

All for one and one for all!

Links to RICS/APM principles: Remember they're only human; Relationships are key
Stakeholder terms: Project team, working relationships, performance, approach

Context

All sectors, minimal cost, about 1.5 hours of project team time, ideally with all core project team members present, completed just prior to the project team starting to work together (i.e. mobilisation).

Problem

Like many stakeholder groups, project teams comprise a variety of people (dependent on the project) to come together to deliver a unique outcome. They each have experience of and reflect, differing working practices, standards and culture and are therefore a group rather than a team at the outset of the project.

Project managers fail to see the importance of agreeing the way they will work together. Their mindset is that this is unnecessary as they are 'professional' and that any 'team building' would be too time consuming.

As a result, the common pattern is that the project 'team' is expected to begin work (e.g. capturing requirements, scoping, defining and planning) and work effectively together.

The result? Mistakes, delays and frustration due to: poor understanding of the project, unclear team standards, composition and how they will communicate, report. Misunderstanding as to how performance will be appraised. Unclear how other stakeholders will be engaged. Sporadic availability of team members. Unclear approach to raising issues problem-solving and decision-making.

Intervention(s)

Much of the above can be avoided if the project manager holds a session (early in the project) in which the team openly explores a number of points as follows:

The project, the project team, roles and responsibilities, personal performance, availability and approach.

This takes about 1.5 hours, using a checklist to bring structure to the meeting. The project manager should resist being fully prescriptive as this is an opportunity to adopt some good practices members bring; to bond the team and for the project manager to establish his/her style of leadership.

This session can be recorded to help 'induct' future members joining the team, followed by a 1:1 session with the project manager to address individual questions.

Outcome(s)

More effective leadership and team working. The avoidance of the team 'storming'

stage. Leaving the team able to develop towards and achieve ‘high team performance’ far more quickly.

This pattern was written by the APM Stakeholder Engagement Focus Group.

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