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in FLUENCING

WITHOUT

LINE AUTHORITY

A KEY SKILL FOR VIRTUAL PROJECT MANAGERS

INCREASING GLOBALIZATION OF ORGANIZATIONS' WORKFORCES, OFF-SHORING AND OUTSOURCING HAVE LED TO A NEW REQUIREMENT FOR PROJECT MANAGERS. THEY NEED TO BE ABLE TO "DIP IN AND OUT" OF NUMEROUS INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS LEADING VIRTUAL TEAMS (SOME OF WHOM THEY MAY NOT HAVE LINE AUTHORITY OVER) TO DELIVER RESULTS ON TARGET AND ON BUDGET.

ALONG WITH THESE NEW CHALLENGES, COME NEW SKILLS THAT PROJECT MANAGERS MUST LEARN TO MANAGE VIRTUAL TEAMS ACROSS BOUNDARIES, CULTURES AND GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS. BUT IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THESE GLOBAL ROLES, THERE ARE FIVE KEY AREAS THAT NEED TO BE DEVELOPED:

1. NURTURING YOUR GLOBAL NETWORK

Networking is about talking, listening, developing relationships and building trust with people. When working on virtual projects, networking should be done as effectively as if you were face-to-face. In order to determine where and how to network, you must first identify goals and objectives and then pinpoint the right individuals to connect with.

Developing a global network offers important benefits such as:

- Making better decisions because you have more people to call upon for information and advice.
- Gaining more respect and credibility with clients and external stakeholders because you seem to know what's going on in their world.
- Getting things done quicker by knowing who to go to for help.
- Having your team members take comfort in feeling that you are well-connected and "in the know."

2. DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL POWER

It is not your actual power, but rather your perceived power, that counts. People will allow you to influence them if they believe that you have power. There are two sources of power available to tap into: one external and the other internal or personal power. Judi Marshall, a professor in sustainability leadership, defines personal power as, "A sense of personal self-worth; an individual valuing and having access to all their characteristics through an aware, but not necessarily pleased self-tolerance."

Influential people generate plenty of personal power. They are strong because they trust themselves. They hear others, but their behaviors and judgements are not dominated by a need to conform, to be liked, to lead or to manipulate others. They are spontaneous, honest, have high self-esteem and feel comfortable using power.

You may find that there are times when your personal sources of

FIVE WAYS TO EFFECTIVELY LEAD WITHOUT LINE AUTHORITY

Project managers need to be able to "dip in and out" of numerous international projects leading virtual teams, some of whom they may not have line authority over. There are five key areas that need to be developed in order to be effective in these roles:

- **Nurturing your global network:** Networking helps you make more informed decisions, gets things accomplished faster and allows you to stay connected.
- **Developing your personal power:** Boost your personal power by reducing stress, being decisive, setting clear goals and managing risk.
- **Stakeholder management:** Manage relationships with stakeholders in such a way that they behave the way you need them to for the project to be successful.
- **Influencing styles:** Understand the four different influencing styles to effectively work with others.
- **Political savvy/commercial acumen:** Act in the best interests of the business, even if that means sacrificing your own goals.

energy abandon you. Once you become aware of what it is, or who it is, that is depowering you, the remedial action is relatively easy to take. Some suggestions on how to boost your personal power supply include:

- Reducing negative stress
- Making choices - indecision drains you of energy
- Having clear goals - minimizing ambiguity and role conflict
- Thinking positively about yourself
- Managing risks with confidence

3. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

> IT IS NOT YOUR ACTUAL POWER, BUT RATHER YOUR PERCEIVED POWER, THAT COUNTS.

Stakeholder analysis is a technique for identifying sources of resistance in advance. Stakeholders are all those individuals and groups, both internal and external to the organization, who have an interest in the operations of an organization. The stakeholders in your project are those who might, rightly or wrongly, perceive themselves to be affected by it.

Successful project management requires that all stakeholders are identified and taken into account in some way. A major component in an influencing strategy should be to manage relationships with stakeholders in such a way that they behave in the way you need them to for the project to be successful. In particular, this means mobilizing support where it is needed and overcoming or

removing resistance where it can be expected. Things go wrong when key stakeholders are ignored and not involved in the communication process or are needlessly alienated.

4. INFLUENCING STYLES

When managing projects, it is important to be able to influence others, whether you have line authority over them or not. To do this effectively, you must be aware of different influencing styles and choose the best style(s) to use at different stages in your communication strategy. Although there are a number of categories for influencing styles, there are four key types that can be identified:

Rewards and punishment
This style is characterized by the use of rewards and punishments to control the behavior of others. This may take the form of offering incentives for compliance and of highlighting risks relating to non-compliance. It may involve the use of naked power, or more indirect and veiled pressures may be exerted through the possession of status, prestige and formal authority. There is liberal use of praise and criticism, approval and disapproval, and of moralistic judgements of right and wrong.

Participation and trust
The efficacy of this style depends on involving others in decision-making or problem-solving processes. When they can be induced to take an active part in making a decision, their commitment to carry it out is increased, and the amount of follow-up and supervision required is markedly reduced. They actively contribute their energy to the work, and the amount of effort required from the influencer is reduced. Participation and trust involves drawing others in, with more "pulling" rather than "pushing."

Common vision
Common vision is a strategy for identifying and articulating a common or shared vision of what the future of an organization, group or activity could be, and for strengthening members' beliefs that the desired outcomes can be achieved through their individual and collective efforts. The common vision style involves mobilizing the energy and resources of others through appeals to their hopes, values and aspirations. It also works through activating the feelings of strength and confidence that are generated by being one of a larger group that shares a common purpose.

Assertive persuasion
This style is characterized by the use of the power of logic, facts and opinions to persuade others.

Individuals who use this style are forward with ideas, proposals and suggestions about what to do and how to do it. They are not afraid to stick their necks out and submit their ideas to the test of others' reactions. They are ingenious in marshalling evidence and arguments in support of the proposals they support, and in rebuttal to those with which they disagree. They are persistent and energetic in persuading others. They often do not listen very well to the points others raise, or they listen only to find weaknesses in the other's position.

5.) POLITICAL SAVVY

There is a high positive correlation between how others rank a person's credibility and how they rank their political savvy. Author Joel de Luca defines political savvy as, "Ethically building a critical mass of support for an idea you care about."

Successful project managers respect everyone's right to have their own views about organizational issues and they act to create innovative ways to combine and satisfy apparently opposed interests (i.e., to build partnerships; and to align multiple and diverse stakeholders with the best interests of their organization as a whole). They don't steamroll their way to achieve acquiescence; rather they constantly search for common ground and winning solutions.

While the charismatic, highly visible project leader can be successful, there is also a need for many more "low profile" people at all levels in an organization. The common thread among successful project managers is their political savvy, rather than charisma or a magnetic personality.

Organizational politics often gets a bad press because most people only see how manipulative people operate. The most effective project managers operate with integrity, using their political savvy to build alliances that work for the greater good of the business, not for personal gain. Everyone will encounter ethical dilemmas at some stage in their career, particularly when there is a lot of change. The best project managers don't shy away from such dilemmas but they always take the ethical option, and act in the best interests of the business even if that means sacrificing their own goals.

> **THE MOST EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGERS OPERATE WITH INTEGRITY, USING THEIR POLITICAL SAVVY TO BUILD ALLIANCES THAT WORK FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF THE BUSINESS.**

SUMMARY

In our volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world, developing these five areas will not only improve your ability to project manage remote teams, but will help you become a more self-aware and influential leader. However, these areas do not necessarily have to be developed before managing virtual teams, but by being conscious of these areas when working on your next project and stepping out of your comfort zone, you will undoubtedly expedite your development by learning on the job. ⏱

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"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader" -John Adams

IDENTIFYING YOUR INFLUENCING STYLE

When looking to use a range of influencing styles, it is important to understand your preferred or dominant influencing style and how it may differ from the styles of other individuals. The four influencing style categories that you can fit into are:

- **Rewards and punishments:** Offering incentives for compliance and highlighting risks relating to non-compliance.

- **Participation and trust:** Involving others in decision-making or problem-solving processes.

- **Common vision:** Mobilizing the energy and resources of others through appeals to their hopes, values and aspirations.

- **Assertive persuasion:** Using the power of logic, facts and opinions to persuade others.