Project Manager Competencies: Soft Skills are the Hard Part!

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Today is about…

Competencies…

• the measurable or observable knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors (KSABs) critical to successful job performance (US Gov)

• Three types:
  • Knowledge Competencies
  • Skill and Ability Competencies
  • Behavioral Competencies

• what people need to be successful in their jobs
Some adjustment to 'fit' with PM
PM Competencies…
From PMI Competency Development Framework

According to PMI, project manager competency consists of three separate dimensions:

**Knowledge** – what a project manager *knows* about the application of processes, tools and techniques in project activities

**Performance** – how a project manager *applies* project management knowledge to meet project requirements

**Personal** – how a project manager *behaves* when performing activities in a project environment

In order to be recognized as fully competent, a project manager must satisfy each of these three dimensions.
PM Competencies…

‘Hard’ Skills…

* Tools & Techniques…
  * ‘Vocabulary’
  * Scheduling
  * Work Breakdown
  * ‘Formalized’ Progress Tracking
  * Earned Value
  * Risk Identification & Management
  * Etc…

‘Soft’ Skills…

* Behavioral Stuff…

So – can we ‘define’ these Soft Skills ???
Soft Skills definition:

**What is:** Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects. Unlike hard skills, which are about a person's skill set and ability to perform a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are interpersonal and broadly applicable.
There is no ‘magic’ involved...
We just need to develop ‘Soft Skills’ COMPETENCIES
PM Competencies…

‘Hard’ Skills…

*Tools & Techniques…*
- ‘Vocabulary’
- Scheduling
- Work Breakdown
- ‘Formalized’ Progress Tracking
- Earned Value
- Risk Identification & Management
- Etc…

‘Soft’ Skills…

*Behavioral Stuff…*

So – what are these ‘Soft’ Skills ???

Any Opinions
CREATIVITY
Trust your gut
intuition
EMPATHY!
And…

With the shift away from ‘process’ and towards ‘behaviors’, the Manager needs to be good at this ‘behavioural’ stuff…

Working out what makes people ‘deliver’, involving links with motivation, commitment, trust… And other ‘soft’ skills…
Links with...

The Social Construction of Reality

- Differently constructed understandings based on our:
  - Values
  - Norms
  - Knowledge Base
  - Culture
  - Organizational Expectation   Etc…
Charles Handy’s ideas about a personal ‘portfolio’ of skills that are transferable.

‘Soft’ skills are essentially transferable to other industries and domains.
And of course… This all feeds into…

LEADERSHIP…
Because...

We use soft skills to:
- Persuade…
- Cajole…
- Encourage…
- Communicate…
- Convince…

AND

- To get ‘people’ to *deliver* for us !!!
Remember… ‘Delivery’ is…

- What PMs do…
- It is achieved by ‘people’…
- It is full of ‘unforeseen’ issues…
- It requires flexibility…

AND

- The requirements change…
Which leads us to…

New Skills required by the Manager
So – what are these skills ???

- **Creativity** – new ideas about ways to carry out tasks and activities
- **Intuition** – ‘following your ‘gut feeling’ for what will work in a given situation
- **Adaptation** – of previously successful actions and interventions to new situations
- **Innovation** – new and novel applications of creative ideas
- **Application of Prior Learning** – re-using good stuff that worked in the past (and avoiding stuff that didn’t)
Links with Improvised Work

These new skills are all linked with the theory that underpins Organizational improvisation – which experienced Managers use constantly
So... Are we talking about...

the Manager as...

Or Maybe...
Knowledge – what a project manager *knows* about the application of processes, tools and techniques in project activities

Performance – how a project manager *applies* project management knowledge to meet project requirements

Personal – how a project manager *behaves* when performing activities in a project environment

*Lets talk about this…*
Knowledge

• We can ‘learn’ this…
• It is what you are doing now…
• From
  • Books; Seminars; Webinars; etc.
  • Study – formal and informal
  • Earning Qualifications… PMP
• Also gained through ‘doing’ – ‘Experiential Learning’
Performance

• We are talking about ‘application’ of learning and knowledge here…

• For Project Managers this may be ‘domain specific’…
  • Different knowledge base for different project types
  • Construction PM is different to Software Development PM

• Experience is important here…
Personal

• This is about how you ‘Behave’ in your role…

• Personal Ethics, informed by:
  • Upbringing (Values; Norms of Behavior; Etc.)
  • Education
  • Culture
  • Personal knowledge base

• ‘Empathy With’ and ‘Respect For’ others…

• Emotional Intelligence…
I would like to finish with…

Competencies within ‘Changing’ Organizations…
Typical Organization

Traditional ‘Silo-based’ Organization
Overlapping roles in the Organization
Multi-skilled PMs are suited to this
Thank you...