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A.O. Lavreniuk
N.P. Babiuk

PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Vinnytsia National Technical University

Анотація
У статті розглянуто зростаюче значення віртуального управління проектами, окреслено його переваги та виклики, а також запропоновано стратегії ефективного управління розрізненими командами в цифровому середовищі.
Ключові слова: управління проектами, віртуальні команди, віддалена робота, цифрова співпраця, командна комунікація, віртуальне лідерство.

Abstract
The article discusses the growing importance of virtual project management, outlines its benefits and challenges, and suggests strategies for effectively managing dispersed teams in a digital environment.
Keywords: project management, virtual teams, remote work, digital collaboration, team communication, virtual leadership.

Introduction

A project manager plays a crucial role in the successful planning and execution of various projects, acting as the central figure responsible for coordinating teams, managing resources, and ensuring that projects are completed on time and within budget. Their expertise ensures that all aspects of a project—from initiation and planning to execution and closure—are strategically managed to achieve the desired outcomes. Without effective project management, many projects risk delays, cost overruns, and misaligned objectives.

Recently, project management in the virtual environment has become increasingly popular for several reasons. First, the rise of remote work, driven by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has made it essential for teams to collaborate digitally across different locations. Second, advances in technology, including the availability of powerful project management software and communication tools, have made virtual project management more efficient and accessible. Third, globalization has led to more distributed teams, with employees and stakeholders working from different regions and time zones [1].

Understanding how virtual project management works is essential, as it requires a unique set of skills and strategies to overcome challenges like communication barriers, time zone differences, and ensuring team engagement in a digital space. Project managers must adapt their leadership style, become proficient in using virtual collaboration tools, and focus on maintaining clear, consistent communication to keep the team aligned and productive.

Research results

The Project Management Institute (or PMI) states that a project manager needs to plan communications carefully to realize virtual team advantages and avoid the disadvantages. A virtual team is a group of people who work together on a project but are geographically dispersed and communicate using digital tools. The PMI recognizes four main advantages of a virtual team. A virtual team helps leverage special expertise from multiple locations. As members may be employed anywhere, the limitation of using only the local talent pool is removed. A virtual team incorporates employees working from home. This allows more opportunities for working with employees with disabilities or mobility issues. Such a team can also employ those unable to travel to the workplace. A virtual team also can help reduce the price of office space, travel, and other overhead expenditures that a physical workplace has to bear [2].

But virtual team has some of the disadvantages. A virtual team depends on the Internet and a computer to accomplish their work. Due to this, technology-related problems might prevent employees from working from home till the problem is fixed. Because of different time zones, virtual teams may face challenges in communication and be deprived of face-to-face interactions. Virtual teams may also struggle with cultural and language differences in addition to different work styles. Individuals may feel lonely and isolated while

working in virtual worlds and develop trust issues [3].

Managing a virtual team requires a unique set of abilities. A project manager must be aware of the "pitfalls" to avoid and the proactive steps to take. Projects where geographically dispersed teams adversely impact project management should be avoided. A virtual team's effectiveness is also less likely to increase due to project complexity. To effectively manage a team in a virtual environment, some things need to be done. Ensure thorough preparation to mitigate these built-in risks. Create a culture of trust by building relationships with team members and encouraging collaboration. Team members should be encouraged to share their ideas and feedback openly. Train employees and invest in technology. Provide team members with the resources and tools they need to operate efficiently. Also, provide assistance and training for utilizing project management software effectively. And, ensure that real-time support is available for virtual team members if they encounter problems [4].

Being consistently accessible to the team is necessary for a project manager to provide a source of guidance and leadership. Be inclusive. Regularly provide information and updates to your virtual team members to overcome any possible feelings of isolation. Define the project's vision. Ensure each member is aware of the objectives and advantages of the project. Develop a team charter outlining the purpose, goals, roles, responsibilities, and expectations of a team. Ensure roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and communicated. Leave no questions unanswered. Virtual teamwork environment requires people to be self-sufficient and self-motivated, with the support of their virtual team managers. When building teams, ensure hiring those who can work and thrive in a remote work setup [5].

Conclusions

A virtual team is a group of people who work together on a project but are geographically dispersed and communicate using digital tools. The advantages of a virtual team include: expertise from multiple locations, employees work from home, including employees with disabilities, and saving travel and office expenses. The disadvantages of a virtual team include: limited technology available, time zones, cultural and language difficulties, and employees feeling isolated. Several ways to effectively manage virtual teams including building trust across the virtual team, investing in technology and training, and being inclusive.

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Лавренюк Арсен Олександрович – студент групи 1ПІ–22б, факультет інформаційних технологій та комп'ютерної інженерії, Вінницький національний технічний університет, Вінниця, e–mail: arsenlavreniuk@gmail.com.

Науковий керівник – *Бабюк Наталя Петрівна*, кандидат технічних наук, доцент кафедри програмного забезпечення, Вінницький національний технічний університет, м. Вінниця, e-mail: babiuk@vntu.edu.ua.

Lavreniuk Arsen Oleksandrovich – student of group 1PI-22b, Faculty of Information Technologies and Computer Engineering, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, e-mail: arsenlavreniuk@gmail.com.

Supervisor: *Babiuk Natalia Petrivna*, Candidate of Engineering Sciences (Ph. D.), associate Professor at the Department of program engineering, Vinnytsia National Technical University, Vinnytsia, e-mail: babiuk@vntu.edu.ua.