



Expert's Corner Paper 2018-02

Key Leadership Behavioral Attributes for Project Success

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The EPC Project business is a challenging market. Relative to other Project industries, the business margin and delivery pressures are high, and inflow of new generation employees is limited. The success measure of an EPC Project goes beyond delivering a onetime profit and expands into areas like human resource retention & growth, continual organization improvement, and repeat Client business.

This brief paper discusses how a successful EPC Project Leader contributes to the aforesaid expansive areas, and the relevant key essential behavioral attributes.

Introduction

Let's commence by clarifying some distinguishing concepts that will allow us to focus on Project Leader behaviors.

A supplementary glossary of some commonly used terms is attached to this paper.

Managerial v/s Leadership Approach

The work title 'Manager' is generically used in corporations illustrating someone that supervises other positions. Leadership is a paradigm approach, and a Leader may not necessarily have a managerial work title. Notionally think expression uses like 'natural born leader', 'self-made leader' (one does not hear natural born or self-made manager). The below table distinguishes a managerial from that of a leadership approach.

Managerial	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a tactical approach• Is skill based, and process focused• Reacts to resolve current problems• Manages a team of specialist• Ensures compliance to Company's best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a strategic approach• Is inspiration based, and performance focused• Pro-acts to solve tomorrow's problems• Guides a team of Managers and specialist• Ensures achievement of outcomes (within Company's best practices)

Business and Project Leadership

A business (corporation / Company) requires sound leadership for its success and viability i.e. vision, mission, strategy, tactic, execution, stakeholder management, entrepreneurship. Project Leaders conceptually share many characteristics with a Business Leader, but the difference lies in their approach related to the underlying nature of their economic system longevity. The below table exemplifies this.

Essential Behaviors of a Project Leader also develop with their career progression

Business Leader	Project Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a multi-tier strategic approach i.e. short / mid / long term• Achievements range from instant results to long term cultural effects• Optimizes effort in delivering existing business, and a mid-term transition into a future business sustaining model (integrates Project Leaders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic approach is fixed Project duration approach (weeks to few years)• Achievements are measured by instant or short-term Project performance• Effort is focused into achieving existing Project outcomes (under a Business Leader)

Essential Behavioral Attributes

The performance expectation of Projects is continually evolving and growing in line with the market changes. Similarly, the Project Leader success behaviors are also changing and cumulatively expanding. We discuss here some of the essential main behavioral attributes of a successful Project Leader.

One Team Approach & Performance Confidence

- Project Leaders achieve a comprehensive understanding of Project (scope terms & commerciality), operations, and all Stakeholders. They can close their eyes and visualize the entire Project coming together, and periodically validate and revise their visualization.
- Project Leaders appreciate the Project performance expectation, and maturely cascade it within their teams by conducting regular team status & follow up discussions (crisp performance management):
 - o synergistically deploy their team as an integrated project community – One Team
 - o influence performance and exude command & control - Performance Confidence

Stakeholder Relationships

- Project Leaders always know their Stakeholders (internal and external), and personally establish partnering relationships with key Stakeholders. Project Leaders build an association of mutual trust/integrity/friendship with their counterparts, whereby a constructive situational phone conversation can regularly occur.
- Project Leaders rigorously know their Stakeholder organization and key decision makers, along with Stakeholder drivers that should be considered during establishing the Project execution strategy. Project Leaders establish rhythmic key Stakeholder forums to continually discuss Project status and re-establish joint commitment to mutual Project success.

Agile Leadership

- Change is the quintessential constant, whereby performance is continually expected to be faster, cheaper, and better. On long term Projects, the Stakeholders & their expectations change in time. Whilst respecting the Project Contract scope of work, Project Leaders periodically test their past base plans (are old plans still relevant and best value) and be agile to modify them.
- Large projects have dozens of project team members spreading across global landscapes, where people changes are common. Project Leaders lead (v/s be impacted) through such changes, by continually evaluating the team skill growth, and championing job rotation of team members, promote them, and infuse fresh talent. Such an ecosystem shall allow for a dynamic high-performance team culture.

Contemporaneous Practices & Beyond

- Project Leaders are well versed and adopt contemporary project systems to extract efficient value from system data access and computing. Data digitization, cloud access, 4D holographic, robotic systems, blockchain, advanced work packaging, and many others are recent industry practices that have revolutionized information management and enhanced Project performance efficiencies.
- Project Leaders trust their teams to continually improve the deployed business systems, ensuring the 'Why' (use reasons) of systems is understood and achieved. These systems are to be used as a team lever and not as a blind dependency. In dynamic Project situations, the team is to feel empowered to operate beyond the limits such systems and create new ones.

Technology

Entrepreneurship

- Project Leaders entrepreneurially identify a White Space, and eagerly adopts new technologies addressing the emerging market requirements that supremely differentiates the Project performance from competitors (e.g. identify a market for integration of hydrocarbon reservoir to facility production in reducing CAPEX & OPEX efforts and offer a new solution).
- Such market mover Project Leaders influence and convince:
 - internal teams to disrupt their comfort zone & passionately adopt new technology
 - management to take on this new risk and the rewards (market dominance)
 - clients to be flexible and visualize the benefit (better/faster/higher value output)

Leaders of Tomorrow

- Project Leaders use their interaction time spent with their teams, as an investment process in intrinsically shaping their team's behavior. Such conscious efforts shall allow Project Leaders to build a team relationship of everlasting trust, loyalty, and high performance.
- As team members work with multiple Project leaders over few Projects, they formally learn from various Project Leaders and the Company (& industry) benefits from continual on the job leadership training and a robust successive pipeline of future Leaders.

Successful Project Leaders share common behavior attributes

Conclusion

The above essential behavioral attributes of a successful Project Leader can be seen from evolutionary career progression:

- First and foremost, all Project Leaders are expected to deliver Project Performance Certainty (basic project management).
- Next, Project Leaders activate their Leadership around brand ambassadorship, charisma and influence.
- Then comes the agile, humble and flexible Leadership style.
- This is followed by mature intellectual Leadership that goes beyond the business systems.
- Further, there is an activation of Leadership intuition to anticipate future market needs.
- Next, inspirational Leadership & wisdom activates. The King becomes the King Maker & more...

Contact

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Paper Supplement - Commonly Used Terms

Award - Client & supplier acceptance to proceed with the full project scope via a contractual agreement Contract, PO, LOI	Manager – manages resources to deliver a defined activity and outcome.
CAPEX – Capital Expenditure. Client’s investment to convert their non-producing assets into a revenue generation stream.	OPEX – Operating Expenditure. Client’s expenses in maintaining their revenue generating assets.
Client – The entity that awards the project (sets Work requirements & provides reimbursement)	Project – Coming together of a team (as a business unit) for delivering Work within a fixed duration, scope, and budget.
Company – The employee’s employment entity	Project Leader – a successful Leader accountable towards delivering the Project outcomes.
EPC – Project delivery that requires performance of engineering, procurement, and construction.	Project Organization – a business entity managing a portfolio of Projects that exist as a self-contained business unit operating under a standard Functional infrastructure
Execution - refers to the traditional project management effort after Award	Stakeholder – Parties of interest in a project including but not limited to Clients, Company management, Project team, others.
Function / Functional – Departments that provide skill, resources, and procedural infrastructure for projects to operate.	White Spaces – new market needs that exists but with limited solutions
King – Gender neutral term	Work – Delivery of products and or services in accordance with a project award.
Leader - one who inspirationally influences stakeholders in delivering the expected outcomes	



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