

PROJECT MANAGER LEADERSHIP FORMING PROCESS

ALEXANDER N. PAVLOV (IT Expert Co.)

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Management success to a great extent depends on Project Manager's abilities to lead people in project team. PMI PMBOK (PM Body of knowledge) [1] describes the following leadership characteristics: establishing direction, aligning people, motivating and inspiring. However, the process of leadership abilities forming is not well studied by the time being. Importance of development leadership skills and abilities is obvious as they are needed for large projects with big project teams successful implementation. As we have now on market a growing demand on large and complex project implementation PM leadership development process is in focus.

2. THE PROBLEM

In general, each Project Manager (PM) performs 3 functions while managing the project implementation:

- DO
- MANAGE
- LEAD

Depending on a project volume, proportion between these 3 functions in project manager's time balance is different. For instance, project team leader responsible for a small project (project team of 2-3 people) is performing mostly "do" function, less "manage" function and much less "lead" function. Project manager, responsible for average project (project team of 10-20 people) is performing mostly "manage" function, less "do" function and, to a certain extent "lead" function. Project executive, responsible for large project (project team of more than 30-40 people) must perform mostly "lead" function, less "manage" function and, to a quite small extent "do" function.

The point is that success of project manager leading role depends on how the process of forming leadership abilities is going through changing priorities in project manager time balance.

3. CHANGING PRIORITIES IN PROJECT MANAGER TIME BALANCE

There are 3 milestone in this process observed: (1) milestone of starting primarily managing function performing, (2) milestone of starting leading function forming, (3) milestone of starting primarily leading function performing.

Figure 1 illustrates a process of changing priorities in project manager time balance.

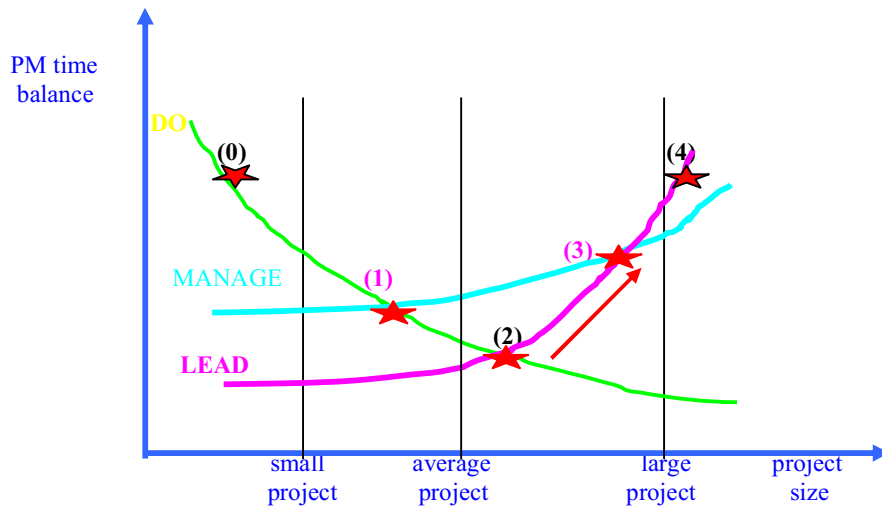


FIG. 1 PM TIME BALANCE OF PROJECT SIZE DEPENDENCY

Achieving of milestone (1) is a "project manager birth momentum". Starting from this point PM is mostly managing people in project team and less doing works by himself. Achieving of milestone (2) is a "potential

project leader birth momentum". At this point PM discovers his personal abilities to lead people. These abilities may be developed further and may be not.

Achieving of milestone (3) is a "project leader birth momentum". Starting from this point PM is leading people first and less managing.

The key thing is moving of potential leader from (2) to (3) milestone. This process is a PM leadership forming process. While this moving from (2) to (3) milestone potential project leader is going through the process of forming his leadership abilities. Milestone (3) should be achieved before PM nomination for a large project managing role. This role is for project executives who completed successfully leadership forming process and able to demonstrate a real leadership performance. At milestone (4) leader demonstrates a high performance results on managing large complex project team successfully.

Both functions MANAGE and LEAD are growing on the path from milestone (2) to milestone (3) and further to milestone (4). Nevertheless, function LEAD is growing faster than function MANAGE. Due to this fact leading function becomes equal to managing function at milestone (3) and much higher than managing function at milestone (4).

4. PM LEADING AND MANAGING FUNCTIONS BALANCE

Figure 2 illustrates PM Leading and Managing functions balance.

At Milestone (2) PM spends more time managing and less time leading people in project team (i.e. $OE < OF$).

At Milestone (3) PM spends equal time for both managing and leading people in project team (i.e. $OA = OB$).

Having achieved milestone (4) PM spends surely more time leading and much less time managing people in project team (i.e. $OC > OD$).

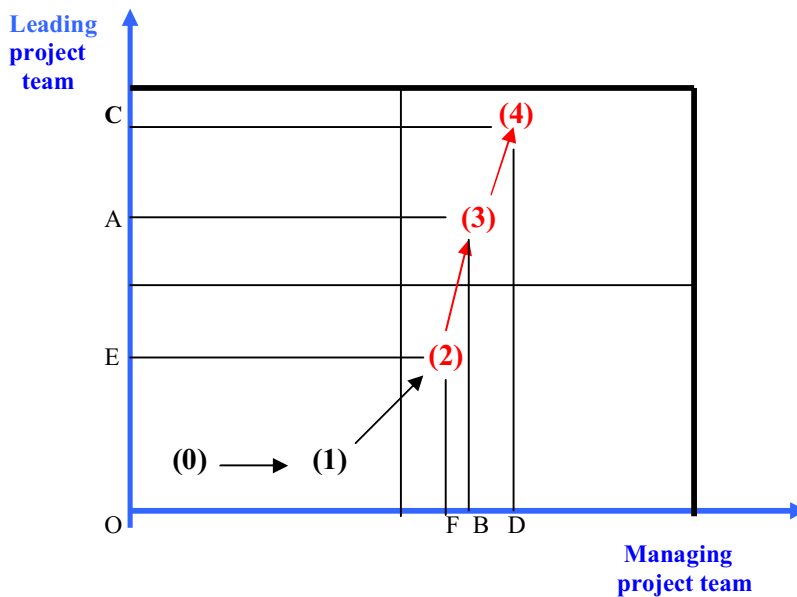


FIG. 2 LEADING AND MANAGING FUNCTIONS BALANCE

5. RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP FORMING

What should be certain recommendations on achieving success in forming project manager leadership ? Another words, how to provide on-going process of changing priorities between PM managing and leading functions as illustrated in Table 1 below ? To a great extend the success of this changing priorities depends on such a factors like: right balance in directive and supportive behavior, individual work with each employee, effective team work guidance, people motivation. In fact, only high effective PM may become a leader. Critical success factor of this process is a speed of PM leadership abilities development. If this speed is not enough, say not faster than PM managing function growth speed, than milestone (3) is not achievable at all. This PM will remain effective manager and will never become a leader.

Milestone	PM functions balance	PM Status
(2)	managing > leading	Potential Leader
(3)	managing = leading	Real Leader
(4)	leading > managing	Mature Leader

TABLE 1 CHANGING PRIORITIES BETWEEN PM MANAGING AND LEADING FUNCTIONS

Achievement of milestone (3) as a process of moving PM from potential leader to real leader of project team requires PM focusing on:

- personal dedication and enthusiasm
- “out of box” thinking
- clear goals setting

These priorities provide creation and necessary growth of leadership abilities with the result of “project leader birth momentum” at milestone (3). At this point a new leader should be recognized in a project team. According to Harold Kerzner [2] the following leadership skills should be demonstrated at this stage: flexibility and change orientation, innovative thinking, initiative and charisma.

Achievement of milestone (4) as a process of further growing leadership abilities requires PM focusing on:

- teamwork
- coaching
- formulate vision
- delegating

These priorities provide a consistent growth of lead function with a result of “a mature project leader birth momentum” at milestone (4). At this stage PM as a mature leader and project executive is more delegating, focusing on strategic goals of large and complex project.

6. REFERENCES

1. Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) 2000 Edition, ISBN 1880410230.
2. *Harold Kerzner*, Project Management. A systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Consulting. 6th edition, ISBN 0-471-28835-7, p. 172