The Power of Project Leadership
Agenda

- Definitions of Leading and Managing
- Leadership in Action within projects
- Essential Behaviors of Project Leaders
- Conclusion
Managing versus Leading

“Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing.”
– Bennis and Nanus, 1985

“Most U.S. corporations today are over-managed and under led.”

Managing
- Enforcing Standards
- Resolving Issues
- Budgeting
- Planning
- Reviewing Status

Leading
- Coaching
- Providing Vision
- Motivating
- Aligning Stakeholders
- Demonstrating Standards and Providing Structure
Great Leaders
Leadership Attributes

Leaders…

- Develop and communicate vision
- Inspire a higher level of performance
- Are proactive and forward thinking; they take initiative
- Listen to and address concerns
- Exhibit wisdom and sound judgment
- Have a high degree of personal awareness
- Are able to persuade others
- Are well organized
- Possess enthusiasm
- Are knowledgeable in their field
- Take Ownership
# Management and Leadership Measures

## Management Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Charter details project scope, roles, timeline</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Work Breakdown Structure and Work Plan are current</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Processes and standards are followed</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Status and progress reporting are communicated</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Budget controls and reporting are in place</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Vendors are appropriately managed</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>The team is staffed appropriately</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
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</table>

## Leadership Measures

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Stakeholders are engaged and aware</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Team members have a clear vision of the project</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Risks are anticipated and addressed</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Morale is high</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Work is well organized and milestones are clearly communicated</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Decisions support the overall vision</td>
<td>![Not at all]</td>
<td>![Somewhat]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicating a Vision

“Without a vision the people perish”
- Proverb

Vision is important on several levels

- Expectations can only be met to the level they are defined
- Vision and mission are high level messages that serve to guide low level decisions
- Teams respond to and are motivated by a clear vision
Inspiring and Motivating

“*The moral is to the physical as three to one.*”
– Napoleon Bonaparte

“*Whether you think you can or can’t, you’re right*”
– Henry Ford

- Motivated and productive team members are valuable!

- Inspiration can help, but sometimes a leader must get rid of the wrong resources and bring the right resources on board

- Detractors and poor performers impact more than their own productivity, they can infect the entire team and bring down morale
Being Proactive and Forward Thinking

“A drive thy business or it will drive thee.”
– Ben Franklin

- A large part of being successful is simply avoiding failure; too often, teams focus on the window dressing and are blind to the pitfalls.

- Great leaders are thinking ahead while others are focused on current tasks.

- Leaders get ahead of challenges and avoid surprises.
Listening and Addressing Concerns

“A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.” – Lawrence J. Peter

“Perception is reality.” – Anonymous

- It’s important to understand an audience; Where is silence consent? Where is it a cover for fear and loathing?

- Human issues (such as unmanaged expectations, hidden agendas, negative rumors) can be more harmful and are less visible than execution issues

- An effective leader will draw out concerns and manage expectations
Gaining Knowledge and Wisdom

“Much wisdom often goes with brevity of speech.” – Sophocles
“Wisdom consists of the anticipation of consequences.” – Norman Cousins

- Leaders are competent in the subject matter of the work, although in many cases others will have deeper expertise.
- With the right knowledge a leader will know when to challenge assumptions and make adjustments to plan.
- Wisdom complements knowledge – a leader will anticipate outcomes and make informed choices to promote a successful outcome.
# Leadership Traits and Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gregarious</td>
<td>• Frequent communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inspirational</td>
<td>• Expectation setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inquisitive</td>
<td>• Active listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wise</td>
<td>• Structured decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enthusiastic</td>
<td>• Positive attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persuasive</td>
<td>• Socratic and Persistent</td>
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Project Leadership
Persistent Execution Challenges

• “90% of Corporate Strategies Are Never Implemented” – Balanced Scorecard Collaborative, 2007

• Most organizations do not actively manage the connections between projects… the resulting fragmentation costs an estimated $1 trillion per year.

  “…we spend more than $250 billion each year on IT application development of approximately 175,000 projects…”

  ✔ 31.1% of projects will be cancelled before they get completed…

  ✔ 52.7% of projects will cost 189% of their original estimates…”

  Standish Group, 1994
A Day in the Life of a Project Manager …

• Leading projects is more art than science
• Knowing a project is not working is one thing
• Understanding why, connecting the dots and actually fixing the root cause are entirely different matters
What Success Looks Like …

- Reflect on your most successful project.

- What does success look like?

- Why did you succeed?
  - The right vision?
  - The right plan?
  - The right commitment?
  - The right team?
Project Success is Driven by Both Strong Leadership and Management…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Success Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on the right business problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-sizing the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating an achievable roadmap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrating 360 degree decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing team political capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning team and project goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating and removing project obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting projects to changing conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaping achievable schedules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing resource capacity</td>
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... as well as sound project management methods.
Inside the Mind of the Project Leader

• What are the most difficult project challenges to conquer?

• What role(s) do methods and tools play in solving those challenges?

• What leadership attributes are needed to solve these challenges?
The Project Leadership Challenge

The project leader **owns the conversation** that illuminates:

- the problem,
- right-sizes the vision,
- motivates teams to respond
- ultimately adapts execution to capitalize on unfolding conditions

**Project Leaders help the business articulate their vision**
The 4 Core Strengths of Project Leadership

Event: Agency’s executive team announces a competing, high priority project

- **Clarity**
  - Victorate Business Problem
  - Create Responsibility
  - Manage Expectations

- **Motivation**
  - Aligning Individual and Project Goals
  - Managing Team Diversity
  - Political Savvy

- **Vision**
  - Right-Sizing the Vision
  - Fostering Innovation
  - 360-degree Decision-Making

- **Execution**
  - Anticipate Risk
  - Driving with Discipline
  - Adapting to Changing Conditions

- **Political Pressure for Results**
  - Strategic Alignment

- **Team Self-Preservation**

- **Competing Agendas**

- **Momentum**

- **Execution Focus**

- **Scarcity of Resources**
Project Leadership Strength: Clarity

*Project leader as ‘illuminator’*

- Core focus
  - The right business problem
  - Clear expectations
  - Ownership

- Common project challenges
  - Disputed ownership
  - Influence and timing

- Essential behaviors
  - Validating the business problem
  - Managing expectations
  - Creating responsibility
Project Leadership Strength: Vision

- Core focus
  - Achievable roadmap
  - Inductive solutions
  - Alignment
- Common project challenges
  - Cultural fit
  - Invisible constraints
  - Speed
- Essential Behaviors
  - Right sizing the vision
  - Integrative thinking (connecting the dots)
  - Instilling innovation

*Project leader as ‘sage’*
Project Leadership Strength:

Motivation

- Core focus
  - Coordination
  - Momentum
  - Performance

- Common project challenges
  - Team self preservation
  - Political pressures

- Essential behaviors
  - Aligning individual and project goals
  - Team excellence thru diversity
  - Political savvy

*Project leader as ‘coxswain’*
Project Leadership Strength: Execution

- **Core focus**
  - The right things at the right time in the right way
  - Measurable outcomes
  - Project health

- **Common project challenges**
  - Team self preservation
  - Political pressures

- **Essential behaviors**
  - Anticipate risk and remove project obstacles
  - Monitor project vital signs
  - Drive with discipline and urgency

*Project leader as ‘conductor’*
Strategies to Strengthen Leadership Behaviors

• Learn by Doing
  • Feedback (and corrective action)
  • Post mortems (Lessons Learned)
  • Executive Leadership Coaching

• Tools
  • Roadmap tools
  • Social network tools
  • Team motivation tools
  • Traditional project management tools
Project Leader Summary

• Projects are organic

• Project management methods and tools are important to managing the project

• Key leadership behaviors are required to:
  • Bring the project management methods and tools to life,
  • Sense the changing environment and
  • Adapt the project to the changing environment
Leadership Conclusions

Leadership is distinct and different from management.

Leadership is an important, sometimes under-emphasized, skill for getting to successful outcomes.

Leadership without management is of limited value (and vice versa); Both are required to be effective.

Project managers should seek to become better leaders, in addition to being good managers, in order to become more effective.
Contact Information

For a copy of the slides or other questions contact:

Teresa Alvarez
TAlvarez@pointb.com
(312)962-1412

Maureen Lombardo
MLombardo@pointb.com
(602) 357-6818

Chuck Ritter
CRitter@pointb.com
(312) 962-1402