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**A project manager's important
professional skills**

Kazakhstani companies face international competition and necessity to manage projects with success. The project is successful if effectively managed. A project manager is in charge of all the aspects of the project and responsible for achieving goals and objectives of any project. To perform successfully a project manager has to communicate effectively with a wide variety of stakeholders. From this point of view so-called "soft skills" are more important than "hard" ones because a project manager's authority may be frustrated by siloing effects. A project manager needs two kinds of skills: the management-related skills (hard) and interpersonal ones (soft). To lead a project to success, a project manager must be able to use interpersonal skills with ease. People are the central part of project management, not the procedures and techniques. Procedures and techniques are merely tools that help people make their projects successful. Soft skills deal with human factor issues and, until recently, have been less discussed in project management literature.

Key words: project, project management, project manager, soft and hard skills, siloing effects, EQ (emotional quotient), stakeholders, interpersonal skills.

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**Жобалық менеджердің
маңызды кәсіби дағдысы
туралы сұрақтарға**

Қазақстандық компаниялар халықаралық бәсекелестікпен ұшырасқанда, жобаларды тиімді басқаруы тиіс. Егер жобаларды тиімді басқарса, табысты болады. Жобалық менеджер жобаның барлық аспектілеріне, мақсаттары мен міндеттеріне қол жеткізу үшін жауапты. Тиімді басқару үшін жобалық менеджер стейкхолдерлермен қатар коммуницирленуі қажет. Осы көзқарастан «жұмсақ» дағдылар «қатаң» дағдыларға қарағанда аса маңызды, себебі жобалық менеджерінің билігі ұйымдағы оқшаулау әсерінен шектеулі болуы мүмкін. Жобалық менеджері келесі кәсіби дағдыларды қажет етеді: менеджментке (қатаң дағдылар) және тұлға аралық (жұмсақ дағдылары) қатынастарға байланысты дағдылар. Жобаны табысты ету үшін жобалық менеджері тұлғааралық қатынастар дағдысын жеңіл қолдануы тиіс. Адамдар жобаны басқару нысаны болып табылады, ал процедуралар мен әдістер басқару нысаны болып табылмайды. Процедуралар және әдістер адамдар табысты жобаларды жүзеге асыруға көмектесетін құрал болып табылады. «Жұмсақ» дағдылардың мағынасы толық бағаланбаған.

Түйін сөздер: жоба, жобалық менеджмент, жобалық менеджер, «жұмсақ» және «қатаң» дағдылар, оқшаулау әсері, эмоционалды ой өріс, стейкхолдерлер, тұлға аралық қарым қатынастар.

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**К вопросу о важных
профессиональных навыках
проектного менеджера**

Казахстанские компании сталкиваются с международной конкуренцией и необходимостью успешно управлять проектами. Проект успешен, если им эффективно управляют. Менеджер проекта отвечает за все аспекты проекта и несет ответственность за достижение всех целей и задач любого проекта. Для успешной реализации проекта менеджер проекта должен эффективно коммуницировать с широким кругом стейкхолдеров. С этой точки зрения так называемые «гибкие навыки» более важны, чем «жесткие», потому что власть менеджера проекта может быть ограничена за счет эффекта изоляции в организациях. Менеджер проекта нуждается в следующих профессиональных навыках: навыках, связанных с менеджментом (жесткие навыки) и межличностных (гибкие навыки). Чтобы привести проект к успеху, менеджер проекта должен с легкостью использовать навыки межличностного общения. Люди являются объектом управления проектами, а не процедуры и методы. Процедуры и методы являются лишь инструментами, которые помогают людям успешно реализовывать проекты. Навыки межличностного общения связаны с человеческим фактором и, до недавнего времени, практически не рассматривались в управлении проектами.

Ключевые слова: проект, управление проектами, менеджер проекта, твердые и гибкие навыки, эффект изоляции, эмоциональный интеллект, стейкхолдеры, межличностные навыки.

A PROJECT MANAGER'S IMPORTANT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

The world becomes project-focused one. Any new activity associates with projects. Projects are one of the means by which the world is changed. What is a project? There is a set of definitions. The Project Management Institute has given the capacious one: “A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service” [1].

Project management covers a wide spectrum of activities and overlaps with general management principles and other application areas [2]. It is an integrated and interdisciplinary body of knowledge. On the other hand, the role of a project management can be described by only one word. This word is “challenging”. Project management helps to manage challenges arising from the environment. Projects start to play important role in the Kazakhstani economy. As never before, Kazakhstani companies face international competition and necessity to manage projects with success.

The project is successful if effectively managed. It is known that project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and methods to project operations to satisfy the requirements of the project [1]. Everybody who is acquainted with project management knows that projects have to be carried out through the application, overlapping and integration of project processes. They are:

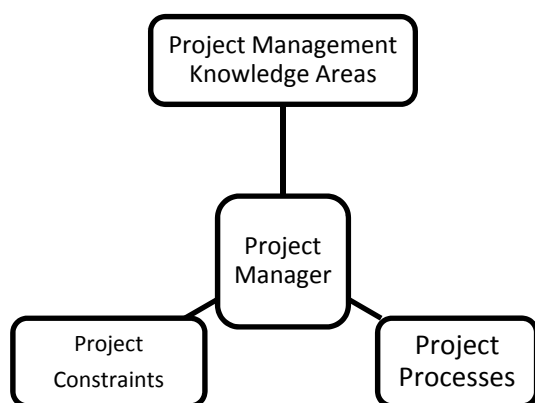
- initiating,
- planning,
- executing,
- controlling, and
- closing [1, 2].

The Project Manager is responsible to the customer for the success of the project. Project Management Knowledge Areas [1] includes ones that have to be managed by the project manager. They are:

- Project Scope Management;
- Project Time Management;
- Project Cost Management;
- Project Quality Management;
- Project Human Resource Management;
- Project Communications Management;
- Project Risk Management;
- Project Procurement Management;

- Project Integration Management.

Project Management Knowledge Areas and a project's constraints are what should be controlled by a project manager in the process of implementing a project. The picture 1 shows what aspects of a project are controlled by a project manager.



Picture 1 – Project's aspects controlled by a project manager

The project manager attempts to balance the competing project constraints, which include:

- Scope,
- Quality,
- Schedule,
- Budget,
- Resources,
- Risks [1].

A project manager is in charge of all the aspects of the project, including doing plans for the project, executing them, controlling the project to keep it on way as planned, communicating with the stakeholders, managing risks, and closing the project properly at the right time. It is should not be forgotten that the project manager's core responsibilities overlap with the project lifecycle. If a project manager is responsible for achieving goals and objectives of any project what responsibilities are important for him/her?

The project manager has to accomplish work through the project team and other stakeholders.

According to Pinto [3] among the set of project stakeholders that project managers must consider are:

- Internal stakeholders as:
- Top management
- Accountant
- Other functional managers
- Project team members.

- External stakeholders as:

- Clients
- Competitors
- Suppliers

Environmental, political, consumer, and other intervenor groups.

An important key to performing all the project manager's responsibilities successfully is communication because a project manager is dealing with a wide functional variety of stakeholders, ranging from CEO, team members, to accountant. The key point by P. Sanghera [4] is that a project manager has to put on the appropriate communication "hat" depending on an individual. The goal is to use the understandable language to send messages accurately.

From our point of view this list has to be extended by a project manager's important skills as:

- problem solving,
- communication,
- team building,
- negotiation,
- influence.

These types of activities are primary for project managers and help him/her to work out best solutions for a project. They are more akin to the activities related with so-called "soft skills". "These skills are quite different from those that figured in the original training of most project managers, which is often of a technical nature"[2].

Project managers need to get things done in situations where their authority is, at best, ambiguous in relation to people in different departments, reporting to different line managers. In reality, many project managers have very little formal authority, especially in functional organizations. The authority delegated to them needs to be quite "clear and communicated throughout the organization"[4]. Moreover, a project manager's authority may be frustrated by siloing effects.

Managing projects effectively takes a multitude of skills. For example, Sanghera [4] considers that a project manager needs two kinds of skills: the management-related skills and interpersonal ones. The management-related skills are here:

- accounting and financial management,
- attention to details,
- information technology,
- negotiation and conflict management,
- problem-solving,
- sales and marketing.

As a result, people learn by heart standards on project management, try to raise their level of proficiency, read many books on management and

project management, participate courses, and try to get PMP. It is not bad. It is good. But sometimes future project managers forget about social aspects that can be associated with interpersonal skills. They help a project manager to interact with all the project stakeholders. To lead a project to success, a project manager must be able to use interpersonal skills with ease. They are:

- communication;
- influencing;
- leadership;
- networking;
- intelligence.

According to our opinion, from the list of interpersonal skills the leadership is the most important one. Moreover, such skills as communication, influencing, networking and intelligence are arisen from leadership. What is leadership? Leadership is influencing project stakeholders to achieve project's goals. Leadership is more than simply holding a project management position. Excellent project managers motivate team members and stakeholders to achieve more than minimal projects' requirements. Without good project managers who are a leader, no project can achieve success. Consequently, most project managers seek ways to improve their leadership skills. However, there is no simple answer to the question. "On a project...the project manager is generally expected to be the project's leader as

well. Leadership is not, however, limited to the project manager: it may be demonstrated by many different individuals at many different times during the project. Leadership must be demonstrated at all levels of the project (project leadership, technical leadership, team leadership)" [1, p. 23].

For the project's successful implementation it is necessary to create such conditions where each person identifies himself with the team and understands his/her responsibility for the project's success and efficiency. The project manager is the person assigned by the performing organization to lead the project team that has to be interested in achieving the project objectives. The project manager's behavior and leadership style significantly affect the team. The project manager must be honest and ethical in communications with team members and the project's stakeholders. Motivation and high performance of the team members depend on their respect for their leader. Manager must be able to provide an explanation for the team members the project's goals, objectives, values and expected results. Leadership is a spontaneously occurring process of influence.

Mukhtarova K. and others [5, p. 73] consider that before building a project team, you need to determine the characteristics of successful project teams. They suggest the following characteristics, presented in the table 1. Five of them are related with the "soft" skills.

Table 1 – The special characteristics of successful project teams

#	Hard skills	Soft skills
	Defining goals and objectives	Open and clear communication
	Casting roles between the team's members	Balanced participation
	Decision-making	Positive atmosphere
	Diversification of activity	Cooperation
	Conflict management	Participated project manager

Source: Adapted from [5, p. 73]

In the source [5] it is said that "problems arising in the projects often appear due to ... lack of communication skills among the project's participants. Transparent and established communication link between the project's participants is the key to achieving the goals of the project. The project's team members should feel free and express their thoughts and

opinions at any time. Improvement of relationships between team members leads to increasing trust, reducing problems and successful implementation of the project [5, p. 75]".

Furthermore, Gardiner P. insists that 'there is a growing realization that project management performance is more closely related to the softer

skills than the hard skills” [2]. People are the central part of project management, not the procedures and techniques. People are critical for projects. Procedures and techniques are merely tools that help people make their projects successful.

When people talk about ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ project management skills, they are referring to the nature of the skills concerned. The term “hard skills” generally refers to the mechanical and technical skills of planning, estimating, scheduling and controlling a project. Project management training courses often focus almost exclusively on teaching these hard skills, which reflects the historical development of project management as a discipline. Soft skills, on the other hand, are people skills, such as interpersonal communication, commitment to success, negotiation, consensus problem solving, leadership and motivation. These skills deal with human factor issues and, until recently, have been less discussed in project management literature.

In “A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge” it is said that “effective project managers require a balance of ethical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills that help them analyze situations and interact appropriately” [1]. They involve such as:

- Leadership;
- Team building;

- Motivation;
- Communication;
- Influencing;
- Decision making;
- Political and cultural awareness;
- Negotiation;
- Trust building;
- Conflict management;
- Coaching.

Gardiner P. also writes that the ‘soft’ skills are much harder to learn and use effectively in contrast to “hard” skills [2]. Our ability to learn and use hard skills, for example drawing networks and calculating a project’s budget, is partly linked to our IQ (intelligence quotient), which is established relatively early in life. Soft skills are more related to our EQ (emotional quotient) or emotional intelligence, which can continue to develop as we mature or through training. So, we could draw a conclusion according to which soft skills are developed through wide experience at a workplace.

So, saying about soft skills of a project manager for project success we consider leading, communicating, negotiating, problem solving, influencing the organization that are highly likely affect most projects.

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