Deeply Practical Project Management

Summary – Execution

"Take time to deliberate, but when the time for action has arrived, stop thinking and go in."

– Napoleon Bonaparte, 1769-1821.

The DPPM methodology builds on the PMI framework to describe the most effective best practices of practical project management from the past 100 years. This document summarizes the practical best practices for the *Execution* chapter of the DPPM book and course. For much more information, please see the DPPM flowcharts, books, courses, example, templates, and certification available from IFPPM.org.

- Execution Purpose. The purpose of execution is to assemble the best possible team, support the team while they do the work, ensure the design of the end-result includes sufficient reviews to ensure it will be what the customer really needs, and prepare for delivery and handover.
- Team Formation. Keep the CPT to ensure continuity and accountability, select the rest of the team based on skills, energy, team temperament, and ethics, choose from the widest set of candidates to maximize diversity and therefore creativity and performance, and include a user representative in as much of the work as possible.
- Team Building. Build up a cohesive team identity with off-site sessions, team training, and team meals, and work continually to maximize team trust since it's the largest contributor to project scope, cost, and schedule performance.
- Colocation. While difficult, the more important the project the more important it is to physically colocate the team to greatly minimize mistakes and communication delays.
- Matrix Organizations. Matrix organizations are usually the best compromise over functional and projectized organizations, providing the best availability of skills, and enabling the Project Manager to focus on project performance, however the functional managers must use a scheduling tool to manage realistic loading of their personnel across projects, ideally allocating people to one project at a time until that work is complete.
- Delegation. Completely delegate to the team the responsibility for "how" the work is done so they feel empowered and can grow and learn, accept that mistakes will be made, give everyone on the team a spending sign-off level no matter how small, make sure the team knows they should ask for assistance when needed, and always status and follow-up at least once a week since you retain overall accountability for success.
- Motivation. Motivate the team to do their best by communicating the project importance and need, business case benefits, and personal career advantages, and

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provide credit and sincere appreciation publicly, privately, and passed on the team's functional managers and senior organization personnel.

- Managing Conflict. Manage people conflict by first addressing any underlying causes, most commonly communication issues and lack of respect, then bring the parties together and clearly communicate the responsibility for resolution by the parties themselves, and then replace personnel if required to protect the overall project.
- Communication Modes. Prefer verbal communications, face-to-face or by video-conference over phone, reserving email and written communication for data transmission, record of agreements, formal approvals, and contract communications, and hold meetings for regular statusing, brainstorming, problem solving, and reviews.
- Kick-off Meetings. At the beginning of execution, even when you think everyone already knows everything, hold an internal kick-off meeting for the whole organization, brief the project plan, answer any questions you can and followup with answers to the rest, and hold another external kick-off meeting with the customer for contracted projects.
- Project Requirements Review. Even when the requirements are supposedly "perfect" and legally locked, hold a requirements review with the customer the first week of execution, review every requirement projected on a screen and and add a clarification column note wherever needed, thereby typically saving many multiples of time and rework later.
- Design Before Build. Ensure one or more designs, prototypes, mock-ups, or drafts are prepared for all deliverables, with associated user reviews to obtain critically important feedback and find out what was missed before expensively locking in the actual creation.
- Finding Root Causes. When problems arise, use the Ishikawa or fish-bone diagram to provide a structured tool to help investigate behind symptoms and find root causes.

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