

## WHAT MATTERS IN PROJECT TEAM MANAGEMENT?

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**Abstract:** The theoretical and empirical discussion presented in this paper concerns the subject of project management from the perspective of the functioning of project teams. The research problem is the location of project team management in a networked space. The research methodology applied in the paper, includes literature analysis and expert methods. The aim of empirical studies is to identify key success factors in project team management in a networked space. The proposed research procedure of Philips 66 technique has enabled identification of a set of factors that are crucial for management of multicultural project teams in a networked space. This is followed by analysis of each of the factors and identification of key success factors in project team management.

**Key words:** Project, Management Project, Project Team Management, Networked Space

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### Introduction

The prospect of functioning in a global environment causes modern organisations to enhance constantly business models. The subject of business model designing corresponds strongly with the topic of value creation. In order to survive, organisations need to develop their capabilities of creating and capturing values. It is stressed that “an organization’s business model is never complete as the process of making strategic choices and testing business models should be ongoing and iterative” (Shafer et al., 2005).

The search for ways to carry out business in the face of such challenges as dynamism of the environment, networking, innovativeness, limited ability to predict the future or the need for cooperation, corresponds with the issue of implementing changes in the organisation and management of an enterprise’s internal structures, and also, more importantly, the architecture of networking. Change is the only permanent element in modern management systems (Chianchana and Wichian, 2016), and its implementation increasingly takes place in networked space (Klein et al., 2016).

The discussion presented in the paper focuses on the characteristics of project team management. The adopted methodological approach is based on literature review and empirical studies. Literature review involves analysis of selected theoretical issues related to the nature of project management, with special reference to project

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teams. In empirical studies, expert methods have been used. In this respect, an attempt has made to find out success factors, identifying those particularly significant to project team management in an international environment. The proposed research approach enables deconstruction of a set of factors and their exploration in networked space.

### **Overview of the Subject of Project Management – Perspective of the Functioning of Project Teams**

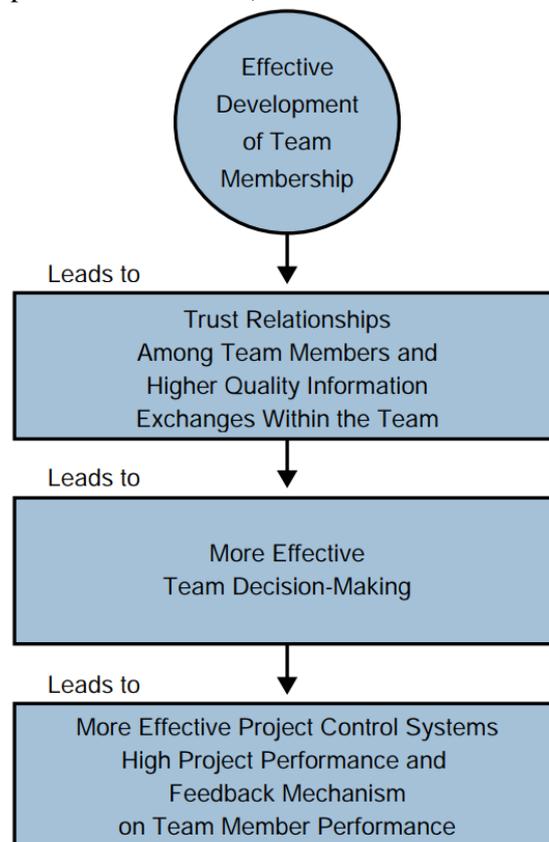
Project and project management are currently a very attractive area of interest among management theoreticians and practitioners. The need to stand out, develop unique competencies or create innovative solutions forces organisations in a business environment to undertake novel initiatives, which represent value not only for the organisation itself, but also – more importantly – to customers. It is worth highlighting the need to develop and effectively use the potential of creativity within an organisation. An organisation's creativity involves such elements as knowledge, creative thinking and motivation (Amabile, 1998). Project, as a business undertaking with such attributes as periodicity, innovativeness, purposefulness, focus on results and value creation, as well as gearing activities towards (internal and external) stakeholders' needs, corresponds to modern challenges of business environment.

The history of research into the nature of projects, in particular project management, is very long. The 1950s were considered as the beginning of scientific interest in the subject of project management (Harold and Kerzner, 2013). However, some scholars argue that the subject of project management was first addressed when the biblical Arc was built by Noah (Cleland and Gareis, 2006).

Dynamism, complexity and diversity of project environment implicate development of the area of project management. There is a recognised need for continuous conceptualisation, with increasingly interdisciplinary scientific approaches adopted as the basis for interpretation of a project and project management (Söderlund, 2004). The literature describes project management in the context of complexity and interdisciplinarity, considering it as a comprehensive issue (Cicmil et al., 2009). The numerous areas of analysis include project team management. At this point, it is worth mentioning the development of project-based organisations, those functioning is essentially connected with implementation of projects (Hobday, 2000). From this perspective, multiple project teams are increasingly functioning in the environment of one organisation.

The nature of project team management results from the specificity of project management itself, where a system of sequential operations exists. In this respect, scholars refer to the interpretation of project life cycle. The literatures explain that "a project life cycle is a collection of sequential and sometimes overlapping project phases. Regardless of size and complexity, all projects can be mapped to generic life cycle structure" (Martinic et al., 2012).

At the same time, project teams are regarded as the key factor determining proper implementation of a project. Also the success of a project is increasingly connected with the functioning of project teams. Similarly, the search for ways of achieving effectiveness and efficiency in project management is conducted in the context of characterisation of project teams and their location in organisational environment. Regardless of the form of organisational environment, it is worth noting that effectiveness and efficiency in project management is achieved by engaging “the right” people in the project team. As “successful project management, regardless of the organizational structure, is only as good as the individuals and leaders who are managing the key functions. Project management is not a one-person operation; it requires a group of individuals...” (Harold and Kerzner, 2013). Building project teams bring benefits at a project level in the context of the development of interpersonal relationships, information exchange, decision-making, control of results, etc. (Figure 1). Another factor that is highlighted in this context is the role of the project manager. The desirable attributes of the project manager include openness and need for continuous learning as well as getting to know other people and oneself (Randolph and Posner, 1988).

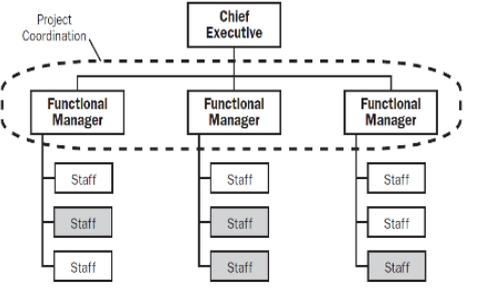
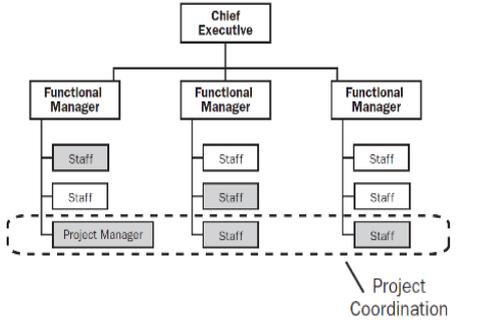


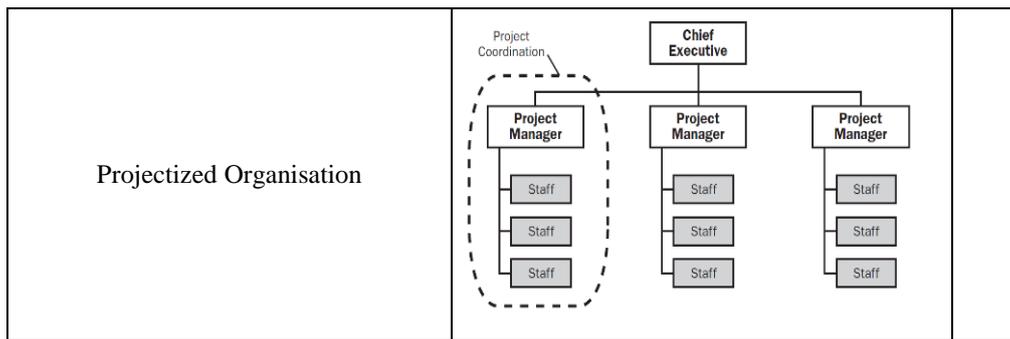
**Figure 1. Benefits of Creating Project Teams** (Harold and Kerzner, 2013).

One of the most vibrant trends in the discussion on the practice and theory of project team management, which has been present in the research literature for several decades, is focused on the location of project teams in organisational environment. In this respect, several research perspectives can be distinguished. Team project management is interpreted in the context of classical structures of an organisation (classical approach), virtual space, project agility and interorganisational networks, among other things.

In the spatial aspect, an organisation's boundaries define its internal environment. Characterisation of the internal environment is most often conducted in relation to organisational structure. In this case, an organisation becomes an environment of a project implementation, which identifies the essence of the classical approach to describing the location of a project team within an organisational structure. In this respect, the type of organisational structure determines the place of a project team in an organisation's environment. Table 1. shows three structures of an organisation: functional, matrix and projectized organisations.

**Table 1. Place of a ProjectTeam in an Organisational Environment – Selected Classic Approaches, (A Guide..., 2008)**

Type of organisational structure	Place of a project team in organisational structure	the grey colour means engagement of an employee in a project team
<p>Classical Functional Organisation</p>		
<p>Classical Matrix Organisation</p>		



The present practice of implementation of business projects more and more clearly shows that project management goes beyond the formal boundaries of an organisation's environment. There is a belief that "project management has truly become 'boundaryless' - cutting across disciplines, functions, organizations, and countries" (Cleland and Gareis, 2006). The practice of the functioning of modern organisations indicates complexity, diversity and openness of the organisational environment, which is increasingly becoming a multicultural environment (Pachura and Smolarek, 2018). Thus, a very interesting research direction is project team management in the systems of interorganisational networks, especially in the context of management of multi-cultural teams. The organisational environment of a network is made up of at least two mutually engaged entities remaining in a certain relation (Thorelli, 1986). Organisations are ever more committed to networking and strive to maintain and make use of relations in a network, improving an internal organisational environment (Pachura, 2015). An organisation's behaviours in the space of social networked relations determine management of project teams in an international environment. For example, In Indonesia, which is a collectivist country, leadership style is a major predictor of decision structure that influences project success (Zhu and Kindarto, 2016).

### Searching for Success Factors in Project Team Management – Description of Research Procedure

The network dimension of the organisational environment of a project makes it possible to look at project team management from the perspective of the network of social relations (first research assumption). Creation, maintenance and use of networking in this respect determines the functioning of project teams. This is because the dynamics, diversity and fluidity of relational links in network structures implicate a new set of factors determining success in the area of project team management (second research assumption). The adopted narrative is in line with the subject of temporary organization, described in the literature, in the context of interpretation of the essence of a project's organisational environment (Andersen, 2006).

The location of project teams in networked structures prompts reflection on what impacts the functioning and management of teams in an international environment, in particular in the context of the search for key success factors. In view of the above, the aim of empirical studies is to identify key success factors in project team management in a networked space.

The empirical studies have been conducted by means of expert methods using the procedure of “Philips 66” heuristic technique. In accordance with the adopted research procedure, expert research has been conducted in two stages:

- the first stage of the research involves identification of the research problem and execution of creative work following the principles of the brainstorming technique.
- the second stage of the research is a detailed analysis of the results of the brainstorming session, double selection of the obtained results and identification of factors that are regarded as key to the current research problem.

The research problem has formulated as follows: “The network of inter organisational relations is considered to be a modern environment of the implementation of business projects. Project teams determine effectiveness of management of international projects. Multinational project teams are created and managed in the sphere of social relations. With challenges facing project teams, such as dynamism, diversity, flexibility, agility or virtuality, there is a need for deconstruction of the set of success factors in management of international teams. What factors should be given particular attention in the context of managing international teams in network economy?”

With reference to the above formulated aim of expert research and research problem, the following things are listed:

- execution of the first stage of the research enables identification of a set of factors crucial to manage multicultural project teams in a networked space,
- through double selection of the indicated factors, key success factors in project team management are identified (second stage of the research).

The empirical studies have been conducted among project teams functioning in the environment of international corporations. The research sample include 36 people, who, following the recommendations of the “Philips 66” technique, are divided into 6-person groups. Leaders of these groups are invited to the second stage.

#### **Attempt to Deconstruct the Set of Success Factors in Project Team Management – Findings of Expert Research**

The general brainstorming session (first stage of the research) has been conducted in 6 research groups. The creative work aims to find answers to the research question formulated in the paper: What factors should be given particular attention in the context of managing international teams in network economy? Comparison of the responses enables identification of a set of 24 factors crucial to the management of multicultural project teams (Table 2). The identified factors

oscillate around the characteristics of two basic cognitive perspectives. Part of them refers to the specificity of the functioning of a project team as a whole. The other factor identity is the characteristics of a human being as a member of a project team.

Analysis of the identified factors uses as the basis for executing the second stage of expert research. The leaders of the distinguished 6 research groups characterise each of the 24 factors. The significance of each of the factors for management of multicultural teams is accepted as the basis for the analysis. Following the adopted procedure of double selection, three sets of factors are identified:

- set 1: factors that are ascribed particular significance during double selection,
- set 2: factors that are considered to be of little importance as a result of double selection,
- set 3: factors that achieve different scores in two selections.

**Table 2. Set of Factors Crucial to Management of Multicultural Project Teams – Findings of the First Stage of the Expert Research Using “Philips 66” Technique**

Item	Factor	Item	Factor
1.	need to learn	13.	trust
2.	social knowledge	14.	goal orientation
3.	general knowledge	15.	common objective
4.	professional qualifications	16.	understanding of the cultural context
5.	mentality	17.	internal communication system
6.	tolerance of uncertainty	18.	access to information
7.	risk-taking propensity	19.	frequency of information transmission
8.	ability to initiate contacts	20.	efficiency of communication channels
9.	engagement and emotional attitude	21.	interpersonal relations
10.	way of motivating	22.	capability of information acquisition
11.	acceptance of values	23.	capability of information synthesis
12.	communication skills	24.	place in the group structure

Set 1 is acknowledged as consisting of key factors in management of multicultural project teams. Set 2 is rejected given the research problem formulated for this paper. Set 3 is subjected to discussion in order to finally decide whether a given factor should be accepted or rejected. On this basis, 15 key success factors in project team management in networked space are identified (Table 3).

The practice of the functioning of multicultural teams indicates the need to develop a common platform of communication. A significant role is played here by general knowledge. Insufficient level of the knowledge about the world limits the possibility of navigating freely around a multicultural space. Teamwork requires trust and sharing of concepts, phenomena and processes. It is true, that multicultural environment involves diversity, which is a key value in terms of the implementation of projects. However, some elementary agreement in the understanding of concepts, phenomena and processes, as well as approval of basic

values, seems to be essential. Of importance is also the understanding of the cultural context and social knowledge.

The platform for effective communication in multicultural teams is created based on recognition, acceptance and understanding of the cultural context. Acknowledging that different values and norms leads people’s behavior in the East and the West often reflect in how people communicate and why they misunderstand one another. Thus, learning communication in Asian organizations will bring new insight into the leadership and management practice (Barkema et al., 2015). Trust, social knowledge and mentality of project team members, which often result from the cultural context, implicate possibility of working in a team. Involvement and emotional attitude of the team members enable achievement of the community of objectives at the level of a project. The practice of project management confirms the need to develop the state of willingness and mobilisation in project teams.

**Table 3. Key Success Factors in Management of Project Teams in a Networked Space– Final Result of Expert Research Using the “Philips 66” Technique**

Exploration context		
cognitive	cultural	operational
–need to learn	–engagement and emotional attitude	– efficiency of communication channels;
–social knowledge	– trust	– internal communication system
–general knowledge	– mentality	– communication skills
–understanding of the cultural context	– interpersonal relations	– ability to initiate contacts
	– acceptance of values	– goal orientation
	– common objective	

While identifying success factors in management of multicultural teams in networked space, it is worth paying attention to the operational area. Ability to initiate contacts determines whether networked social relations will be created, maintained and used. The internal communication system developed for the purpose of a project team enables knowledge flow, skills and experience, both in the internal environment of a project and in the networked space.

### Summary

The location of a project in networked space invites one to review the functioning of project teams. The networking perspective implies a new dimension for creation and management of project teams. It is worth highlighting such characteristics as self-regulation of teams, diversity, flexibility, openness, agility, virtuality, etc.

A few dominant trends seem to emerge in the discussion on the development of the theory and practice of managing project teams. The first is connected with the increasing role of virtual spaces in business models. In this area, research on

management of virtual teams is conducted (Cascio, 2000; O'Leary and Mortensen, 2009; Griffith and Neale, 2001).

The second trend in the current discussion on management of project teams is the concept of Agile Project Management (see: Fernandez and Fernandez, 2008; Stare, 2013; Doherty, 2010; Meade and Sarkis, 1999). The agile approach to project management is about “minimalization of risk through concentration on small interactions of clearly defined deliverables” (Bhola, 2017).

The characteristics of the environment of inter organisational networks show the complexity and comprehensiveness of the set of factors determining the functioning of project teams. There are significant differences among these factors in terms of their importance for the functioning of project teams. The increasing importance of the area of management of international teams creates the need for identifying those factors that should be given a particular attention during project management in networked space. The authors are aware of certain limitations of the research approach presented in this paper, but are at the same time convinced of the necessity of conducting discussion in this area, both among theoreticians and practitioners of management.

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#### CO MA ZNACZENIE W ZARZĄDZANIU ZESPOŁEM PROJEKTOWYM?

**Streszczenie:** Omówiona w referacie teoretyczna i empiryczna dyskusja dotyczy tematu zarządzania projektami z perspektywy funkcjonowania zespołów projektowych. Problemem badawczym jest lokalizacja zarządzania zespołem projektowym w przestrzeni sieciowej. Metodologia badań zastosowana w artykule obejmuje analizę literatury i metody eksperckie. Celem badań empirycznych jest identyfikacja kluczowych czynników sukcesu w zarządzaniu zespołem projektowym w przestrzeni sieciowej. Zaproponowana procedura badawcza w technice Philips 66 umożliwiła identyfikację zestawu czynników, które są kluczowe dla zarządzania wielokulturowymi zespołami projektowymi w przestrzeni

sieciowej. Następnie analizuje się każdy z czynników i identyfikuje kluczowe czynniki sukcesu w zarządzaniu zespołem projektowym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** projekt, projekt zarządzania, zarządzanie zespołem projektowym, przestrzeń w sieci

#### 项目团队管理中的重要事项？

**摘要：**本文提出的理论和实证研究从项目团队运作的角度来看，涉及项目管理的主题。研究问题是项目团队管理在网络空间中的位置。本文应用的研究方法包括文献分析和专家方法。实证研究的目的是在网络空间中确定项目团队管理的关键成功因素。飞利浦66技术的拟议研究程序已经确定了一系列对于管理网络空间中多文化项目团队至关重要的因素。随后分析每个因素，并确定项目团队管理中的关键成功因素。

**关键词：**项目管理项目项目团队管理网络化空间