the project will use to manage the project team. The chart also helps identify the reporting relationships amongst the project team members and how the project integrates with the organization.

As the project starts the team is unclear about their roles and the direction of the projects, some new hires need to adapt to the new organization ways of doing things and understand its mission, vision and values, which may increase the level of frustrations that is often at the start of any new project as it tries to set a clear direction. Lack of availability of key personnel may increase the workload on the rest of the team members who are being asked to do more than what was originally planned.

Team management is not only limited to hiring and reassigning staff after the end of the project, it involves the careful planning to ensure the project has the right people at the right time doing the right things.

Despite the recent information and technology revolution in project management, people are still at the center of the project and they de-

termine the success or failure of a project. It's the project team that is involved in the definition of project goals and they are instrumental in planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and monitoring all project activities. The team is able to meet the project goals and objectives by the skillful use of interpersonal and organizational skills such as communication, delegation, decision-making and negotiation. In the challenging environments of development projects, people can be viewed either as problems and constraints or as solutions and opportunities.

### **A Team is not a Group**

Development projects, due to its complex nature, require a diverse mix of individuals who must be integrated into an effective project team; and this should not be confused with bringing together a group of individuals to work on the team. The difference between a group and a team is in how their level of work dynamics has an impact on the overall project performance. Gathering a number of individuals together in a group is the easy part; but it requires the use of special skills, new attitudes and a strong commitment to turn those individuals into an effective team.

A team approach is a distinctive way of working that harnesses the collective skills, strengths, and energy of team members. Teamwork leads to synergy and improves performance of everyone. A team is a group of people, but all groups do not qualify as teams. A team is a group of people who work interdependently, who are committed to common goals, and who produce high quality results.

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These series of articles focuses on concepts and practices related to development projects. It is our hope that the ideas and methodologies presented here prove useful to anyone who is engaged in managing projects in the broader development community, and helps bring sustainable benefits to the communities and beneficiaries who need it the most.

The Millennium Development Goals aim by 2015 to reverse the grinding poverty, hunger and disease affecting billions of people.

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