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Diocese of Cleveland Facilities Services Corporation

Principles of Project Management

In March 2020 we discussed project management in our *Focus on Facilities* column titled*, "A Brief Discussion on Project Management"* and we want to continue on with this discussion addressing the principles of project management. To do this we should first start with what we believe makes up the principles of project management:

- Value
- Behavior
- Goals

When it comes to project management, a project manager (PM) is needed to oversee and lead a team through the completion of assigned tasks to accomplish the project's overall objectives. Without this one individual to lead, the project can become unclear to others assigned to this task. The "**Value**" a PM brings to a job will be to guide the development of objectives, establish the timelines, budget estimate the costs to be incurred, facilitate the communication, oversee this project, and assure project closure. The role also challenges the PM's ability to bring out the best in each team member. There is a saying, "If a project is successful, the team will get the recognition, but if the job has problems, the PM will get the blame." The PM must understand this and act accordingly because, when a project has challenges, no one wants to hear the PM "pass the buck" and blame someone else on the team. What is wanted is a successful job with no excuses or bad luck stories.

A PM's "**Behavior**" is critical to project success and satisfaction. Without very good communication skills, both verbally and in writing this individual may struggle with team leadership. Miscommunication can compromise the completion of tasks at-hand e.g., missing due dates. The PM needs to lead and not follow and this is demonstrated through one's actions, as it is said, "Actions speak louder than words." Team members, and others will see through any inadequate

performance or behavior.

Establishing project "**Goals**" in sync with specific milestones and due dates is critical to PM success. Quite often these goals include a financial cost goal that must also be met. It is the PM's job to establish the roadmap a.k.a. project schedule to completion. While each team member is focused on their assignments it is the PM who must oversee and orchestrate all these team activities to stay on course to completion.

When it comes to Values, Behavior, and Goals as it pertains to a specific job assignment, the PM should focus on the following activities and be the point-person responsible for the success of each category:

- Secure an authorization to proceed
- Organize the team
- Facilitate meetings including the kickoff meeting
- Define the scope of work

- Define the milestone due dates
- Define the budget with pertinent cost breakouts
- Define project goals
- Request required documents e.g., existing condition drawings
- Request security criteria and maintain these guidelines
- Facilitate regularly scheduled meetings
- Always maintain communication e.g., meeting minutes
- Provide predetermined project schedule updates and financial budget-to-actual estimates
- Oversee the final report
- Submit the report and follow up with a final report meeting
- Determine "what next" actions
- Closeout the job.

The principles of project management should be very clear to fulfill but not everyone is skilled in being a successful PM. Depending on the individual and the industry this person is in, skill criteria will vary but the standard goals all PM's should aspire to are:

- Be proficient in communication
- Be proficient in managing meetings and immediately getting meeting minutes out to all who attended along with others on the project distribution list
- Be proficient in time management
- Be proficient in managing schedules
- Be proficient in budgeting

Future, as well as current PM's should seek out educational programs to learn how to be better at each of the five skills noted above. Often, education can be considered "on-the-job" training but PM education goes beyond simply filling the role if one wants to be competent in this role. More formal training may be needed requiring one to attend in-class courses, reading or listening to audio CD's on professional development, or taking a course(s) on-line to achieve proficiency in these five skills.

Depending on the type of project, the project management activity can be very complex and goals need to be measurable. In simple terms, project management is the discipline of planning, organizing, managing, leading, and controlling resources to achieve project success. In the end it is the PM's responsibility for securing acceptance and approval of deliverables. Effective project managers must have a good balance of Value, Behavior, and Goals to help them analyze situations and lead the project team to the successful completion of the project.

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