Top Management Commitment on Success of A Project

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Abstract
The top management is given the mandate to manage projects. Being at the apex of a project, they determine whether a project will be successful or not. This study sought the practices to be adopted by the top management for a project to be successful. This study adopted a descriptive research design to collect first hand information from senior managers. The data was then analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 21 and conclusions drawn explained thereafter in form of texts. Results indicated that there exists a positive relationship between the top managers and success of a project. The study is of paramount value to scholars as they can refer to it and expand knowledge. Top managers across all disciplines can enhance their management skills by the help of this study.

Key words- Success, top management, communication, motivation, managing relationships

Introduction
Many projects fail to exceed the needs of the stakeholders (Zwikael, 2008a). Modern project management does not limit the definition of success on the three constraints; completing within time, cost and quality but rather focus on the end product. How well the end products serves the stakeholders is what determines success of that project. With 190% cost overrun and delayed completion time The Boston Dig project was still considered a success (Asbjørn Rolstadås, Iris Tommelein, Per Morten Schiefloe, 2014). Factors that cause a project to succeed or fail remains an area of interest to many researchers.
Success or failure of a project is determined by distinct factors. Leadership factor appears to have a lot of weight in how well a project performs (Love, 2006). Success of a project is determined by the people at the apex of the project, the top management. How well or poorly a project performs relies heavily on the top management (Hambrick, 1990).
As the top management strives to make a project succeed, what should they put into consideration? This paper therefore seeks the top management practices that make a project a success.

Literature Review
Upper echelon theory states that “organizational outcomes, strategic choices and performance levels are partially predicted by managerial background characteristics”. Top management experiences, values and background has the ability to influence the direction the organisation is heading to (Albert A. Cannella, 2005). Having a multitude of roles and responsibilities and being the head of the project, the top management therefore have a greater influence on the success of a project (Love, 2006). Top management is believed to influence positively the results of a project if well utilized (Zwikael, 2008a) and is responsible for delivering the outputs of a project (Zwikael, 2008b). Studies done on the same have proved that the top management have a positive influence on the outputs of a project (Zwikael, 2008b).
Communication, Managing relationships, and Motivation; are just but a few duties vital to the success of a project and which are entitled to the top management.

Due to the complex nature of a project, there must be an incorporation of a set of stakeholders for a project to be successful. The group at the top bring people together as a team (Parker, 2012) for the project to succeed. The top management lies at the apex of the whole project team and is thus seen as a Critical Success Factor (Zwikael, 2008a). These people will only commit to the affairs of the project only if they relate well with each other and they are motivated to do so. Regular communication acts as a motivator and grows relationships stronger. The three functions of the top management have a mutual relationship and all affect success of a project. Communication on its own is viewed as a critical success factor (Paul Ziek, 2015). Communication is a requirement for effective project managers (Paul Ziek, 2015). Only the top managers are in position to manage communication (Cervone, 2014).

The top management must ensure that it is composed of the right team because the right team forms the backbone of the project. Having a talented team is what determines the direction a project is headed to. The top management is assigned with the role of ensuring that the team moves in the same direction by having clearly defined mission, vision and keeping information flowing throughout the lifecycle of a project. In addition to having the right team, the top management must also ensure that the right plans are in place, resources are available, the team remains committed, regular communication and that there exists positive relationships within the team. Positive relationships within the team create room for problem solving and the ability to handle risks. Good relationships are also believed to motivate the team and create room for innovation. Failure is brought by bad relationships amongst the project team.

Methodology

A descriptive research design was adopted because it is used to describe data relating to persons or organisation settings (NGUGI, 2013). As well as being free from biasness and manipulation of the environment (Mugenda, 2008). A total population of 620 was used for the study. 10% of the whole population which is 62 was selected to represent the whole population. (Kerlinger, 1986) 10% a sample size of 10% gives reliable data. Therefore, 62 respondents were picked using stratified random sampling technique. Stratified random sampling technique is used if the population is not homogeneous hence the need to use it for the study (Mugenda, A .and Mugenda, 2003). Structured questionnaire based survey were used to collect primary data. A questionnaire is free from biasness and provides first hand information (Mugenda, A .and Mugenda, 2003). Data was then analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21. Conclusions were then drawn from the analysis and the data presented diagrammatically in form of tables, charts and explanations given in texts thereafter.

Conclusions

The empirical literature revealed that there exists a positive relationship between top management commitment and performance of a project. Communication emerged a powerful tool in success of a project. Projects that maintain consistent flow of information were found to perform better than those that do not. Informal communication was found to strength the bond within the teams as it encourages interaction amongst the team.

Projects with highly skilled team have better results than projects with less skilled individuals. A skilled team was found innovative and possess good conflict resolution tactics hence improved performance.

Motivated individuals readily take up duties with minimal supervision. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations have a high impact on the results of the project.
Recommendation
Engagement of all stakeholders is vital but the top management have a greater duty than other stakeholders. The top management are assigned with the duty to merge all other stakeholders for the whole project team to work as one. With such heavy duties, highly skilled individuals are therefore recommended. Regular training of staffs to increase their skills and capacity is important for the organisation and the organisation returns.
Motivated stakeholders increase performance of an organisation. Project managers therefore have a duty to motivate all individual to improve performance. One on one communication is more active and provides people with a chance to understand each other better therefore recommended over passive communication. Though it is good to communicate through emails, face to face communication has the best output. Also, it is recommended that the top management should create positive and long lasting relationships with all stakeholders at all levels to increase participation, boost morale, have a positive reputation and improve on the output.

References