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Project Managers' Competencies Model for Construction Industry in Poland

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to create a model of construction project managers' competencies in Poland. The model includes factors related to the project manager's attributes. The created model can serve as a reference in the development of an integrated approach to the management of construction projects in Poland. Using the proposed approach, the process of construction project management can be customized.

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1. Introduction

Growth in the number of business activities that are deployed through projects results in increase in interest of all the issues related to project management. Management of a project team is significantly different from managing team of employees. That is mainly due to the nature of project and resulting range of project manager duties. Projects are strictly defined by result requirements, the cost and time constraints, and are bounded by the environment in which are implemented. As a result a set of project manager's activities typically include motivation, time, cost, scope, quality management and various administrative duties. Gaddis [6] described project manager competencies as: "ability to have different approach towards classic management functions, ability to finish tasks within the time with no specific information at the early stages of the project and that is related to the ability of taking risks, shall have power in the organization to delegate responsibility to subordinates, "trouble shooting" skills, planning skills, avoid crises

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“selling and reselling the project” abilities, to be able to act as a front man and a man in between with communication skills, “ability to generate necessary drive and momentum to spark the project to success”.

There are several definitions of that what constitutes a competency. Mulder et al. [12] classifies competency definitions into: the behaviourist, the generic and the cognitive. The behaviourist approach focuses on features of effective and successful job performers. Therefore competencies can be gain through training and development. Competence is based on the description of the most effective performance and behavior. The generic approach identifies set of abilities that can statistically explain variation in job performance. The cognitive approach describes a range of cognitive capacity that a person shall have to perform well in a specific sphere Boyatzis [2]. Cognitive, social and emotional intelligence competencies can foresee effectiveness in job performance. Outstanding results are achieved when human’s capability fits the job’s description. “Competencies are behavioral manifestations of emotional intelligence” [2].

In construction industry, projects are companies’ source of revenue. Therefore construction industry is probably the largest project-based sector. Many organizations within the industry are interested in establishing the competencies of their managers since the project’s success is highly dependent on its manager competencies. In this paper a model of construction project managers’ competencies is proposed.

2. Project managers’ competencies

Duties of project manager include a range of activities from administrator of the project to team leader. Therefore, to successfully execute project its manager needs a unique set of capabilities and competencies [7]. Since there is a strong relationship between the project’s success and the project manager’s work effectiveness, conditions ensuring that effectiveness are concern of many researchers. That initiates attempts to define competencies that have the significant impact on project manager’s effectiveness. Due to the nature of project manager work, which is largely based on cooperation and project team directing, manager’s characteristics can have a crucial impact on project’s results. Therefore a choice of a “right” person to perform a project manager role is one of the most important decisions taken by project’s sponsor/investor. The differences between the processes of employees’ selection in traditional organizations and those with project structures are indicated by Lichtarski [11]. Kerzner [9] mentions following features of project managers:

- initiative
- leadership abilities
- ambition
- creativity
- flexibility and adaptability
- personal commitment
- vision
- creating trust
- ability to persuade
- effectiveness
- ability to make decisions
- ability to identify problems
- ability to organize work to subordinates.

Project Manager Competency Development (PMCD) – a Project Management Institute (PMI) standard [14] defines three project managers’ competence areas: knowledge competence, performance competence and personal competence. International Project Management Association [8] defines 20 technical competency elements, 15 behavioral competency elements, and 11 contextual competency elements.

Construction project managers have to combine technical knowledge and expertise with skills that can assure effective coordination and communication of many different stakeholders [5]. American Society of Civil Engineers [1] describes construction project managers’ job as: “(...) the act of managing the engineering relationships among the management tasks related to staffing, organizing, planning, financing, and the human element in production,

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