Crafting project success

I was recently involved in a discussion looking at the 'internal' reasons why some projects fail and others succeed in similar circumstances. The answer seemed to be the way the people delivering the project work together. A cooperative and committed team underpins success.

This led to thinking about the key requirements for creating a committed and cooperative team, and while the concepts below are not new, consistently creating the environment to allow them to flourish is difficult. In my opinion the three most important factors are:

1) **An agreed and understood objective people are willing to commit to**. Defining the objective in a way people understand is the starting point. A 'great website' may mean a technical marvel to one person with all the 'bells-and-whistles'; it may mean a simple easy-to-use presence to someone else. Committing to an objective that is not going to be delivered creates disenchantment!

2) **Internal team organization**. The team needs to be organized to achieve the objective efficiently. How this is achieved is less important; options can range from self-organizing teams thorough to traditional leader-follower models. What matters is the team works in a coordinated and organized way, and this needs good, multi-directional, internal communication.

3) **Trust between team members[1]**. This last element is probably the most important and least understood. You don't need to like someone to trust them, in fact you don't even need to know the person to trust them. In an emergency It is common to see a group of strangers form into a self-organized team and trust each other so they can work together in quite dangerous situations to allow the situation to be stabilized – this type of trust is called 'swift-trust'. More traditional trust builds on reputation and observed experience. However, without trust, you are not going to rely on the other people in the group to do the right thing to help you and the rest of the group successfully achieve your shared objective.

In the modern world, people work on projects in all sorts of ways, virtually, in agile 'scrums', in traditional organized teams, and in many other groupings; the people may come from one organization or many. Regardless of the group structure, my feeling is effective teamwork is vital to project success and the three factors above underpin everything else involved in creating an effective team.

_____

---

[1] For more on *trust* see: https://mosaicprojects.com.au/PMKI-TPI-010.php#Trust

First Published 8th March 2022