PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS FOR PROJECT SUCCESS

How Your Personality Affects Your Projects and What You Can Do About It
AGENDA

- Motivation
- Personality Dimensions
  - Communication Apprehension
  - Innovativeness
  - Self-Monitoring
  - Conflict Management
  - Change Initiation
  - Personality Type
- What to do about it
MOTIVATION
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• Stems from an article by Creasy and Anantatmula in the December 2013 *Project Management Journal* titled “From Every Direction—How Personality Traits and Dimensions of Project Managers Can Conceptually Affect Project Success”

• Synthesized existing research into a larger theory describing how a project manager’s personality affects the likelihood of project success

PERSONALITY DIMENSIONS
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Communication Apprehension
  Innovativeness
  Self-Monitoring
Conflict Management
  Change Initiation
  Personality Type

Project Success

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION
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- Anxiety from oral communication
- Two dimensions:
  - Trait-like
  - State
- Four contexts:
  - Group
  - Meeting
  - Dyadic
  - Public

You are having a project team meeting to discuss a recent issue on your project. You have the lead engineers and SMEs present to discuss how to address this issue.

• How comfortable are you participating in this group discussion?
• Would you be relaxed and calm or nervous when answering questions from your team and participating in the dialogue?
INNOVATIVENESS
INNOVATIVENESS

- Project team’s innovation climate
- Innovative teams need:
  - Openness to innovative ideas
  - Adoption of innovative ideas
- More openness to innovation leads to higher likelihoods of project success

You are in the planning phase for your project. One of your newer team members recommends changing to an emerging, innovative project repository tool because of how well it worked on a previous project at a different organization. Switching tools now would be costly in terms of time and money, but the project is young enough that it is feasible.

• What is your reaction to this suggestion?
• If you decide to consider using this tool, what are your next steps?
SELF-MONITORING

- Refers to a project manager’s surface acting variability
- High self-monitoring shows a higher level of surface acting variability
- Higher self-monitoring leads to a lower likelihood of project success

You are being assigned to a new project with a sponsor that is notoriously difficult to work with. You realize that one of your early tasks will be to develop a positive working relationship with that sponsor.

• How would you approach this relationship?

• Would you change anything about how you act or behave in meetings to address the uniqueness of this sponsor?
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
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- Approach to and experience with conflict
- Conflict derives from three properties:
  - Disagreement
  - Interference
  - Negative emotion
- Greater abilities to handle conflict lead to higher likelihoods of project success

Your project is about halfway through execution. You are noticing some resistance among your team members. They think you are preventing them from implementing the system the way they want. They indicate they are frustrated with how you are managing the project.

• How do you handle this conflict?
• What steps can you take to prevent this type of conflict from occurring again on your project?
CHANGE INITIATION
• Ability to enact organizational change
• Requires connections within the organization and ability to use those connections
• Greater abilities to create organizational change lead to a higher likelihood of project success

Your project just delivered. As part of the closeout activities, you need to assess how well the organization adopted the change required by the project. You notice that people are using the new system, but they are not changing their processes enough to truly benefit from all the new capability your team delivered.

- What can you do now to foster the organizational change required for the system you just delivered?
- What should you change about your approach next time?
PERSONALITY TYPE
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- Certain Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) types correlate with the likelihood of project success.
- One study found these MBTI types most closely aligned with project leadership competencies:
  - INTJ
  - ESTJ
  - ENTJ

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT
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• Learn your strengths and weaknesses in these areas:
  • Maximize your opportunities to use your strengths on your projects
  • Seek development opportunities to improve your weak areas
• Identify project team members and stakeholders with strengths in one or more of these personality dimensions that can help to fill your gaps
To continue the discussion, send me an email or give me a call:

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