

Everyone's Smart University

Project (Spring 2021)

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PROJECT LEADERSHIP

Instructions:

- ☐ آخر موعد للتسليم هو يوم الخميس 2021-05-20 في تمام الساعة ٩ مساءً.
- ☐ الإجابة متاحة باللغة الإنجليزية أو اللغة العربية مع مراعاة أن تكون المصطلحات العلمية باللغة الانجليزية.
- ☐ يتم تسليم المشروع في صيغة ملف pdf مع الالتزام بنموذج الجامعة ولن تقبل أي مستندات أخرى.
- ☐ يجب مراعاة أقسام البحث الرئيسية (مقدمة Introduction، دراسات علمية سابقة Literature Review، طريقة البحث Methodology، النتائج والمناقشة Results and Discussion، وأخيراً المراجع References. وان كان هناك ملحقات Appendices يتم إضافتها)
- ☐ يجب الالتزام بـ Theme موحد كما يلي:
 - حجم الخط 12.
 - نوع الخط Arial.
 - لون الخط أسود.
 - المسافة بين الأسطر 1.5 line spacing.
 - عدد صفحات البحث (لا تقل عن ثلاث صفحات ولا تزيد عن ستة صفحات).

Instructor's Name: **Dr. Sara Adel**

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS ON PROJECT SUCCESS IN **YOUR ORGANIZATION**: A CASE OF YOUR OWN.

Different leadership styles are the key factor in the success of any project. Project Leaders are responsible and accountable for the success/failure of the project. There are numerous responsibilities that are assigned to a Project Leader during the leadership journey.

YOUR MISSION:

Your research/project must provide an overview of information and knowledge in a corporate environment with an underlying theme of **defining leadership styles within applying the hard and soft skills** for that style needed by the leader to ensure successful project delivery in your organization. (You are required to demonstrate your understanding of the relevant body of works to real-life business research).

Choose one only of the following project leadership skills using the tools that we learned during the project leadership course; starting from identifying and assess the case till executing the project.

- Prioritization (Using tools for Estimation – Scheduling – Tracking – prioritizing stakeholders).
- Team management (Using Team structures – Team development stages – Team needs).
- Embracing Accountability (Using RASCI)
- Conflict resolution (Using the Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument).
- Motivation (Using one theory of motivation – Types of motivators).
- Communication in the project.
- Influencing (Using different sources of LEADER POWER).

What you have to do:

Your project task requires the preparation of a full project proposal that should contain the following components:

- **Introduction:** A detailed statement of the problem, research aim, and objectives that you would like to investigate and discuss. **(2 points)**

- **Literature Review and Conceptual framework:** An analysis of the literature relevant to the research topic that will give you the conceptual basis for conducting your research from the previous studies. **(2 points)**
- **Methodology:** Based on the conceptual framework, research aim(s), and objectives, you need to provide a detailed description of the data collection tools, data sources. **(2 points)**
- **Results and Discussion:** Description about the main findings of a research, outline your thoughts to defend your research and to emphasize the significance of it. **(4 points)**
- **References:** Lists all the resources you've used in your project, and your refereed journal articles as well. **(2 points)**
- **Appendices (If it is available in your study):** Any supplementary material you need to add. (Optional)

[Write the names of the chapters/sections of your research/ project and briefly discuss what you will write in those chapters/sections] .

Best of luck...

Dr. Sara Adel

تأثير مهارات القيادة على نجاح المشروع في مؤسستك: حالة عملية خاصة بالطالب.

أساليب القيادة المختلفة هي العامل الرئيسي في نجاح أي مشروع. قادة المشروع مسؤولون عن نجاح / فشل المشروع. وهناك العديد من المسؤوليات الموكلة لقائد المشروع خلال رحلة القيادة.

مهمتك:

يجب أن يوفر بحثك لمحة عامة عن المعلومات والمعرفة في بيئة المؤسسة الخاصة بك وهي موضع الدراسة مع تحديد أنماط القيادة في إطار تطبيق المهارات الخاصة بالقائد والمناسبة لهذا النمط الذي يحتاجه القائد لضمان تسليم مشروع ناجح في المؤسسة. (أنت مطالب بإثبات فهمك لما تم دراسته وتطبيقه بالأبحاث الواقعية في مؤسستك).

اختر واحدة فقط من مهارات قيادة المشروع التالية باستخدام الأدوات التي تعلمناها خلال مقرر القيادة في المشاريع.

- Prioritization (Estimation – Scheduling – Tracking – prioritizing stakeholders).
- Team management (Team structures – Team development stages – Team needs).
- Embracing Accountability (RASCI)
- Conflict resolution (The Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument).
- Motivation (Using one theory of motivation – Types of motivators).
- Communication in the project.
- Influencing (Using different source of power).

ما عليك القيام به:

تتطلب مهمة مشروعك إعداد مقترح مشروع كامل يجب أن يحتوي على المكونات التالية:

- مقدمة: بيان تفصيلي للمشكلة محل الدراسة، تحديد هدف البحث والأهداف التي ترغب في التحقيق فيها ومناقشتها من خلاله.
- دراسات علمية سابقة: تحليل الأدبيات والدراسات السابقة ذات الصلة بموضوع البحث والتي ستساعدك في مجال الدراسة لإجراء هذا البحث.
- المنهجية وطريقة البحث: بناءً على أهداف البحث، تحتاج إلى تقديم وصف تفصيلي لأساليب وأدوات جمع البيانات ومصادر البيانات والأساليب / الأدوات التي ستستخدمها.
- النتائج ووصف المناقشة حول النتائج الرئيسية للبحث: شرح مفصل للمشكلة محل الدراسة.
- المراجع: تسرد جميع المصادر التي استخدمتها في مشروعك، ومنها مقالات المجلات المحكمة أو المواقع المستخدمة للبحث.
- الملحقات (إذا كانت متوفرة في دراستك): أي مواد تكميلية تحتاج إلى إضافتها. (اختياري).

{اكتب أسماء فصول وأقسام (البحث / المشروع) الخاص بك، وناقش بإيجاز ما ستكتبه في كل قسم}.

كل التوفيق لكم جميعاً.....

Dr. Sara Adel

Managing communications effectively and efficiently

Introduction

While we realize the importance of regular and sufficient communications for our stakeholders – and the desire to communicate to them as they would like us to do so – we also need to be practical. One of our goals as project managers is to limit the ways we communicate with our stakeholders – preferably communicating in a way that works best for us given everything else we need to do on the project. We do this because we just don't have the time to do otherwise. However, what works best for us does not necessarily work best for our stakeholders. We all absorb information differently. Some of us are more visual than others and want to see charts and graphs; other prefer to listen to others communicate the information to them through a presentation or in a meeting; and yet others want information prior to review and analyze on their own and then to speak with someone about what they have read. When we present information in just one or two ways to our stakeholders, we engage some and not others.

Then of course once a project becomes more complex, our communications must be more detailed to ensure that we reach all the individuals with whom we must communicate to be successful. When we plan our communications upfront, we enable for:

- Improving the effectiveness of communications overall, including frequency and quality
- Keeping individuals engaged in the initiative through open communications
- Getting stakeholders involved in communications through enabling for more effective two-way conversations

On more complex projects, as a project manager I don't want to be the only one communicating with stakeholders. I want to enable for other project team members to be involved in stakeholder communications based on their expertise on components of

the project. This doesn't mean as a project manager we relinquish control of communications, rather we still manage the overall communications but enable for others to be involved. For example, if the project has stakeholders located in remote office locations, ideally a project team member in or close to that location will be responsible for communications with those stakeholders. It is easier to engage stakeholders located remotely when there is someone close by with whom they might communicate personally and reach out to with questions or concerns.

And, as a best practice, I want to check in with stakeholders to ensure communications about the project meet their needs (and not just my own needs as the project manager). This may be done through sending a brief email or survey that asks three questions:

1. What is working in how we communicate with you about the project?
2. What is not working or is not effective in our communications?
3. Where can we improve our communications with you?

For more complex projects that require significant stakeholder buy-in and commitment, I may ask these questions on a bi-monthly basis; for smaller initiatives I may ask just once mid-way through the project. Timing is dependent on your project and your stakeholders.

Poor Communications and the Impact on Our Projects

When we do a poor job communicating with our stakeholders or even with our project team, we have a tremendous impact on the success of our project. Poor communications results in:

Poor Team Communications	Poor Stakeholder Communications
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• Misunderstanding around project goals and objectives • Missed deadlines • Conflicts between team members • Individual team members moving in different directions • Decreased productivity on the project leading to increased timelines and going over budget • Lack of commitment on the part of project team members in accomplishing the work of the project	• Lack of or limited buy-in and commitment to the project • Misunderstanding around stakeholder expectations on what is considered project success • Conflicts between the project team and stakeholders, or between stakeholder groups • Stakeholders who may actively work against the project being accomplished • Failed projects
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Sometimes poor communications are due to feeling overwhelmed by the project or are unable to effectively manage a conflict. When we have a stakeholder who is a frequent complainer or finds fault in all we do in managing the project, we may lean toward avoiding the individual. It certainly is easier on us if we don't have to engage with that stakeholder outside of our regular communications about the project. However, when we don't engage them and respond to their issues/complaints, we now have a disengaged stakeholder who can cause damage to the project through being non-responsive or communicating negatively about the project to others.

Poor communications are also reflected in over-communicating to stakeholders. If we are sending out too many emails about the project or setting up too frequent stakeholder meetings, we will lose the attention and engagement of our stakeholders. There needs to be a fine balance between too much and too little communications. To avoid the imbalance, work with your project team and key stakeholders to determine:

- Who needs to know what information?
- How often must that information be communicated/shared?

- By what means will information be communicated/shared?

Your communication plan, discussed later in this paper, will focus on delineating your responses to these three simple questions.

The Impact of Cultural Differences on Communications

Communication across cultural boundaries adds an element of complexity and challenge in our communications on projects. We need to consider the best ways to communicate with others dependent on a number of factors such as their attitudes toward hierarchy, their communication styles with others, ability to understand our language and how they might interpret and process what we tell them in our communications. Nonverbal behaviors are often the most challenging because individuals of different cultural backgrounds may react differently to our body movements, facial expressions, eye movements, and the tone of our voice. For example, in the United States there is a tendency to be very direct in communications and our approach with others; however, in other cultures, such as certain parts of Asia, there is a tendency to be more indirect and soft-spoken (Brislin, 2008, p. 34). As another example, we might use hand gestures to make our point; however, in some parts of Asia, exaggerated hand gestures or dramatic facial expressions are distracting and considered rude. Or, we might ask stakeholders if they have questions about the project, and hearing none assume everyone is on board and understands what is going to happen and where they are needed. Only to learn that for the culture with which we were interacting, asking questions is not a common practice as it is seen as critical of the speaker or shows weakness on the part of the questioner. There are a number of resources (some listed in the references in this paper) to help us understand how others communicate and how they expected to be communicated with. Understanding a variety of cultures enables us to more effectively tailor our communications to those individuals.

When you need to communicate across boundaries with stakeholders who may speak limited English, try the following best practices:

- Keep the number of topics to be discussed in one meeting at a minimum, be aware of information overload
- In your presentation use visuals and charts to help communicate your ideas
- Use simple terminology – don't use slang, jargon or terms that may not be universally understood
- Speak clearly and ask specific questions rather than “yes,” “no,” or “do you understand”
- Be aware of nonverbal cues from stakeholders that may indicate a lack of understanding

Barriers to effective stakeholder communications are a combination of cultural biases (our impressions of others), a lack of awareness of cultural differences, language differences, ethnocentrism and poor listening skills (Brislin, 2008). When we learn how to get past these barriers and communicate inclusively, we develop a better understanding of how stakeholders from different cultures than our own hear and process what we say in our communications to them.

Communication Planning Best Practices

When developing your project communication plan, consider having two plans – one a simple overview plan of your communications and the other a more detailed communication plan. Certainly for smaller, less complex projects a simple overview plan may be effective and sufficient. The goal of any communication planning is to establish communication with stakeholders that manage their perceptions of the project – which means supporting and championing the project.

Develop your communication plan in conjunction with your project team, not by yourself. Focus your plan on the communication needs of the stakeholders (consider the three questions discussed earlier in this paper). My communications prior to the project start are likely quite different from communications once the project has launched, throughout the project and again at the end. And certainly communications may change

if challenges arise that must be addressed with stakeholder involvement. Initial communications about the project should focus on socializing the project with stakeholders. Discuss the project in detail, answer any questions and ask for stakeholder support on the project overall. Discuss how you will communicate about the project as it progresses. This communication should be done prior to any communications around specific needs from stakeholders. Use this first communication – ideally in person or in a virtual environment (videoconference call) to establish a rapport with stakeholders. Too often project managers forget this essential initial communication and rather jump into discussing what they need from the stakeholders and by when, without really discussing the project in detail. Consider how you might feel if you are walking down the hallway and get pulled aside by someone who tells you they need you to do something by a certain date to benefit them. You are not as engaged or motivated to do so.

The challenge for any project manager is determining who needs to know what and when. It is essential to balance the distribution of information amongst stakeholders. Some will want to be, or need to be, communicated with more than others. Some will prefer email updates, others will prefer face-to-face meetings. Our goal as project managers is to reach all of our stakeholders to keep them engaged and committed to the project while reducing the amount of time we are spent communicating with stakeholders. Of importance here is understanding the stakeholders with whom you are communicating. To do this, you need to establish relationships with your stakeholders. Once you get to know them, you are better able to communicate and get your message across because you understand how you need to communicate with them to be effective, efficient and get your message across in as limited a time as possible. Building relationships with your stakeholders also helps to build trust between you, them and your project team – and trust around the project. Trust is a key component of effective communications with others (Arredondo, 2000). Stakeholders who feel they can trust you are more apt to share information with you and be engaged in the project. They are more apt to provide you what is needed for you to accomplish the goals of the project – whether that is completing tasks, providing information, answering your questions or being a champion for the project. When we don't have trust between the

project manager, project team and the stakeholder group, we focus on our differences rather than areas where we may be in agreement.

When building your communication plan, consider your stakeholders and your relationship with them. Do you know who they are? Have you worked with them previously and if so, how was the interaction? Have you ever interacted with them outside of needing something from them or them needing something from you? If you answer “no” to these questions, you need to begin to build a relationship with your stakeholders in order to enable for effective communications with them. If you have worked with them before but have had poor interactions with them, consider that you need to start from the beginning in re-building a relationship with them before you can effectively engage them in the project. Yes, this takes time and effort on your part. However, the best project managers have worked to establish relationships throughout the organization and with potential stakeholders before they need those relationships. If you do not have these relationships in place, your first communication plan must be focused around reaching out to stakeholders to build relationships and begin to build trust.

Simple Communication Plan Components

Your simple communication plan should capture the following elements:

- With whom you will communicate (e.g., leadership team)
- What will be communicated (e.g., status report on project)
- When you will communicate (e.g., monthly)
- How you will communicate (e.g., at the leadership meeting)
- Format for your communications (e.g., presentation at the meeting)

The simple communication plan enables for a high-level overview of your communications with stakeholders. By focusing on stakeholder groups (e.g., leadership team), it enables for more effective and efficient communications. Unless there is a pressing reason to do so, I want to keep my stakeholders grouped for communications

rather than communicating with every single individual stakeholder. This enables me to better control and manage my communications overall and reduce the time I need to spend in communications.

Detailed Communication Plan Components

Your detailed communication plan should include much more information about your stakeholders and your communications to stakeholders, including guidelines for distributing information about the project and how information will be gathered from stakeholders.

Capture the following elements in more detailed communication plans:

- List of all stakeholders (individual names), including their responsibility on the project and contact information (along with time zone differences where they exist)
- Stakeholder information requirements by group and/or individual
- Requirements for how information will be distributed to stakeholders including:
 - What will be communicated (e.g., status report, project budget)
 - Due dates for communications
 - With whom you are communicating (e.g., stakeholder group and/or individual)
 - Person on the team responsible for the communication component
 - How you will distribute the information (e.g., email, presentation, via a portal)
- Requirements for how information will be gathered and reported on, including:
 - What information is needed from stakeholders (e.g., information on the budget, scope of project)
 - Team member responsible for collecting and reporting on the information
 - Stakeholder responsible for communicating/sharing the information

- Due dates
- Guidelines for gathering and distributing information
 - How project information will be stored
 - Approved communications methods and technologies

In addition to using detailed communication plans for complex projects, they are often of value when managing a variety of stakeholders who must contribute significantly to the project and/or managing stakeholders who are very detail oriented in their approach to the project.

Communication plans must be updated on a regular basis. As the project changes and progresses, your project communications will need to change. You may also identify new stakeholders to whom you must communicate in a way differently from your current stakeholders.

Communication Modes and Styles

There are a variety of communication modes and styles. Modes are of particular importance depending on your stakeholder audience, what you are communicating and how urgent the communication is to the project. Styles are based on our own preference for communicating and receiving communications.

Individuals communicate using a variety of communication styles along a continuum (Arredondo, 2000, p. 53) that includes passive at one end – expressive in the middle – aggressive at the other end. There is also the possibility of a passive-aggressive communicator who moves rapidly from one end of the continuum to the other. The well-balance communicator is “expressive” (Arredondo, 2000, p. 55). As a project manager you want to be “expressive” in your communications. Project managers who are expressive in their communications are better able to engage stakeholders and keep them committed throughout the project initiative. They communicate effectively by enabling for a two-way conversation with stakeholders. They engage their stakeholders

through effective listening skills, communicating in a way that is non-confrontational but candid so as to establish trust and enabling for better conversations overall.

When communicating with a wide audience, especially on complex projects with stakeholders that come from a variety of locations, use a variety of modes or channels to communicate. Certainly the more complex the project, the more modes will be used to capture the greatest number of stakeholders in a way that works for them. For simpler projects, communications via a few meetings and/or via email may suffice.

Modes, or channels, for communicating might include:

- One-on-one meetings/casual conversations in the hallway or in the cafe for those who are local to you
- Small group or department meetings
- All-staff meetings
- Lunch and learns or before or after hours get-togethers
- Internal website or portal established specifically for the project
- Email
- Chat technology
- Project newsletters
- Virtual meetings
- Conference calls/videoconference calls

The more methods used to communicate about the project, the more likely I am to engage stakeholders and keep them engaged. As a best practice, I make the business case to have one face-to-face stakeholder meeting prior to the start of the project and, ideally, one other meeting at the end of the project. In my first communication with stakeholders, I share the variety of modes I will use to communicate (e.g., bi-weekly emails, monthly stakeholder meetings, etc.) and ask individuals if there are particular ways that will work better for them than others. This is particularly important when

working with stakeholders from a variety of countries or who are remote/virtual stakeholders.

Communication for Virtual Teams

When working with virtual teams – as most project managers are doing these days – you want to be sure to set up essential processes and procedures for effective communications early on for the team. Similar to the need to manage stakeholder communications to enable for more efficient and effective communications, you must do the same with your project team. Otherwise, you risk spending far too much time on communications with and between the team and neglecting your stakeholders and/or your project.

Involve the team in planning communications and processes and procedures for communicating. When involved, team members are more apt to follow the rules and to be engaged in communications.

When developing your communication plan for communications with and between virtual team members, include these components:

- What needs to be communicated and when
- How communications will flow – from whom to whom on the team
- What communication modes/channels will be used for communications
- Communication response times (e.g., four hours for emails, two hours for emergencies, etc. – keeping in mind time zone differences, holidays and vacation time)
- Communication status (e.g., priority, important, routine, information only, etc. – include a status in the subject line of each message – especially for complex projects that require frequent communications, e.g., PRIORITY: Updated Project Plan)
- Timing of regular communications (e.g., weekly, bi-weekly)

It is also important to designate modes for specific communications. For example, the team may choose to use email for “need to know” information, instant messaging for emergencies or a collaboration portal to share documents.

As with stakeholder communication plans, team communication plans must be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure they are still effective and make sense. Changes to the project, new team members joining the team or others leaving the team, new stakeholders, etc. all impact the communication plan.

Effective Use of Technology to Communicate in Global Environments

Use technology to enable for more effective and efficient communications with stakeholders and others. When selecting an appropriate technology, consider challenges such as:

- Lack of specific technology in a particular country or lack of sufficient access to that technology
- Lack of or limited knowledge of the technology; unsure how to use it
- Using the wrong technology to accomplish a task
- Overuse of technology thereby reducing more personal communications

Consider any of the following tools/technology to effectively communicate in a global environment:

- Use of Skype, Webex, NetMeeting or other virtual meetings tools that include virtual white boards
- Use of collaboration portals (Microsoft SharePoint, GoogleDocs) or intranet sites
- Instant messaging/texting
- Email
- Telephone/audio or video conferencing

Using a variety of methods enables for increased engagement of a variety of stakeholders – including simpler (phone call or email) to more complex methods (collaboration portal) in order to meet a variety of needs and comfort levels with the technology. As a best practice, for more complex projects, provide stakeholders and team members with a hand out describing technology to be used, how it will be used, how to access it and any other relevant information to increase usage of the tool and comfort levels.

Be sure to use the appropriate tool/technology for the appropriate situation (Derosa & Lepsinger, 2010, p. 143). For example, for sharing information with stakeholders or getting answers to questions on the project, you might use teleconferencing, email, virtual meetings or a collaboration site. However, if you want to brainstorm with stakeholders to resolve a problem or determine whether to expand project scope, you would want to use virtual meetings or collaboration site to collaborate as conference calls or emails will not be very effective.

A collaboration portal is a great tool to have a “one-stop shop” for all things related to the project. Use of a collaboration portal might reduce the amount of communications with stakeholders as they can utilize the portal for:

- Status reports
- Project schedule/timeline
- Project documentation/information
- Access to a team member directory
- A forum to ask questions about the project or to log issues/concerns

The more complex your project, the more effectively you can manage your communications with stakeholders through the use of a portal solution. You might utilize the portal to share all communications about the project and eliminate the need for excessive face-to-face, virtual or audio conference meetings. In such situations, set up a few initial meetings with the stakeholders then transition them to using the portal for future standard communications, such as status reporting on the project. If you take this

approach however, be sure to hold a stakeholder meeting at least occasionally – whether bi-monthly or quarterly for longer projects and hold a last meeting to wrap up the project (your lessons learned meeting). Of course, should decisions need to be made, or challenges arise on the project, or extraordinary circumstances occur, reinstate meetings with stakeholders to ensure continued engagement and involvement rather than rely on the portal for these communications.

Results and Discussions:

If we don't plan for communications with stakeholders early on in the project, we run the risk of either spending too little time on communications so as to disengage our stakeholders or spending so much time being inefficient in our communications that we are unable to effectively manage our project. Planning for communications means that we take the time to understand our stakeholders and how they want to be communicated with so that we engage them in the project and get what we need to be effective in meeting the goals of the project.

When working with virtual stakeholders with a variety of cultural backgrounds, an understanding of their communication needs and expectations is essential for success. Cultural differences can have a negative impact on our project communications when we believe we can simply communicate as we always do without taking into consideration the needs of others. Taking the time to build relationships and understand your stakeholders enables for improved communications.

Use a variety of communication modes to capture the greatest number of stakeholders – keeping them engaged and communicating in a way that works for them. The use of technology enables for better control of communications -especially on complex global projects.

As a best practice, take time upfront before the project officially starts, to develop your communication plan and outline the ways and tools to be used for communications. Validate this information with your stakeholders to be sure it will meet their needs.

The more effectively you communicate with your stakeholders, the more engaged and committed they will be to the project enabling for increased project success.

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