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PROJECT MANAGEMENT: QUALITIES OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MANAGER

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Abstract

A project manager is a person who is responsible solely for the management of a project. In certain building construction, the role and responsibility of the project manager is vital in ensuring the success of the project. This paper will provide a conceptual overview of project manager qualities with regards to project management as part of the development process in the construction industry. The objective of this paper is to give an insight into the project manager's roles and qualities in construction development process. Data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to project managers involved in the construction process in North Malaysia. Findings of this study were presented in an integrated tabulated table. Ultimately, this research hopes to contribute to a better understanding on the roles and qualities of a project manager in the construction industry.

Keywords: Project Manager, Liability, Project Management

1. Introduction

A project manager is the person who has the overall responsibility for the successful initiation, planning, design, execution, monitoring, controlling and closure of a project. The job title is used in construction, petrochemical, architecture, information technology and many different industries that produce products and services. Willis (1994) defines project manager as the name given to the role of project manager, whether project controller or project coordinator. The idea is that one person should have overall control and responsibility for coordinating the activities of the various consultants, sub contractors, processes and procedures for the full duration of the project. As for Walker (1989), the use of the title 'project manager' in the construction industry has deflected away from the process of the project management. Therefore it is important to distinguish between the title 'project manager' and the project management process. Someone called a 'project manager' is a person who is responsible in solving the solved management problem. But the project management process will still have to take place irrespective of the title of the people in the process.

2. Literature Review

A project manager can be appointed from anyone in the construction field who possess the knowledge and skills in managing the construction process irrespective of the basic background and qualification. In Malaysia, there is no regulatory body that has been developed for project manager. Therefore a project manager has to develop their own rules and regulations in managing and controlling a construction project into success. Projects are used as a means to achieve organizations strategic goals. It is obvious that global spending on projects is in the order of many billions of dollars annually; however, in spite of advances in the project management (PM) discipline, the common experience suggests that many projects fail (Williams, 2005).

There are a few liabilities and criteria that need to be possessed by project managers as pointed by Willis (1991). These criteria are very essential for project manager in order for him/her to face the obstacles in making the project a success.

Table 1: Project Manager's Criteria

Qualities of Project Manager	Explanation
Managerial Skills	Project manager must at least possess a basic knowledge of the principle and practice of management. He or she has to understand the theories exist and adopt the skills to particular situation. A managerial skill of a project manager is very important in order to meet the requirements and success of the project.
Good Personality	Project managers are born to be one and not made to be one, the qualities must already present in an individual plus with the proper education, training or even experience. Improvement in performance can be achieved thru encouragement in the right direction.
Leadership	A good leadership quality is essential for a project manager because in construction industry project manager often is the leader of the design team. In order to ensure that the project is carried out effectively, a project manager has to be open to receive complements and opinion from the various members, therefore with good leadership qualities, the project manager will be able to keep conflict to a minimum. A good project manager will not overshadow the other members of the design team. He/she must able to lead and motivates other.
Technical Knowledge	Apart from knowledge on the managerial skills, a project manager must at least have the knowledge in techniques that can be applied to his/her job in the construction industry. A project manager should possess great understanding of the construction process and working nature of the construction industry.
Delegation	Project manager must be able to delegate tasks and duties to others involved in the project as well as able to received advice from the other team members. A good delegation is essential to be made in order for the job to be completed according to the schedule. Delegation made must make the project team members feel they are able to provide a valid contribution to the project.
Decision Making	Good decision making is very important and essential to be made at all levels in the construction process. Making decision need a certain amount of courage because of the project complexity and number of consultants involved makes making decision difficult. Sticking to the decision made also a challenge that has to be faced by a project manager in all conditions. Project manager therefore has to have the ability to sense a situation and exercise correct judgment in the construction process.

Source: Willis, 1991

3. Methodology

This study collected data by hand questionnaire and personal interview from top management of Malaysian Construction Developers in North Malaysia using stratified sampling techniques. Sixty Malaysian Construction Developers registered with Real Estate Housing Development Association (REHDA) were chosen as the sample. The survey was conducted from December 2009 to February 2010. The project managers was chosen as the respondents because they are the most important person who planning, implement and enforcing management of a project. Data obtain from the questionnaire survey and interview were collected and analyzed. In order to obtain the return of responses from the respondents, the questionnaire has been designed to be simple and straightforward where it requires the respondents to select and tick their relevant answer(s) in regards with the majority of the questions. In the remaining questions the respondents were given the opportunity to view their opinion on the matter. The questionnaire was designed in five different sections. This paper will focus on the result and analysis of section A and B only.

Table 3: Project Manager

	<i>Description</i>	<i>Percentage of Respondents (%)</i>
Project Manager's Degree of Importance in Construction Project	Least Important	0%
	Important	40%
	Very Important	60%
Relevancy of a Project Manager As part of team.	Relevant	100%
	Not Relevant	0%

A project manager has a very important role in a project or more specifically in the development process because they provide an efficient planning; scheduling, organizing and coordinating the project so that the project can achieve its best performance in term of time, cost and quality. Therefore, based on the Table 3 above, majority of the respondents (60%) agreed that project managers play a very important roles in construction project, while (40%) of the agreed that it is important. All of the respondents (100%) agreed that a project manager is relevant as part of the design team.

Table 4: Project Manager's Criteria (Questionnaire Part B)

<i>No</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Scale 1 Most Important</i>	<i>Scale 2 Important</i>	<i>Scale 3 Average</i>	<i>Scale 4 Not Important</i>	<i>Scale 5 Least Important</i>	<i>Mode (frequency of accuracy)</i>	<i>Ranking</i>
1	Managerial Skills	40	14	5	2	1	1 (40)	1
2	Good Personality	12	14	19	10	7	3 (19)	6
3	Leadership	20	22	13	5	2	2 (22)	3
4	Technical Knowledge	32	20	6	4	0	1 (32)	2
5	Delegation	15	17	20	8	2	3 (20)	5
6	Decision Making	18	20	16	6	2	2 (20)	4

Table 4 shows result and analysis of a project manager's criteria with ranking based on the degree of importance from the respondent's perspective. Based on the table above, there are a few qualities that a project manager should possess in ensuring them to perform their best practice in the undertaken jobs. Majority of the respondents agreed that the most important qualities of a project manager are good managerial skills in managing a project, followed with technical knowledge. The third ranking of a project managers qualities is leadership, followed by decision making, appropriate delegation of works and last but not least a good personality.

Apart from the above qualities based on the literature review findings, respondents also indicated in the survey that a project manager must also possess a few additional qualities in order to achieve their highest level of performance in managing a project. Given below are the additional qualities of a project manager based on the respondents' opinion:

- a) Open Minded
- b) Clear Thinking

- c) Friendly
- d) Loyal

5. Conclusion

Crawford (2000) believes that the competence of project managers is clearly a vital factor in the success of projects, yet it remains a quality that is difficult to quantify. Competence of project management personnel is important as they are seen as having a major impact on project performance and hence on business performance. A project manager should possess the following principles/qualities in ensuring them to perform their best practice in the undertaken jobs. These qualities include a good managerial skills, technical knowledge, leadership, decision making, delegation and last but not least a good personality.

Therefore as a conclusion to this paper, it can be concluded that in a management of a project, project manager has responsibility for getting the particular project to be completed on time and on schedule within the specified cost and budget. He/she coordinates all matters relevant to the project and must possess broad authority over all elements of the project. Project manager's function as a leader to the design team and provides cohesive impacts that bind together the diverse elements into one solid and functional team that will bring the project to success.

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