Saimaa University of Applied Sciences
Business Administration, Lappeenranta
International Business

Le Bui Ngoc Anh

Role of communication in leading a successful international project

Thesis 2019

Abstract

Le Bui Ngoc Anh
Role of communication in leading a successful international project, 54 pages, 2 appendices
Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, Lappeenranta
Faculty of Business Administration
Degree Programme in International Business
Thesis 2019
Instructors: Senior lecturer Anu Kurvinen, Saimaa University of Applied Sciences; Managing Director, company X.

The purpose of the research was to find out reasons why communication is highly crucial in successful international project management. Also, it studied the role of the project manager from leadership perspectives, as a servant leader in project management. The work was commissioned by company X as one of their company's projects.

The information was gathered from literature, the Internet, by interviewing seven of company X's employees in Helsinki and as final feedback, after the project finished, from the customers, which was executed online by Google document.

The results of the study show the interconnected relationship between leadership and communication in successful project management. The results can be applied by future project manager who are looking for successful project management advice and by managers and human resource managers to learn more about the communication roles, plans and techniques to engage their employees further.

Keywords: project management, project manager, servant leadership, communication plan, communication tools

Table of Contents

1   Introduction

Nowadays, projects have been widely used in companies regardless of firm size, time, cost or result effectiveness. Hence, the role of project manager is becoming more and more important. Moreover, project manager can be anyone who has the ability, regardless if he or she is the CEO of the company or not. It requires more than just a title and experience for a project manager to be regarded as a leader in project team. The expected requirements can be named as the mindset and key persona, skills such as dedication, interpersonal skills, adaptability and customer orientation for a project manager to *guide the people involved (team, stakeholders, organization)* towards *the accomplishment of the project's objectives.* (Horine 2012.)

To be a project manager is not simple. It is more than just managing, but it is about leading people and other relevant stakeholders that leads to a project's success. To make the project successful, the project manager's key competencies are leadership skills. Hence, in this thesis, the definition, the roles, and effectiveness of effective leadership styles in managing project will be introduced and analyzed with the help of literature and online research, especially servant leadership. This is because this style has been reviewed and rated highly when the thesis writer carried out the project for this thesis as a project manager for an international team.

To become a successful leader in a project, communication techniques in different project stages is the key. Hence, a key topic in project management is communication, in other words, communication tactics in different stages of project management. With analyzed and logical facts and arguments, the thesis author wants to show the importance of communication in project management, which in fact is usually undervalued for its time consuming and unclear cost-effectiveness. This thesis focuses to describe factors contributing to project management's success, namely communication and project manager leadership. The goal of the thesis is to see the different communication roles in different project stages, and the importance of right communication skills for a project manager to oversee project management.

1.1   Research subject

The thesis focuses on international project management and factors contributing to its success, namely communication skills and leadership style of project manager. Culture is among the most influential factors in communication. Hence, dealing with cultural differences requires also leadership skills. Besides, during different stages of a project, communication plays an important role contributing to the project flow and success. Communication is not viewed only as part of meetings and documents. In a broader view, it is about the tools to deliver messages. Hence, a communication plan will also be analyzed in this thesis, together with the communication skills specifically required of a project manager to lead an internationally team.

1.2   Research question

The main research question of this thesis is "What communication skills are needed for a project manager as a servant leader to lead a successful international project team?" There are no fixed answers nor wrong or right answers to this question, but the main point of this thesis is to find out the tools and techniques of communication for a project manager. To support the main question, there are sub questions such as:

- What is the role of project manager from the leadership perspective?
- What are the leadership skills that project managers need?
- Why are leadership and communication skills related to each other?
- What is servant leadership and its connection to project management?
- What are the communication techniques to deal with cultural differences in managing a project?

The goal of having several questions is to highlight the tight interdependence between leadership and communication skills as regards project management. Even though there are several questions, they are all connected and strengthen each other, to give a clear picture of a successful project manager.

1.3 Research methods

The research questions of the thesis will be answered with a qualitative type of research, which aims to solve the questions what, how and why. This research method is believed to be the most suitable one for the writer to get a logical, clear and deep understanding of project management.

There are two parts in the study: theory part and empirical part. In addition to the literature sources, the empirical part is inevitably important for the thesis to provide more practical experiences concerning the thesis topic. The empirical research is a thirty-thousand-euro international project that the thesis writer has carried out as project manager. In short, the result of the project highlights the importance of communication in project management.

To gain a deeper understanding and achieve practical information on the thesis topic, the research is carried out with both personal interviews and an online survey, regarding the project success where communications and servant leaderships styles are at the center. To be specific, the personal interviews involve seven internal employees in Helsinki. The main idea of the interview is to explore different expectations regarding the project management style in an internal company, including the factors that will make this project successful. The interview form is included in the Appendix. A feedback survey is carried out at the end of the project. Via the survey, the thesis writer hopes to get answers regarding the success of project management with the communication skills used. Right communication skills truly facilitate the project success. The target group for online feedback survey is 35 internal tour guides in the company's project. The online method is chosen for its flexibility, and online survey gives users the freedom to express their feelings. Hence, this survey helps the thesis research to measure the importance of leadership and communications through scale detailed questions score from 1-7 relating to the topics. The survey form is included in the Appendix as well.

1.4 Theoretical framework:

Differences in project types also require different methods of and approaches to project management.

Scope
Communicate with managers, stakeholders

Needs

Outputs

Initiation
Communication required

Planning
Communication required

Approval
Communication required

Delivery
Communication required

Closure
Communication required

Resources
(people, $, time)

Outcomes
(impact, benefit)
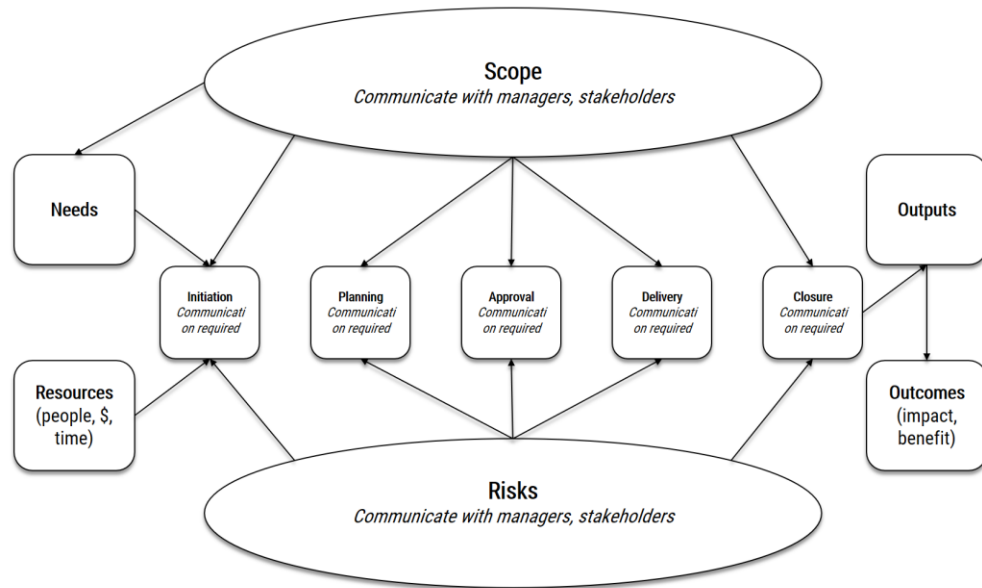
Risks
Communicate with managers, stakeholders

Figure 1 Project management model (Goleman 2018)

From the model in figure one, we can easily see the connections between leadership and communication. To manage different project stages, the project manager needs to be the key controller, using different communicating tactics and methods. This model also shows the over all picture of elements contributing to the success of project management. It is crucial to put the scope in the highlight of the project, as this will direct the project in the right direction. If there are no changes in the project resources, budget, and timing, there is no need to change the project's scope. Risk is an inevitable part of the project. The more the project risk is controlled, the better for the project progresses. Project inputs arise originally from the needs of the customers and are influenced by the project resources (human resources, budget and timing). Hence, it is vital to have proper communication plans and tactics throughout the project stages in order to achieve the project targets and goals.

The thesis will describe this theoretical framework as follows: It starts with a theory about project management's success elements: project manager's role in servant leadership and proper communication's roles in different project stages. The author base the description on previous literature and online articles specialized in project management. After the theoretical part, the case of company X, which includes the project that the thesis writer had carries out, is introduced

which will give practical experiences about leadership and communications, thus describing the importance of servant leadership and communication.

1.5 Definitions of key terminology

The first term is project management. According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), project management is defined as *the application of knowledge, skills, and techniques to execute projects effectively and efficiently.* For Barker and Cole, *a project is a unique piece of work, with a defined beginning and end. And at least one major crisis.* Project management is simply the process of managing projects. According to Horine (2012), it includes three key points:

• *Project management is not "brain surgery". It covers a vast array of subjects, processes, skills, and tools but the key fundamentals of project management are straightforward and are consistent across industries.*

• *To better understand project management, we need to understand what a project is. The nature of a project provides insights into the scope and challenges of project management.*

• *To better understand project management, we need to understand what is implied by the term managing and how this compares against traditional business management.*

The second term in the thesis is leadership. According to Oxford Dictionary, leadership is *the action of leading a group of people or an organization.* It also includes *the state or position of being a leader* and *leaders of an organization and country* to name a few.

The third term is the project manager: He/she is the leader of the project. According to Horine (2012), the many roles of project management perform involves leadership, including the following:

- **Planner** – The project manager makes sure the scope of the project aligning with its success factors. Besides, his responsibility is also engaging stakeholders, executing and controlling the project.

- **Point Man** – He serves as the central point of contact for all oral and written project communications to key stakeholders.
- **Facilitator** – He helps stakeholders and team members working together despite different perspectives, in order to achieve effective team work and project goals.
- **Aligner** – Project manager reaches agreement with the stakeholders on project definition; success criteria, approach and manage stakeholder expectations throughout the project while managing the competing demands of time, costs, and quality; gains agreement on resource decisions and issue resolution action steps.
- **Problem solver** – He figures out problems in the team, and uses his experiences and techniques to solve these problems.
- **Umbrella** – Project manager works to shield the project team from the politics and "noise" surrounding the project, so they can stay focused and productive.
- **Coach** – He is the coach of the project team. He helps team members to understand their roles, helps them in their tasks and constantly provides motivations and feedback to the team.
- **Salesman** – This role is focused on "selling" the benefits of the project to the organization, serving as a "change agent", and inspiring team members to meet project goals and overcome project challenges.
- **Ownership** – Project manager is responsible for the project success or failure. Hence, he should lead by example, and is accountable to the project team members and relevant stakeholders.
- **Savvy** – Project manager should invest in his knowledge of understanding the organizational environment and its people, also show practical knowledge of the changing environment, thinking fast and developing personal relationships with team members and stakeholders for the project's benefit.

The fourth term is communication. Generally, it is a *two-way process of reaching mutual understanding,* in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas, and feelings but also create and share meaning (Rajkumar 2018). Moreover, communication is *a means of connecting people or*

places. In business, it is a key function of management-an organization cannot operate without communication (Business Dictionary.com 2018) between levels, departments, and employees. To master communicating, the project manager needs to understand this process and its factors.

1.6 Overview of company X and Guide Academy project

Company X is a Finnish tour operator that specializes in "experience travel" to Northern Lapland and Northwest Russia. In addition to scheduled departures, they also offer tailor group tours to places across the Nordic area. All destinations are run by a dedicated team of travel industry professionals. The company is currently working in the Business to Business segment, in other words, involving tailor-made groups, when the sales team make tours and design itineraries for customer groups of other companies, and free independent tourists, when they offer service packages and tours. The company is a link between tourist agencies in Asia and activity service providers in Lapland. It focuses on groups from Asia with a vision to become the best travel operator with the most satisfied guests.

The company values are fresh and fun (focusing on innovation); passion (focusing on the service level); embrace (about the happy team) and trust (about operations). These values are also reasons why partners (other businesses) want to cooperate with the company, because of the travel experiences, expert services, earning customer trust, and professional planning operation.

The Guide Academy project provides practical training for the company's guides in Lapland. The training period lasts for nine days in Saariselka, with 9-day training agenda, which includes both theory sessions and practical experiences in the destination's products, for example Husky Safari, reindeer safari and snowshoes. The total length of the project is three months, with a budget of 30,000 euros, and 35 people involved. The project team members are the company's Chief Executive Officer, destination managers, the marketing manager, the company's driver, the project manager (the thesis writer) and the main customers (the guides). There are two main training methods: training sessions and guides' handbook.

As being the project manager in this international project, the author realized the importance of proper communication skills and leadership skills that would make project management easier.

1.7 Delimitations

There are several delimitations for this thesis. The researcher focuses on only communication skills as a project management technique, which is the main target topic to analyze. Eventhough to be a successful leader in managing projects requires several characteristics, in this thesis only communication will be discussed to get a deep understanding of this important skill, instead of going into too general crucial project manager's competencies. Also, the thesis focuses on how the communication context should be considered during different project stages involving the tools for communication such as different technological tools.

Concerning the leadership topic, only the servant leadership style is in the focus, to be analyzed and used in the project. There are a variety of different styles for the project manager to manage a project, however, to deal with this project that has an international team, the author chooses to focus on project management as a servant leader. Another delimitation is from the research method, which is solely based on the company X Guide Academy project. In specific, the resources to prove communication theory's effectiveness will solely based on results of interviews and online survey, which are carried out the company's internal employee.

2 Project manager as a leader

The responsibility of a project managers is undeniable. First, there are the organizational results. To reach this goal, leadership is needed. There are higher and higher expectations from enterprises for the project manager to align the enterprise's vision into their projects and further, the projects' results should boost and contribute to the enterprise's goals. To meet this demand, *it does not only involve technical project management skills, but also international skills, and especially, leadership skills to involve the whole team to reach the enterprise's goals*. (Roeder 2013.)

Moreover, there are different types of project. Projects can be different in size and scope, for example the amount of work in the project, costs and lengths.

There are five stages in projects

- *Initiating: Authorizing the project or phrase.*
- *Planning: Defining and redefining objectives of the project and selective the best course of action to attain objectives.*
- *Executing: Coordinating people and resources to implement the plan.*
- *Controlling: Ensuring project objectives are met by monitoring and measuring progress regularly to identify variances from the plan so that corrective actions can be taken.*
- *Closing: Formalizing acceptance of the project and bring to an orderly end.*

Finally, there are two parts of results that the project tries to deliver: outputs and outcomes (Goleman 2018).

Also, the project's success is measured by its results. This also requires leadership skills of the project manager, to control the project's stakeholders, scope, budget, and timing. The project manager should be the leader who draws the direction for the whole project team. Uncertainty happens usually in all project stages; hence, the project manager should be the leader to clarify and provide the transparency and answers for direction to the team, especially solutions for problems rising up frequently in the project. The overall project expectation comes from the enterprise management level, however, the daily goals, directions, encouragement and motivations that the project team needs come from project managers. (Roeder 2013.)

Another fact about the project manager is that they do not have direct authority. In other words, there is no direct reporting for a project manager. Since there is no official department in an enterprise that focuses only on one single project, the project team members usually report to their supervisor or manager in their official department. This causes difficulties for the project manager to control his project team members since they might not have project responsibility in their job description. Also, there is a resistance since doing project work affects their normal job routine in their main roles in the company. However, the project manager can

manage the project team with *a dotted line reporting relationship.* This means the project manager directs the employees only in the matters related to the project. Moreover, the project manager can also provide feedback about their performances in the project. The situation can be unique and awkward sometimes when the employee has both a formal supervisor whom he reports to about his job and the project manager controlling the project tasks. This is a good chance for the project manager to practice his unofficial leadership skills, to learn to understand his team members and lead them. Also, he/she can practice before assuming a formal position of authority in the future. (Roeder 2013.)

2.1   Leadership in project management

Generally, managers do not realize the importance of organizational climate that affects the business's financial results, which in fact takes up almost a third of the financial performance. Organizational climate comes from the manager's leadership style. Specifically, this is when the manager controls his employee work results, reports, gathers information, makes business decisions, changes and handles crises. Leadership can be categorized into six styles (Figure 2), which based on different emotional intelligence competencies that work on different occasions and have different effects on organizational climate. (Goleman 2018.)
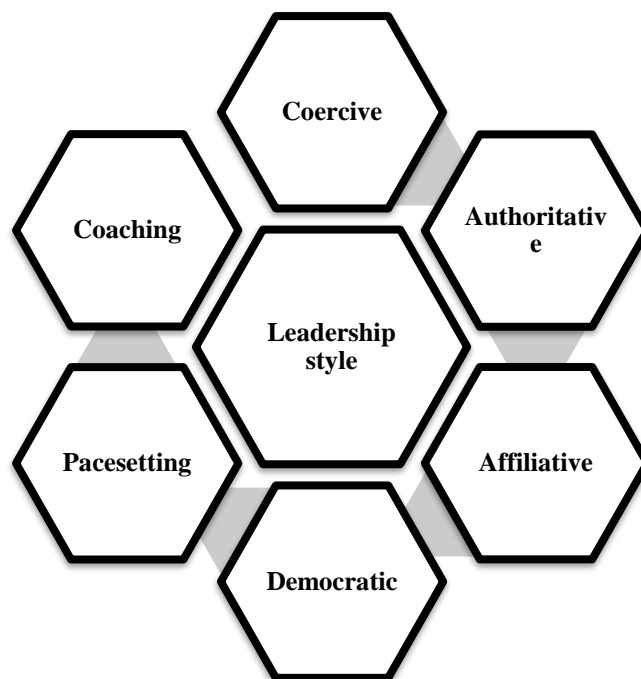
Figure 2 Leadership style (Goleman 2018)

The first style of a leader is the coercive one. In a phrase, this style can be summed up as "Do what I say". It works best when the manager is dealing with a crisis, a problem employee, or a turnaround. However, this will influence negatively on the organizational climate, specifically the organization's flexibility and employees' motivation.

The second leadership style is authorization, in which the main goal is to mobile people towards a vision. "Come with me" is the short phrase for this style. This style works best when there is a need for a clear direction or changes to a new vision. When a business is at the initial stages, this style of leadership can perform at its best; however, it will be less efficient for the leader to use this style to work with team members that are more experienced than him.

The third style is affiliative leadership. This style involves mainly empathy and communication. The summary phrase is "People come first". The style's goal is to create harmony and build emotional bonds. However, the side can lead to a poor development in employee's performance. Also, the leader of this style does not usually give advice, which causes employees to lack directions.

The fourth style is the democratic one. This style involves employees in the decision-making process, with a summary phrase as "What do you think?". This helps the leader to get valuable inputs from the employees, increase the organization's flexibility and employees' responsibility. The downsides are long meetings, and this can cause employees lack of direction.

The pacesetting style is the fifth one. The summary phrase of this style is "Do as I do, now". The leaders set high standards for performance and lead by example. This brings positive impacts on highly competent and self-motivated employees, but negative ones on other employees due to the high demands for excellence, which will cause the resistance in employees to take more responsibilities in their work.

The last style but also a very important one, is the coaching style. The style's goal is to develop people for the long-term effect. The impact is positive on employees'

desire to develop their weaknesses; however, the leader needs to deal with his employees' resistance to change, which is not easy.

As mentioned earlier, these six different styles work effectively in different situations. Hence, the more styles the leader can apply in his team leading, the better for creating and nurturing healthy organizational climate and business performance. (Goleman 2018.)

When leading without having official authority, not only managerial skills but also leadership skills are crucial for the project manager. When the project manager is the leader in the project team, he can win his team members' trust and accountability with leadership. Hence, without pushing an official title, the project manager can still lead the team to achieve the project goals. Official titles can make people finish their assigned task, but a leader in their mind will motivate the employees to accomplish their given task with their best efforts. (Roeder 2013.)

Leadership is also dynamic. As stated above, the project manager has a wide variety of roles in a project. At different stages of the project, the roles change accordingly. The art of leadership here lies in the fact whether the project manager knows when to lead and when to follow. (Roeder 2013.)

To become the real leader for the team members, it is advised that the project manager knows their team members expectations for their leaders. A leader is expected by employees to leave positive influences and not affect their own work. Hence, the project manager cannot use the direct authority of assigning his team members tasks with no clear explanations and structures. The role of boss, parents, or managers are out of the line for a project manager. People's expectations for project manager's characteristics are listed below: (Roeder 2013):

- *Active listener.*
- *Takes ownership.*
- *Follows up.*
- *Careful wording.*
- *Honesty.*
- *Willingness to say, "I don't know.*
- *Integrity.*

- *Same message in different settings.*
- *Unselfish; more interested in others than self.*
- *A sense of humor*
- *Compassionate.*
- *Competent.*
- *Organized.*
- *Respectful.*
- *Positive attitude.*
- *Does not take self too seriously.*
- *Open for input.*
- *Nonjudgmental.*
- *Confident.*
- *Has vision.*
- *Ability to put things in terms of the big picture.*
- *Intuitive.*

The leadership matrix below (Figure 3) is a tool to illustrate clearly the connection between a project manager and a leader. This model helps the project manager to choose the most suitable leadership styles, based on factors of time and experiences. In one project, different situations require different timing; hence the model can still be regarded as a continuum.
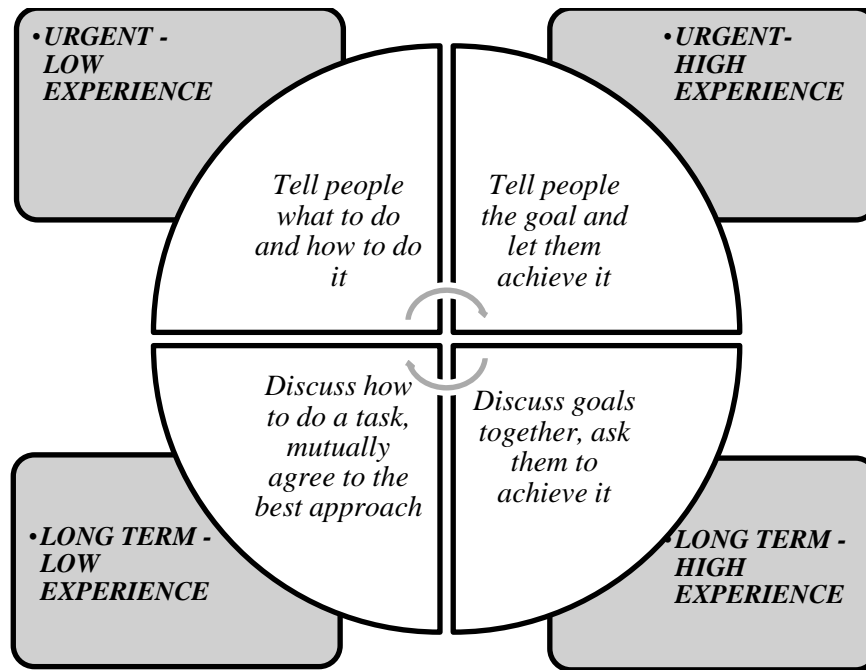
Figure 3 Detailed 2x2 leadership matrix (Roeder 2013)

As explained above about leadership model, to manage a project the project manager also considers the allowed time and available human resources' capabilities. For example, when the project manager is working with inexperienced stakeholders in an urgent situation, direct leadership is applied, because the inexperienced stakeholders require direct supervision and instruction, in other words, task-oriented style. In short, this is called "direct tasks". However, in the same urgent situation, but the stakeholders being experienced, the project manager needs to focus on providing direct goals, not the instruction to achieve goals. "Direct goals" are what the experienced stakeholders need in the urgent situation. When there is a long-term situation that allows more time, there should be task-oriented discussions, in other words "discuss tasks", between inexperienced stakeholders and the project manager, to increase the clear direction and training for the team. For experienced stakeholders, when there is more available time, goals should be in the center of discussion, as "discuss goals", for the project manager to increase stakeholders' responsibilities and consensus. (Roeder 2013.)

There are risks of project failure when the leader uses an inappropriate leading style. In specific, the leader should understand his stakeholders as far as he can, as inexperienced ones, in some cases, have the resistance to openly share their

lack of experiences. They are reluctant to ask their leaders for direction. If the leader does not figure out this case, it can take a long time counted in weeks or months for the stakeholders to try to figure out the direction by themselves, which will result in a delay in project delivery. Besides, the goals and budget, together with the quality of deliverables, are also negatively affected when the time gets delayed. (Roeder 2013.)

2.2 Leading an international team in a project

To lead a team, regardless of the team type, trust is the core value and tool for the leader. Trust helps the teamwork run properly, the work results can be driven to the highest level, team members cooperate with each other and dedicate to the mutual team goal. Gaining trust is a long process, however, it is required and needed for the team standards. An international team in which team members come from different cultural backgrounds is no exception; sometimes, gaining trust is harder for this team. (Molinsky & Gunling 2016.)

In the heart of leading lies the communication style. Different cultures have different communication styles of expressing opinions, regarding opinions, giving feedback and expressing disagreements. When it comes to cultural differences, there are perceptions of ethnocentrism involved as well. In an international team, the role of the leader is even more important. According to Molinsky and Gundling (2016), there are five pieces of advice for the leader to gain trust from his international team members:

- *Set the success as the team's structure. List out factors that make up the success for the team. Clarify as clearly as possible the direction. Make all the information and resources for the team transparent and accessible. Plan wisely and advance with different people's strength and use their knowledge and expertise at their best. Trigger their minds with challenges, curiosity, and flexibility.*
- *Study the cultural differences in the team. Understand your team members individual and as a team to choose mutual working communication and culture, in order to respect the employees and unite the different cultural personalities within the team. Mutual team norms will engage people,*

switch cultural differences into opportunities to learn among team members.

- *When team norms are set, stick to them. Team norms are the crucial tools to connect people as a team using incorporating practices from different cultural backgrounds. Communication by the project manager is crucial for managing cultural differences. Moreover, patterns of communication also differ based on culture. Team norms should be consistent and critical about regarding work styles and expectations to maintain a common ground team culture.*

- *Personal relationships are among the most powerful tools to solve team conflict. Cultural differences also have an impact on the way of building these private bonds. Team members, either they are from the UK or India, they are all human, who have their own feelings and emotions. As project manager, there are several ways to create social connections, namely social events, pairing team members of different nationalities and characteristics. These personal bonds will help the team leader to understand his team members, solve the potential conflict and make teamwork much easier for the leader to lead the team.*

- *Solve the conflicts as soon as they arises. An international team will inevitably come across conflict. However, the sooner that it is solved, the sooner the problem be prevented from becoming bigger. Knowledge of different cultural perspectives with communication skills will help the leader to build the common ground for the team to solve conflicts. The project manager should always be ready to have either direct conversation or private ones to solve the team's problems as well.*

In short, trust is crucial to lead the team to the project's success, as it is a powerful tool for a high-level effective team, especially a team combining different cultures. These tips are the keys for a leader to gain trust in leading an international team. In addition, the team leader, using this advice, will change the cultural differences into a team strength, and reduce the international team challenges. (Molinsky & Gundling 2016.) Moreover, servant leadership style, which focuses on the psychological human being, is the ultimate way for the project manager to gain trust, especially in the project team.

2.3 Project manager's responsibilities

To manage the project to success, the project manager needs to be the project's leader. Communication is the key for the project manager to become a leader, even without official authority. Hence, project manager is the main communicator in a project. There are two main parts of communication for project management: **control and communication** and **coordination**. These are described below. To manage **control and communication**, for the project manager it is not just weekly updates, or meeting minutes and reports about project progress. This means all actions involved, for example discussing and communicating the project aims and deliverables, and identifying and engaging all related stakeholders with their needs to align with the projects. Hence, communication should be planned strategically and in advance. The channels for communication should be based on project goals, situations and stakeholders, not solely on the preferences of the project manager. Email is commonly used for sharing updates, and it is regarded as a cold and quick way of information delivery. Research has proved that face-to-face meetings generate significantly more trust and collaboration than any other form of communication. Even though everyone is busy, which will cause inconvenience to have regular face to face meetings, the project manager should take every effort to arrange meetings on a regular basis.

Furthermore, the project manager should coordinate with his project team. The task given should be simplified and clarified, with careful planning and communication since unclear communication can lead to a project failure, which will ultimately affect the organization's goal as well. To conclude, a good project manager, as well as a good leader with appropriate and effective communication skills will control, communicate and coordinate to maintain the quality of the project. The right communication skills will bring several benefits for the project, including engaged stakeholders, equally distributed responsibilities, adhered milestones and a suitable project vision to overcome unforeseen issues arising up along different project stages. Also, this is a two-way correlation. A successful project also requires suitable communication skills of the project manager. (Clack 2013.)

2.4 Servant leadership in project management

A true leader is the one whose prime concern is a profound wish to facilitate others. Hence, the servant leader is the leader that has the willingness to serve the team. He sets the core of others' benefits outwards his own. *It begins with a natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.* (Humphreys 2005.) Another definition is *who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral.* (Humphreys 2005.) One can recognize the effect of servant leadership in an organizational environment. Employees voluntaryly take more ownership of the enterprise, their resistance to changes decreases, they find it easier to listen to the leader. Employees are also humans. According to human psychology, when people are taken care of, sympathized with, listened to, the mutual trust will be increased substantially, along with the relationships growing positively. Hence, servant leadership is the ultimate leadership style for long term development in an enterprise.

To make the employees serve the customers with respect, the leader needs to serve the employees accordingly. To empower the employees with new tasks, encourage them to accept changes, and reduce their resistance to changes, the servant leadership style is the way to go. The leader needs to set examples for people to follow him. In order to implement changes, the guided "five C's" should be applied in servant leadership: cooperating, coordinating, communicating, comforting and conflict resolving. Following this guideline requires the support, understanding, and humility of the leaders, which are the main characteristics of servant leadership style. Additionally, openness and communication are crucial for a servant leader, to set expectations and direction for his team. *This can be done by openly talking about the change and the vision behind it.* (Humphreys 2005.)

Servant leadership is a synergistic approach for any organization (or project) that values strong customer-service and team-focused approaches in their leaders. (Horine 2012).

According to Horine (2012), these are the outstanding characteristics of this philosophy:

- *Asserts a strong service orientation; lead by expanding service to others.*
- *Emphasizes listening, patience, respect, and responsiveness.*
- *Takes the perspective of others; maintains the best interest of others.*
- *Accepts responsibility; takes initiative.*
- *Encourages collaboration and trust; empowers individuals.*
- *Seeks growth and improvement in all team members, organization, and community.*
- *Solicits input and feedback from all stakeholders, especially in the decision-making process.*
- *Insist on the use of skills to influence and persuade, not manipulate.*
- *Spotlights a strong integrity principle – the ethical use of power.*

Like all project management and leadership skills, a servant-leadership mindset *is not an "all-or-nothing" approach. It is spectrum between a total egocentric leader-first mindset on one end and a complete servant-first thought pattern on the other end.* (Horine 2012).

Moreover, with the fast pace of global economy, the *old traditional, hierarchical, high-external-control, top-down management* is being replaced. A new form of control is called *strange attractor* - like a *sense of vision that people are drawn to, and united in, that enables them to be driven by motivation inside them* to achieve the common purpose. (Greenlead & Spears 2002.) This is the goal that every servant leader is striving for. *They are the ones who seek to draw out, inspire, and develop the best and highest within people from the organization in a process that creates a shared vision, which inspires them to stretch and reach deeper within themselves, and to use everyone's unique talents in whatever way is necessary to independently and interdependently achieve that shared vision.* (Greenlead & Spears 2002).

There are several advantages of the servant style. Humans are believed to have moral authority. Hence, servant leadership with the inspiration to encourage leaders to be just and care for their employees will be the uttermost ideal management

method. Moreover, the servant leader is the facilitator with a collaborative approach towards the team to make decisions. Hence, employees feel respected and responsible for the team, in a the friendly, not disciplinarian working atmosphere. Employees take ownership of their work, which will increase their work attachment and pride. Moreover, servant leadership especially suits well a diversified team. Since the leader encourages and respects their employees in the decision-making process, this flexibility encourages employees to develop at their best with self-fulfillment. Furthermore, employees' involvement will be increased substantially, when they are given ownership of the work, responsibility, flexibility, and chances to make decisions. As the project goal is to create and deliver the best product or services, servant leadership will create life-long benefits for both the project manager and the firm where the project was established. (Clarke 2016.)

In short, it is recommended for the project manager to use servant leadership style because it makes sense. In the project environment, it requires trust in self, where it effectively relates to others to get the work done, and where the project manager must completely understand the needs and requirements of the customers to deliver the proper solution. At the same time, servant leadership is a very practical path to take. In brief, servant leadership *is a synergistic approach* or a project (or organization) that *values strong customer-service and team-focused approaches* in their leaders. (Horine 2012.)

2.5 Project management tools

As previously defined, a successful project requires careful preparation from planning to ending stages. According to Horine in the "Project management" book (2012), there are different tools to build a project, which at the same time represent "key information and thought processes" that are vital for the project manager to manage the project:

- *Project charter:* It is specified in the initiation stage and provides *official notice to the organization*.
- *Project definition document:* It is created in the initiation stage and defines *project purpose, objectives, success criteria, and scope*. This is the key to

managing *expectations,* controlling *scope* and completing other *planning efforts.*

- *Requirements:* In the planning stage, the tool defines *the specifications for the product or output of the project.* This tool helps the manager to manage expectations and control the project scope.

- *Project schedule*: It is created in the planning stage via communication among project team. Project *schedule shows all work efforts, properly estimated, with logical dependencies, assigned to responsible resources scheduled with the year calendar.* Its value is in directing all project team-work efforts, it is the key to managing expectations, and *allows for what-if simulations when things change.*

- *Status reports*: These can be used in both the planning and delivery stage. The reports are *periodic reviews of actual performance versus expected performance.* These provide essential information to stakeholders, and allow for *timely identification of performance variances.*

- *Milestone chart*: This is a summary of a *detailed project schedule* showing progress against key milestones, which can be used in the approval stage. The tool allows stakeholders to see *the high-level project progress* on one page.

- *Project organization chart*: Likewise, this chart is used in the approval stage to show all project stakeholders and *the working relationship* among them. It allows team members to get a better *understanding of the project roles and organizational dynamics.*

- *Responsibility Matrix:* This can be combined with an organization chart, to define *project roles and responsibilities.*

- *Communication plan*: This is an important tool which is used throughout the whole project. *It defines the how, what, when and who regarding the project information to stakeholders.* It is the key to managing expectations and establishing buy-in.

- *Project repository:* The tool is used mainly in the closure stage, to *store all project information*, which helps managing project information and the project team to know where to find project documents.

- *Project notebook*: This is also used in the closure stage. It is a tool that the project manager uses to *maintain an official record of important project*

documents and deliverables. It is also part of managing project information.

3 Communication skills for project management

Communication lies in the core of project management. As humans, we all have our own knowledge, different ways of understanding and receiving information.
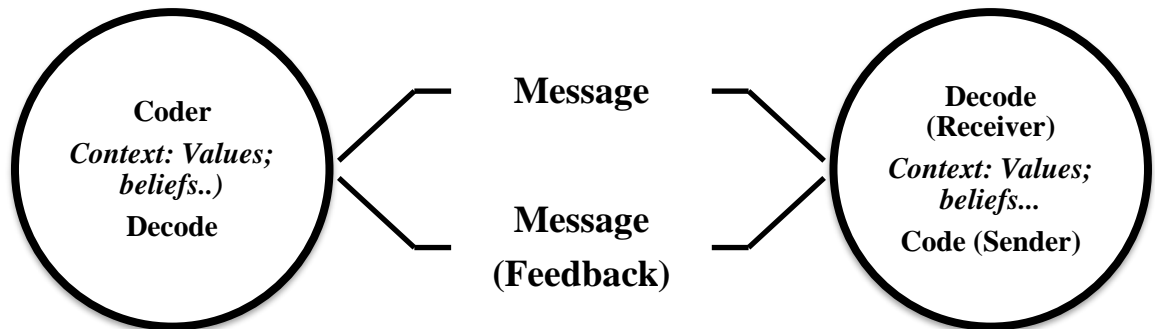

Figure 4 The communications Process (Rajkumar 2018)

To communicate, there need to be two sides (message sender and receiver). The context that the sender wants to express via communication is interpreted based on the receiver's point of view. The message can, hence, be accepted or rejected. For example, in a project meeting, the project manager (sender) can list some challenges (communication content) that he sees from his point of view in the project; however, the project team members might receive this context or reject (disagree with) it. The medium exists during communication as well, which uniquely influences the receiver's receptivity. The message that is delivered in communication can take place in a different format, either a hard one (paper) or a soft one (electronic). Feedback is an important part of the communication process because it shows two ways of communication. There are different types of feedback: simple when there are two people in the communication process, or a complex one when there are more than two people. Feedback can also be positive, negative or neutral reflecting *the receiver's receptivity.* Misinterpretation can happen during the communication process; feedback is an ultimate solution to deliver the message in the appropriate way for both sender and receiver. There are different factors that can affect the communication process, namely receiver's and sender's own beliefs, values, message emotion and the medium. They can

affect positively or negatively the receptivity and feedback of communication. Context and the way it is delivered also influences the message quality and, consequently, receptivity. Another factor that influence communication process is the surrounding environment, namely time, location and organization structure. It is crucial for the project manager to understand these influencing factors, ranging from the environment setting, message and feedback methods of delivery. (Rajkumar 2018.)

There are a variety of communication modes and styles. They depend on the communication targets, whom you are communicating to, and the urgency of communication in specific situations. Communication styles can also base on individual preferences. (Abudi 2013.)

Communication styles can be passive or aggressive. It is suggested by Abudi (2013) that the project manager's communication style should be expressive, the middle balance type. The more expressive the project manager is, the better engaged and committed the project stakeholders are. Communication should also be two-way. In other words, the project manager should also be the listener, as the project stakeholders can feel their opinions heard; hence, trust is built between parties. There are different channels of communication, depending on the complexity of the project and distance among project team members. The larger the number of stakeholders, the more varied communication channels that the project leader should use to engage them. Trying different communication channels is encouraged for the project leader to find out the channels that work best, either for the whole team or individually. For a project of which size is small and less complicated, meetings and emails are advised for time and cost efficiency. (Abudi 2013.)

In short, the more methods are used, the more engaged the team will be in the project. Face-to-face communication styles are also more preferable and effective than electronic ones, as the thoughts and opinions can be expressed both ways during a facial meeting directly. The project leader can also bring communication methods to be discussed and chosen within the team for mutual project

team's working methods. This works efficiently especially for an international pro-ject, which involves team members coming from different cultural backgrounds as well. (Abudi 2013.)

Regarding the direction of communication in figure 5, there are three types: an upward channel, lateral channel and downward channel. Upward channels mean channels that send the information upwards, such as emails or face-to-face meet-ings. Upward communication is crucial to include stakeholders in making deci-sions in projects. Lateral channels are used to involve stakeholders that are not directly involving in the project; however, their roles are also crucial for the project success, for example suppliers, managers or customers. Last but not least, down-ward channel involves communication from project manager to project teams. This can be tasked deadline reminders, or project status updates. (Weedmark n.d.)

Upward channel
- *Communicate to senior executive*
- *Hignlight issues, risks and exceptions*

Lateral channels
- *Communicate to client, vendors, and functional managers*
- *Involves negociations for resources, budgets, and time allocations*

Downward channel
- *Provide direction to project teams*
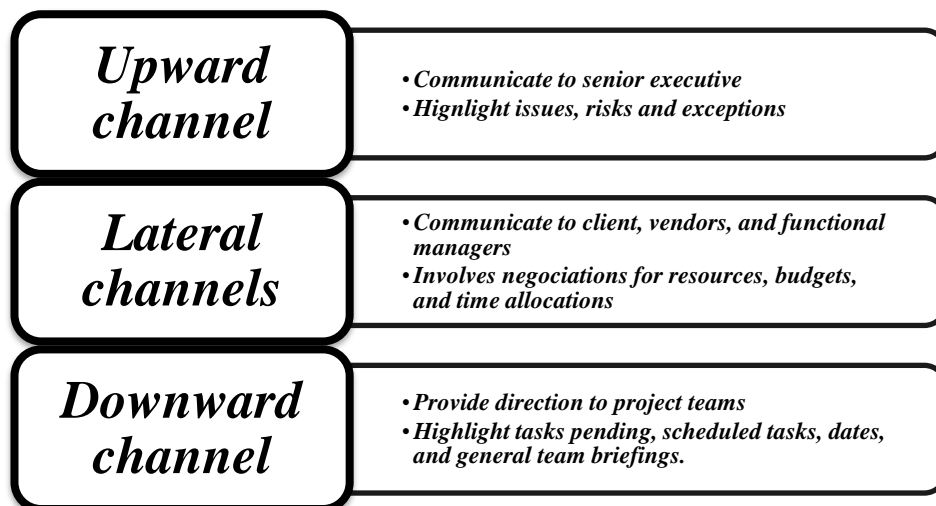- *Highlight tasks pending, scheduled tasks, dates, and general team briefings.*

Figure 5 Communication channels (Weedmark n.d.)

Hence, communication methods should be analyzed and used in the appropriate ways so that the receiver (stakeholders) will understand the message that the project manager wants to deliver. There is a possibility that the stakeholders might not be engaged right at the beginning of the communication, especially in a situation that involves a large number of stakeholders. There are three ques-tions to understand different stakeholders' preferred way of communications:

- *What is working in how we communicate with you about the project?*

- *What is not working or is not effective in our communications?*
- *Where can we improve our communications with you?*

Regarding the importance of communication, regular and sufficient communication is needed from project management for the frequency and quality effectiveness of interaction, which engage stakeholders to take initiatives in the project (Rajkumar 2018).

3.1 Risks of communication failure

Figure 6 below describes the effect of poor communication on the team and stakeholders:

Poor team communication	Poor stakeholder communication
Project goals and objectives are mis-understood.	Project contribution and commitment are limited.
Deadlines are missed.	Stakeholders' project expectation is misunderstood.
Team conflicts arise.	Conflicts arise.
Different directions in team.	Stakeholder objects to project.
Project productivity decreases, cost and lengths increase.	Project fails.
Individual commitment in project is missed.	

Figure 6 Poor communication effect (Rajkumar 2018)

Poor communication can result from inadequate or over communication. Lack of engagement and responses or vice versa, too many emails and questions can cause negative domino effect challenges for the project team and stakeholders. This is a particular problem of communication in project management. Hence, balance is the key to prevent communication problem. Rajkumar (2018) suggests three questions to find the balance:

- *Who needs to know what information?*
- *How often must that information be communicated/shared?*
- *By what means will information be communicated/shared?*

Effective communication tools contribute to the success of the project, as communication skills and techniques can lead the project to success or failure. Furthermore, communication will create a high-performance project team. *Communication is about motivating, leading, delegating and reporting among project manager, team members and other project-related stakeholders. To lead an effective communicating team, the project manager needs to acquire good communication skills to deliver directions and feedback towards team members, along with maintaining the team harmony.* (Charvat 2002.)

3.2 Culture roles in communication

Moreover, multiculture plays an important role in communication, as this will bring richness and creativity to the project team in decision-making and problem-solving. Also, it will bring effect on team performance, which leads the project to either success or failure. (Bauer n.d.)

To be specific, internationalization creates diverse perspectives within a team, which will broaden the team view, and at the same time, helps the team to get optimized results from the project. Although culture differences also create conflicts, these problems can be solved with mutual team norms and understanding. (Kokemuller n.d.)

Cultural diversity is also vital for external communication among project team, stakeholders, and customers to name a few. As the world is becoming flat, a company's projects usually go to the international market. Hence, multicultural communication encourages the company to serve customers and local societies better. (Kokemuller n.d.)

Diversified working environment requires communication that is suitable for every employee, regardless of where they are from. This communication in a cultural team needs to start from the leader level. As mentioned above, there is a higher chance of project success in a diversified team. Hence, it is crucial to have differences in team members' cultures. A multinational team project promotes the company's image externally, and internally increases fairness and equality, which focuses on cultural awareness, and a collaborative and open working environment for employees. Diversified communication can also be shown by the company's

willingness to overcome cultural challenges, in terms of ethical, racial and cultural backgrounds. This willingness can be trained with coaching for cultural knowledge, team's tolerance and acceptance for differences. (Kokemuller n.d.)

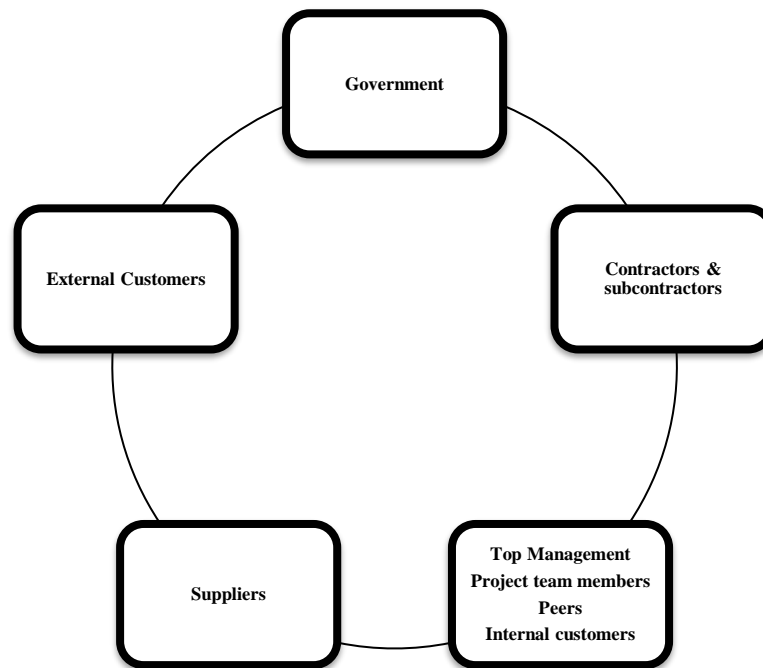## 3.3 Communication with a different audience in project management

Figure 7 Different stakeholders in project (Watt n.d.)

Figure 7 categorizes different stakeholders that the project manager needs to communicate with when managing the project. It is better to utilize different ways of communication to their specific preferences and provide them with relevant information that they need, in order to balance the communication and engage different stakeholders thoroughly in the project. Particularly among top management, namely CEO and managers, the topic of communication should be maintained constantly in the project, for example project risks and potential impacts. Also, scheduled reporting on a regular basis is preferred to save time and be effective.

In the planning stage of the project, the goals together with project milestones should be communicated clearly between the project manager and top management in the company. In the project team, direct communication such as weekly

meetings should be held to track project development and give support. Interpersonal skills are crucial for communication when leading the project team. Usually, project manager has his/her own manager/ director. This relationship is undoubtedly crucial, as the manager is the first-person the project manager comes to seek for advice. Hence, communication should be frequent regarding project updates, changes and approvals, to name a few. Also, the reporting method should be discussed at the beginning of the project to get both sides' agreement and comfortability. Also unclear direction should be solved through direct communication. Peers are people at the same level in enterprises but may not be involved directly in the project.

To communicate effectively with peers, the project manager should organize review meetings about the project to ask for support and advice; and get expectations from them for the project at the beginning planning stages of the project. Through frequent communication, the peers will give the project manager respect and support the project. Another stakeholder in the project is internal customers. They are internal company employees and the customers for the project as well. For them, the key factor of communication is transparency, considering their expectations, needs, project supported document specifications, deliverables, responsibilities and changes in projects. The project manager is the main communicator who directly delivers changes, project expectations and specifications to internal customers. (Watt n.d.)

Outside the box are governments, external customer, contractors and suppliers. Communications need to be varied depending on situations and timing; besides, interpersonal skills to solve conflicts and have negotiations are vital as well. (Watt n.d.)

3.4   Effective communication planning

There are four steps in the process to achieve effective communication. Firstly, communication requirements need to be identified. In specific, the project team should have a common time to figure out the needs for information as a group and individually. There is a formula of communication: N(N-1)/2. For ex-ample, for a project team composed of five people, 5(5-1)/2 = 10 there are ten possible

channels of communication. Hence, the project manager should make sure for the team to understand that there are no gaps in understanding be-tween project teams if they only utilize a maximum of ten communication channels. The needs of stakeholders also need to be understood as regards information content and the desired way of communication. (Charvat 2002.) The stakeholders' demand for communication can be figured out via:

- *Organization charts*
- *The project structure within the performing organization*
- *Stakeholder responsibility relationships"*
- *Departments and disciplines involved within the project work*
- *The number of individuals involved in the project and their locales*
- *Internal and external information needs, and stakeholder information*

(Charvat 2002).

A second method to identify communication requirements is using 5W (why, what, where, who) and 1H (how) method:

- **Who** *needs to be communicated to. This is based on the communication formula and needs to be determined*
- **What** *needs to be communicated. All information related to the project does not need to be communicated to everyone in the team*
- **When** *it should be communicated. The timeline of communication should be monitored.*
- **Where** *should it be communicated. If the team involves many people, then the individual level and team level communications needs to be resolved.*
- **Why** *the communication of information is essential and to what level is important. Why is it not encouraged as a blame rather than change.*
- **How** *the communication needs to be done. Is it conducted via e-mail, phone, or a presentation done to the team members?* (Charvat 2002.)

The second step is to identify and accommodate the environment factors. For example:

- *Organizational culture and structure*

- *Standard and regulations for the project*
- *The logistics and the organizational infrastructure*
- *The human resources for the project*
- *The policies and procedures for personnel administration*
- *The project's work authorization system*
- *The marketplace conditions*
- *Stakeholder risk tolerances*
- *Commercial databases that the project may use for estimating, and*
- *Project management information system.* (Charvat 2002).

The project manager should consider these factors to be in line with the project goals and initiatives (Charvat 2002).

The third step is to identify organizational process assets, which have impacts on the project communication:

- *Standards and policies unique to the organization;*
- *Organizational guidelines, work instructions and performance measurement criteria;*
- *Organizational communication requirements for all projects considering required and approved technology, security issues, archiving and allowed communication media;*
- *Project closure requirements;*
- *Financial controls and procedures;*
- *Issue and defect management procedures for all projects;*
- *Change control procedures;*
- *Risk control procedures;*
- *Work authorization systems;*
- *Process measurement database;*
- *Project file structure, organization, and retention;*
- *Historical information and lessons learned requirements;*
- *Issue and defect management databases;*
- *Configuration management databases; and*
- *Project financial databases detailing labor hours, costs, budget issues, and cost overruns* (Charvat 2002).

Moreover, not all projects in one company have the same affecting assets. Understanding what assets that will affect the project communication will reduce the conflicts during different project stages. (Charvat 2002.)

There are other factors that affect project communication. Verbal communication is the most common form of communication. The *key* for two-way communication is that the message is *delivered correctly from the sender to the receiver. The confirmation of message delivery can be the receiver's body language, feedback, and verbal confirmation.* It is scientifically proved that *only 7% of communication is the content that is delivered*. The rest of the message's meaning is *delivered via the quality of voice, volume, speech, and pitch*. Hence, for communication to be successful, other factors such as body language and expressions play a crucial role too. To conclude, each team and project has a different set of communication tools that will work best, which will help the team to reach project goals and harmony in the team's environment. Communication plan and tools should be analyzed at the beginning of the project for different project stages with the involvement of the whole team. (Rajkumar 2018.)

3.5 Effective communication tools

There are two perspectives when considering effective communication tools: from different stakeholders and from different project stages. These two perspectives are interconnected, which requires planning. This is a powerful way for the project manager to manage the team, as there are several effects that communication plan will create in the team. (Charvat 2002.)

Charvat and Marsan provided some effective tools for project communication (Charvat 2002; Marsan 2015):

- Email: For the project team to communicate texts, audios, video files.
- Project status meetings: To track and inform of the project status, current situation and updates.
- Telephone/video conferences: A medium to involve team members in other locations.
- Project road show: A feedback tool for stakeholders.

- Project website: To publish project information, avoid miscommunication and confusions in the project team.
- Feedback channels: Tool for the project manager to give regular and consistent feedback, for example status reports, issue logs, risk logs and meeting notes.
- Project board: A tool to capture the planned, in progress and completed work. A project board includes the project feature details acceptance criterias and private conversation among project team members. It is also a tool to window into the project and assess its progress. For example: Trello, Pivotal Tracker, Jira.
- A discussion board: A place to hold shared, asynchronous and archived project team conversations. A discussion board is a better tool than a mail for conversations, for the benefit of documents and summarizing discussions. For example: Basecamp.
- A chat tool: A less formal project discussion platform, when information is not highly important to be documented. For example: Slack and HipChat.
- A document repository: A place to store all project-related reports such as status reports and required documents. This place should be accessible for all project team members. For example: Drop Box, Google Drive, Basecamp.
- Daily standup meetings: Face-to-face discussions about actions that have been done and next steps in the project, in other words, a short time for interaction and Q&A. For example: meeting in person, skype or via phone.
- Meeting: Weekly team meetings to monitor the project progress and plan for next steps.
- Sync-ups: Longer one-on-one meetings for higher-level terms, project risks and solutions. Meetings involve stakeholders and should be scheduled in advance.

Different project stages require different communication types. Hence, carefully chosen communication tools will help the project manager to ensure the smooth process of information exchange, develop the project and reduce frictions and misunderstanding (Marsan 2015).

As mentioned above, balance is the key to project communication. The project man-ager should deliver the correct information to all related stakeholders, not bothering them with irrelevant and repetitive information. Charvat (2002) also revealed some signals for ineffective communication. This is when the project manager micromanages everything in the project on his own. For example, the project manager draws a detailed over 1000-line project plan and pushess team members to achieve all these plans to the most incredible detail. To avoid this problem, open and transparent communication should be fostered by the project manager. Too much communication is happening, in other words a communication paralysis. This will negatively affect project timing and increase the amount of irrelevant work in a project. Hence, communication should be planned, the individual needs for information of each project member should be understood, and different communication tools should be utilized. With a clear and concise communication plan, the balance in project management will be achieved.

4 Guide Academy project

Lapland is an amazing destination. Saariselka is in the far north of it. The destination is regarded as the northernmost travel resort of Finland, which is embraced by highland fells. Guests come to Saariselka mainly for outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing, since there are about 200km of cross-skiing tracks. (Inaari, Saariselkä, n.d.) Located in Lapland with Kittila as the center, Levi is regarded as the Las Vegas of Finland, with a variety of activities available for guests. Levi is widely known for its winter ski slopes and northern lights. Visiting guests are also interested in Sami cultures in Levi. Vasatokka is another destination located in Lapland. Arctic nature is one stunning feature of Vasatokka together with three Lappish cultures: Inari Sami, North Sami, and Skolt. (Vasatokka n.d.) Company X's product of the Arctic Ocean is very popular among guests with trips to Norway and Russia.

Tour guides are regarded as the most important labor of company X. According to the CEO *many companies do not understand, that the guide is often the first the last touch point in the customer experience. People have travelled far, and they have worked hard for a deserved holiday. Our mission is to make sure, that*

they trust us, relax, stop worrying and live in the moment. When this is achieved, you will see a childlike, warm smile on customer's face! We are travelling not to escape from life- but the life not to escape from us! Because of this, our guides are the most important ones in our team. For this reason, we take guide recruiting and training extremely seriously.

Moreover, the company had been arranging the guides training for two years. However, the programmes were separated per individual destinations. Previously, training was not clearly recorded from planning to actual outcomes. Besides customers' feedback afterward only had a few questions regarding guides. Also, everyone in the company is having various tasks that can not spare time focusing only on guides training. Hence, in 2018, the Guide Academy (GA) idea was initiated, with high expectations and needs. The goal was to train guides on problem-solving skills and customer-oriented values. Also, this was one way to brand the company's image as a "trustworthy company" to new employees and potential audience. The focus of Guide Academy was to train qualified and new guides to be the company's representatives. Also, teamwork training was in the focus. All the planning of agenda, training materials to budget planning and actual costs will be recorded and saved in Google Drive, for the needs of future reference and project evaluation.

All the guides were the company's employees. There were four targets groups of the training: Chinese guides, Saariselka guides, Levi guides and Vasatokka guides. The guides are the most important part in the frontline of the company to work directly with guests because guests' satisfaction is the core measure of the company's success and the main source of profit and stable development. This project was regarded as the whole company's project since it is aimed not only for the guides but also for all managers to participate in planning, budgeting, executing and evaluating. Also, this training was a brand strategy for all of the company's customers (B2C), service providers and clients (B2B).

There were qualitative and quantitative objectives. As for qualitative goals, through Guide Academy, training was expected to produce qualified guides to build well-trained destination teams. A qualified guide means a professional one, who has good team spirit, understands processes, has good work ethic and has

the respect for the company's brand and team. In Guide Academy, they were trained to be the representatives of company X. Most ideally, they had the responsibility to present the image of company X as a trusted brand for both guide candidates and potential customers. Though Guide Academy, company X's service standard was delivered to every front-line coworker, so the company can make sure its values are kept the same from strategic planning to destination service delivery. Also, the company values and brand communication are clarified to implement in everyday work. Consistency is also expected to be achieved after Guide Academy sets standards for service level (to build trust in clients). To measure the success of Guide Academy, a final test for guides about their knowledge about Finland, problem solving and expected behaviors will be created. Also, during the training, continuous supervising and feedback was provided by the destination managers for all the guides. Flexibility was highly considered as well as the agenda for possible changes to be made.

The resources which were used for Guide Academy 2018 are listed below:

- The previous 2017 training agenda.
- An agenda template was based on tour itinerary (which includes daily activities and time frame).
- Guides Academy Tools: These were the main monitoring and controlling tools for the Guide Academy project. This Excel sheet includes employees' expectations for the guide school, the project agenda, timeline, participant lists, guides criteria, budget planning, actual costs, and project evaluation.
- The partnersä information on lunch menu and sauna room prices.

4.1 Servant leadership in company X

A servant leader is the one *who invests himself or herself in enabling others, in helping them be and do their best.* Leader is the one *who invests himself or herself in enabling others, in heling them be and do their best* (Humphreys 2005). This, servant leadership, is the most common working culture of company X that the thesis writer found out from personal interviews with internal employees. Hence, this leadership style was applied by the project manager in the project.

38

Throughout the whole project process, the thesis writer experienced the usefulness of servant leadership, since project team members are the executive team of the company, yet they joined the project enthusiastically and involved in most of the project meetings. Moreover, servant leadership helped the project manager to gain their trust, which made project team members enthusiastically embrace the project's responsibilities and finish their tasks on time. Servant leadership is a method not only applied in the project but also is one of the working cultures in company X, said the CEO. Another answer from Mrs. A (the name is hidden) from the survey is that when leading by example, the CEOs are a great example who serve their employees with great care, and servant leadership was also one requirement for the guides to learn after the Guide Academy project. In the Guide Academy project, one risk was that there is no snow. This was what has happened during training. The situation of no snow also affected the training for guides, since most of the activities involved snow. However, this is an external factor that cannot be changed by human power, so servant leadership was clearly shown in this case. The project manager rescheduled the training plans with a proper explanation and carefully followed the training to help both trainers and trainees. The CEOs and destination managers, as project team members, happily followed the continuous reschedules made by project managers, with great sympathy.
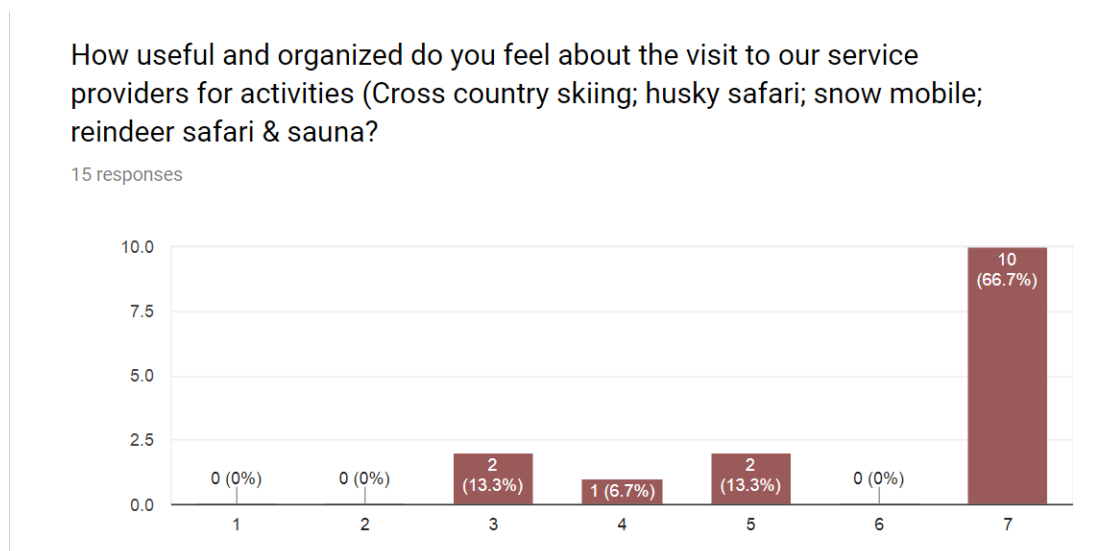

Figure 8 Feedback question about partner visit training

The online survey result in figure 8 shows the effectiveness of this training. Due to lack of snow, the original plan of partner visits could not be carried out. Hence, these sessions of training were improvised with a detailed explanation at the spots the service owners, and questions from the guides were answered in detail and clearly for everyone. According to the survey, the majority of participant (66%) felt this improvised training was useful and practical, as they could see reindeers and huskies.

There are different criteria to measure the project success, in other words, to measure the project manager is leadership style. The criteria with feed-back re-sults are shown in figure 9: The final guidesä evaluation produced feedback such as "Practical and useful; fun ways to check what I have learned". Based on guides' feedback in figure 9, the length of the training period (9 days) was rated 5.6 out of 7. The result shows that there can be an improvement in the length of training, which is a good record at the project closure stage, to see the strength and weakness of Guide Academy 2018.

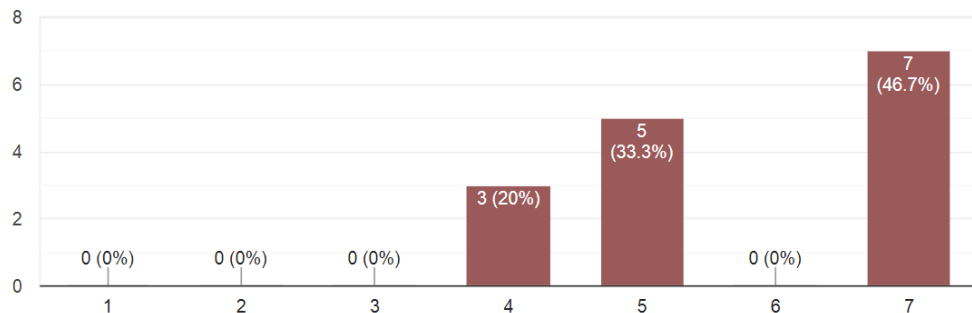### Was the training period (9 days) sufficient?
15 responses

Figure 9 Feedback question about training length

Guides' questions and concerns about the training were rated 5.8 out of 7 in figure 10. The result shows their average satisfaction with their jobs and related areas. The result was positive, which also shows the close and friendly managing styles of the company leaders, who were able to understand and answer employees' concerns.

Do you have your questions & concerns answered and solved during the training?
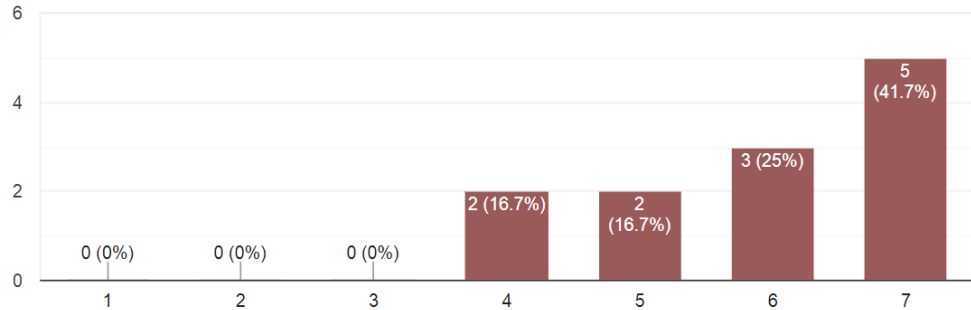
12 responses

Figure 10 Feedback questions about guide's satisfaction

The average grade that all guides who participated in the feedback survey gave to the Guide Academy project 2018 was 5.3 out of 7 in figure 11, which shows that people genuinely enjoyed involving in the guide school. This is feedback from the company's CEO, *Guide Academy was crucial for guides* and *Thank company X for valuing guides and spend huge effort both in HR & financial wise for organizing training for us* said a Chinese guide. The guides' feedback on learning through Guide Academy was as follows: *Participation, inspiration, practical, passion team!; Good humor & team spirit;* Destination process, real-life situations; problem-solving, and team bonding were mentioned several times as well.

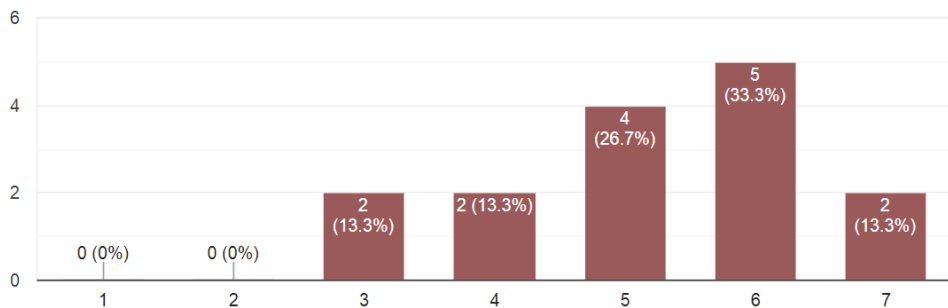In General, which grade would you give to guide school

15 responses

Figure 11 Survey question for Guide Academy grade

4.2 Project management tool

The Guide Academy project used online Excel project management tool, which includes:

- project summary
- expectation setting
- project team chart
- budget and real cost
- status report
- milestone chart
- communication plan.

This tool was managed and updated daily by the project manager. Besides, the Asana project board was also utilized in the project, for the project team to visualize project product and keep track of the deadlines for project preparation. Figure 12 below visualizes this Asana application:
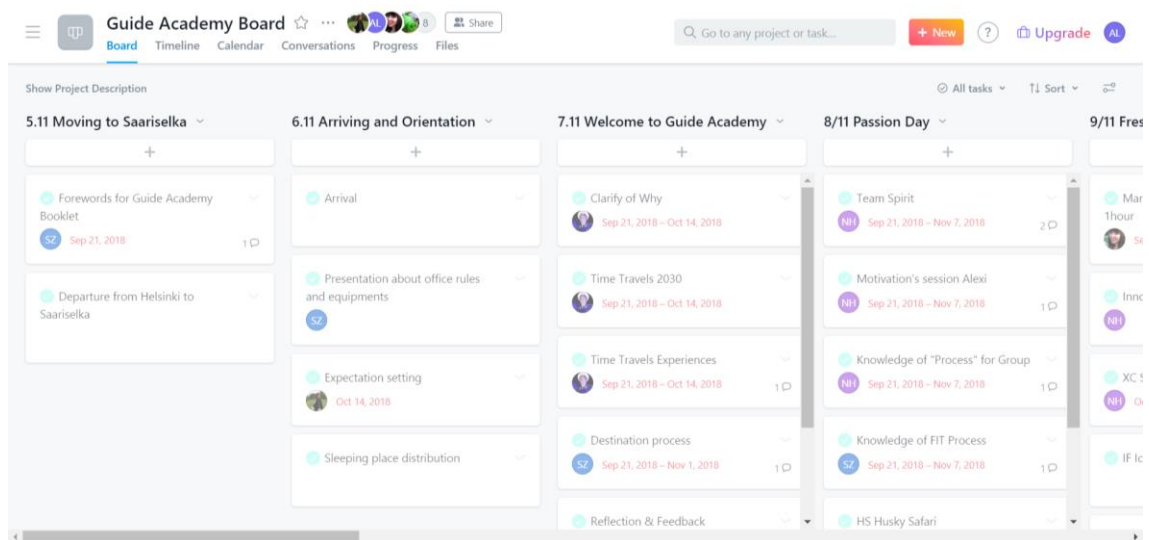

Figure 12 Guide Academy project board

4.3 Communication in the Guide Academy project

Communication is highly important for a project, from planning stage to results. Based on the feedback results, the project received positive mentions about the communication tool that was used: 80% of the guides got enough information through WhatsApp (Figure 13). This application was utilized from the planning

stage, to involve all project participants, which included the guides and project team members to socialize and introduce each other. Moreover, WhatsApp was also used for the personal calls and chats inside the project team for its instant notifications and quick responses in the planning stage, whenever problems arose. During the time the project was delivered, WhatsApp was used intensively to update important project changes compare to agenda if arisen, the agenda for training days and key persons to contact. Also, people could easily share pictures of training moments and their fun memories in the WhatsApp group, which connected all people together and motivated them despite the long period of training. In the project closure stage, WhatsApp communication was a valuable tool for the project manager to see what had happened during the planning and delivery stages of the project, in order to measure the success of it.

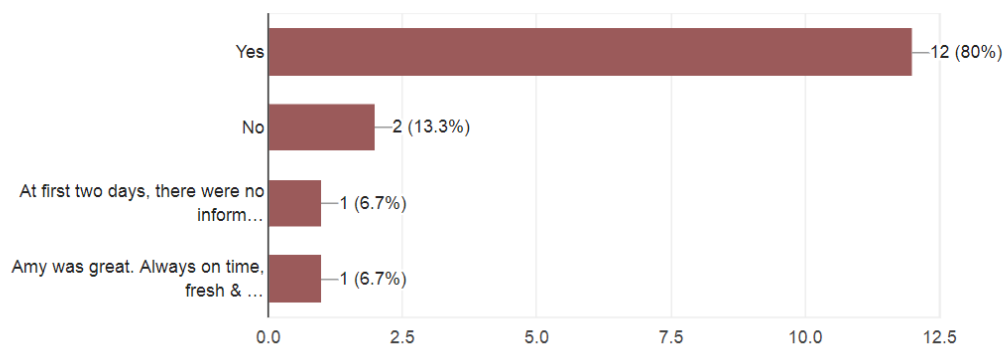Do you get enough information via Whatsapp group?
15 responses

Figure 13 Survey question for WhatsApp's feedback

4.4 Communication with different audiences in Guide Academy

The project manager is the main communicator between different audiences that can meet the needs of everyone, namely managers, guides, the company's human resources, and other coworkers. Meeting and discussing weekly is highly important, in order to keep everyone updated with the project process and get everyone involving in building and taking ownership of the project. There were weekly meetings in the Helsinki office, with a pre-agenda which was sent by email for everyone before the meeting started. After the meeting, the meeting minutes were concluded with "next steps", making clear who does what and when the

deadline was. These meeting minutes were arranged into one slide, which helped the project manager and team members to keep track of project flow easily. During the week, the project manager was tracking the workflow, and maintaining communication transparency with everyone, by updating news in the Asana Board for the whole team.

4.5 Guide Academy communication plans

A communication plan (Figure 14) is a draft to clarify the different stakeholders that are involved in the Guide Academy project. Different preferred ways of communication for different stakeholders are also included. It is visible that the majority of the stakeholders prefer face-to-face meeting, where direct communication is carried out to make the project transparent and reduce confusion.

To whom	Responsibility	Form/ Channel of reporting	Entrusted to	When
Company X's Chief executive officers (CEOs)	Budget suggestion and approval	Email and meeting	Project manager discussion with companies' manager	Within 2 first weeks in September
Target group: 3 destination teams	Information communication	WhatsApp; emails; Asana; meeting	Project manager is the main direct communicator to all the parties	Thorough the whole project stages; from plan to result from evaluation
Other stakeholders Company X's Human Resources and employees	Information communication	WhatsApp; emails; meeting; Google hangouts	Project manager is the main direct communicator to all the parties	Thorough the whole project stages; from plan to result from evaluation

Project team (Project manager, marketing manager, CEOs, destination managers)	Information communication	WhatsApp; emails	Project manager is the main direct communicator for updating news; references & suggestions	Thorough the whole project stages; from plan to result from evaluation
Management (CEOS and destination managers)	Information communication	WhatsApp; emails; Asana; face-to face meeting	Project manager is the main direct communicator for updating news; references & suggestions	Thorough the whole project stages; from plan to result from evaluation

Figure 14 Guide Academy project communication plan

4.6 Effective communication tools of Guide Academy

During the Guide Academy project, the most effective communication tool was face-to-face meetings with an organized agenda and meeting minutes prepared afterwards. These direct weekly meetings were set up for only thirty minutes to one hour maximum, which is effective in timing and limited the discussion topic to only the main focus points of the project. Also, meetings involved different methods: discussion, brain-storming and introduction. All topics and meeting agenda were introduced to the project team via emails before the meeting. Hence, the project team had the preparations and ideas organized beforehand, which saves time during the meeting. There were other factors that contributed to the effectiveness of team meetings, which were the enthusiasm from an individual team member and the meeting environment that the project manager created during the meeting. To be specific, when the team member had space to express their opinion and discuss it, they tended to be more active and contribute more to the meeting, which helped the meeting to be more effective, connected to when only the project manager/meeting organizer would be the only speaker.

Regarding the training session contents, by having a meeting with all the managers (stake-holders) involved in the project, the project team brainstormed and

came up with necessary and relevant sessions for the guides. These sessions were also crucial also for all managers, for example. It is good to remind everyone again about the company's values. The same working method was used for handbook contents. When having face to face meetings, everyone's ideas were respected and discussed to reach a mutual goal, which was to create the most effective training for all guides. For activities arranged by services providers (for example cross-country skiing and husky safari), relationship building was important. A long-standing destination manager, with phone calls as the main communication tool, arranged smoothly all the activities for the training period. For arranging other activities such as conference room, lunch reservation, and artic sauna, the company's reservation email was used, with an introduction about the project and the expected number of people. Since the places were reserved with the company's partner, there is a discount and more flexibility if changes arise.

4.7 Guide Academy's effective online communication tools

Asana application was the tool for delegating tasks and initially used for visualizing training sessions day by day. This application was accessible to all project team members and updated daily by the project manager. This application in the Guide Academy project as a communication board was effective to some extent. However, for a team that has a team member who does not use the computer and check emails often, the online board was not be effective, as they would tend to lose some important information. Hence, the project manager's role was crucial to balance the information flow to all team members. In more detail, for the majority of team members using an online board, information about the project is published there. Also, phone calls and personal meetings are set up individually between the project manager and team members to follow up whether they receive the delivered message.

During the training period, WhatsApp communication is the most important tool. In WhatsApp, the agenda for the next day is announced, changes are notified and plentiful pictures and random happy moments are shared among the project team and the guides. WhatsApp is a great tool for direct brief information communication when the project team gets updated about the project progress and clarified any confusion. It can be a private chat or group chat which depends on

the project team's preferences, which gives both the project manager and project team the freedom of communication choices based on message purposes.

For personal communication and online meetings, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts and Facebook are the three main direct communication channels that are used.

Ding talk application is a financial application tool to apply for all expenses in the project, such as flight tickets and accommodation. Ding talk is a great communication tool that allows personal chat and a team member can apply a financial budget for the project in the application.

5 Conclusion

Communication skills play an important role in managing a project. Pushing project team members with a detailed plan and tracking will pull people out of interest for the project. Moreover, team members' preferred way of communication and their personality at work have an enormous impact on team project communication as well. The project manager should draw up a communication plan, with the involvement of the whole team at the beginning planning stage of the project. Discussing face-to-face in a group will help the team to set common communication team norms and get everyone's preference, respect, and agreement. A communication plan is an important asset and a powerful tool for the project, which will make the work of the project manager substantially easier to manage.

The project manager's role is not only to manage the project, but also to lead. The ultimate leader style that suits project management is servant leadership. To show empathy and serve the team members, this is the key for the project manager to keep the balance in project management in general, and in communication in specific.

Leadership goes hand in hand with communication. A great leader gets the trust of the team members via the way of communication he uses within the team. Therefore, the thesis has analyzed closely both topics, since they support each other, strengthen and clarify how the project manager can lead the project team to success in an international project.

Via the Guide Academy project, the thesis writer focused on various management styles of project manager, and later on the writer focused on servant leadership, which surprisingly helped the author in managing the project, in terms of getting support from the managers, delivering successfully the project scope with other stakeholders and most importantly, customers (the guides). Satisfaction with the project among internal customers (the guides), based on the after feedback survey, was very high despite the fact that the project manager had no position in the company. To add, via servant leadership, trust was built, and project team members were more open in sharing their problems and thoughts comfortably. Moreover, through continuous personal feedback during and after the project, the author realized the importance of suitable communication tools with different stakeholders in different project stages. With the thesis writer's supervisor, constant feedback was shared weekly about the project status and support. With the project team, the project manager utilized the Asana board, which is an online project board, and helped in organizing and making the project product transparent for all the project team. Face to face meetings were held weekly for brainstorming, organizing and solving project problems. There was a company meeting where the project manager explained the project and was informed of the expectations and support from company X's employees. These named communication tools helped the project manager to solve many problems at the right time. To conclude, during this Guide Academy project, the author learned several lessons regarding the importance of servant leadership and communication. Guide Academy provided the materials for the empirical part, to support the righteousness of the theories that were discussed in the theory part.

List of figures

References

Abudi, G. 2013. Managing Communications Effectively and Efficiently. Project Management Institute. https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/managing-communications-effectively-efficiently-5916. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Bauer, M. n.d. Effectiveness of a Multicultural Team. https://work.chron.com/effectiveness-multicultural-team-3772.html. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Bell, M. n.d. Effective & Efficient Project Management. http://www.simpleimprovement.co.uk/Effective%20and%20Efficient%20Project%20Management.pdf. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

BusinessDictionary.com. 2018. Project Management. http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/communication.html. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Charvat, J. 2002. Project communications: A plan for getting your message across. https://www.techrepublic.com/article/project-communications-a-plan-for-getting-your-message-across/. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Clark, C. 2013. Project Management Excellence – how to run a successful project – Prosperity 24.7. https://prosperity247.com/2013/06/11/project-management-excellence-run-successful-project/. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Goleman, D. 2018. Leadership That Gets Results. http://www.powerelectronics.ac.uk/documents/leadership-that-gets-results.pdf. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Greenleaf, R. and Spears, L. 2002. Servant leadership. New York: Paulist Press, p.3.

Horine, G. 2012. Absolute beginner's guide to project management. 3rd ed. Indianapolis, Ind: Pearson

Humphreys, J. 2005. Contextual implications for transformational and servant leadership. Management Decision, 43(10), pp.1410-1431.

Inari Saariselkä. n.d. https://www.inarisaariselka.fi/en/saariselka/. Accessed on 9 December 2018.

Kokemuller, N. n.d. The Importance of Diversity in Communications. https://work.chron.com/importance-diversity-communications-4138.html. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Marsan, A. 2015. 9 Essential Tools for Project Communication. https://spin.atomicobject.com/2015/03/01/project-communication-tools/. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Molinsky, A. and Gundling, E. 2016. How to Build Trust on Your Cross-Cultural Team. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2016/06/how-to-build-trust-on-your-cross-cultural-team. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Mr Clark's Blog. 2016. Advantages and Disadvantages of Servant Leadership. https://5j16mrclarke.wordpress.com/2016/01/16/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-servant-leadership/#_ftn1. Accessed on 9 January 2019.

Oxford Dictionaries | English. n.d. leadership | Definition of leadership in English by Oxford Dictionaries. https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/leadership. Accessed on 15 January 2019.

Rajkumar, S. 2018. Art of communication in project management. https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/effective-communication-better-project-management-6480. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Roeder, T. 2013. Managing project stakeholders. Hoboken: Wiley.

Techopedia.com. n.d. What is a Project Manager (PM). https://www.techopedia.com/definition/677/project-manager-pm. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Vasatokka. n.d. General Information. https://vasatokka.fi/in-english/general-information/. Accessed on 9 December 2018.

Watt, A. n.d. *5*. Stakeholder Management – Project Management. https://opentextbc.ca/projectmanagement/chapter/chapter-5-project-stakeholders-project-management/. Accessed on 13 December 2018.

Weedmark, D. n.d. Types of Communication for Successful Project Completion. http://work.chron.com/types-communication-successful-project-completion-5181.html. Accessed on 28 November 2018.

Appendix I

Interview questions for expectations for internal employees:

- How was Guide Academy last year for you?
- What do you expect from Guide Academy 2018?
- Have you had experiences being a tour guide?
- Can you share your advices for new guides?
- Do you think training is relevant and necessary for our company?
- What leadership styles do you prefer, and why?
- How are our managers' leadershipstyle in your opinion?

Appendix II

Guides' online feedback survey:

- How many times have you joined Timetravels guides training?
- Were the objectives of the training were clearly defined?
- How would you improve the Guide handbook sent before the training for you?
- Do you get enough information via Whatsapp group?
- Do you think the agenda was organized and useful?
- Was the training period (9 days) sufficient?
- How useful and organized are these A/B/C/.. sessions?
- How useful and organized do you feel about the visit to our service providers for activities (Cross country skiing; husky safari; snow mobile; reindeer safari & sauna?
- Do you have your questions & concerns answered and solvedduring the training?
- What did you like the most about this training?
- What aspects of this training were most useful or valuable for you?
- In general, which grade would you give to guide school?
- Do you recommend Guide Academy for Timetravels future guides?
- What aspects of training can be improved next year?