

Stakeholder communication within a project team

Project type: People

Location: UK

RICS/APM stakeholder principles: Communicate; Consult early, and often; Plan it!; Relationships are key; Just part of managing risk

Stakeholder terms: Project planning, stakeholder communication

Abstract

A major project was so well planned, and ‘stakeholder relations’ within the team so well managed, that the project succeeded despite the death of the project manager (Anthony Antwerp).

Background

This case study is based on a fictitious story drawn from Tom Taylor and Rob Dee’s excellent book. Nevertheless the moral of the story bears the telling. The project manager went to unusual lengths to set up the project structure, team roles, communications, and stakeholder interactions within the team. The actual substance of the project is not recorded, but the project manager arrangements were extensive and detailed.

The issues

The project and all its stakeholder engagement aspects were working extremely well. However, project safety in a conventional, if slightly exotic, office context was not well managed. There was no ‘safety thought for the day’ at the start of the project kickoff meeting nor was safety culture promoted. Else the offending trip hazard that led to the demise of the project manager might have been noted and mitigated.

The challenges

In the best managed of situations, the extraordinary lengths that the project manager went to, to best manage his stakeholders, counted for nothing when safety culture was treated lightly. The challenge was effectively that of over-emphasizing one aspect of project management at the expense of another.

The solution

The solution was not explicitly stated; the project, founded on such good stakeholder relations, sailed on to success despite losing its prime architect. It is to be inferred that his successor paid rather more attention to safety culture.

The benefits

By first ‘getting it setup right’, in terms of stakeholder engagement, this project succeeded when most projects would have collapsed.

The learning points

Project management is a multi-faceted discipline. Stakeholder engagement is important but there are also other equally important aspects.

This case study was written by the APM Stakeholder Engagement Focus Group.

- *For more information on the group or stakeholder engagement, [click here](#).*