

Communication Concepts for Handling Projects More Efficiently

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Summary

In our current, fast-lived society, construction projects are becoming ever larger and more demanding. In order to achieve the tasks in the often short timeframe provided the number of project participants increases proportionally. To achieve the project goals, interfaces must be negotiated along with the client's wishes. For international partners not only efficient communication is important, but gaining an understanding of the cultural differences as well as mastery of the language used in the project are just as vital. Inadequate communication may increase the risks of the project not succeeding and cause additional costs and possibly significant delays.

By using adequate methods in communication and through systematic documentation of the results many typical errors can be avoided which may have a significant impact on a project's success. This paper presents the general problem and shows some simple solutions which can help in handling projects more efficiently.

Keywords: communication, cooperation, project controlling, documentation

1. Project Task

In many small projects the number of participants with probably 20 persons remains manageable. For many large-scale projects the number of people participating may quickly rise to more than 100 individuals once the project gets started. It is easy to lose sight of who is responsible for what task. In order to remain within a project's often tight time frame it is absolutely necessary to coordinate very efficiently. One has to know who the correct contact person is and who makes the decisions just to avoid wasting time. The results and agreements of any discussion must be documented judiciously and should be made available to the entire project team. As not all participants will be involved right from the beginning structures must be created such that these persons can be fed information from the ongoing project. Decisions should be documented along with their justification as some of these decisions may prove to be incorrect as the project goes along further which often will not have been foreseeable at the time.

2. Communication Technology

2.1 Project Team Organization

The project team is usually assembled at the beginning of a project. The decision makers on both the owner/client and contractor sides will be designated as well as the persons responsible. The composition of the team must be documented accordingly and be made available in a project team listing or similar. Next to last name and first name and the usual contact information such as mail and e-mail addresses, telephone and fax numbers should be listed along with the areas of responsibility and gender. The latter is a very important factor in personal communication and in international projects it can become very difficult to deduce the gender of the contact person just