

The obligations of the Contractor's Project Manager in construction projects

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Introduction

The success of the projects in the contracting sector depend on experience and capability of the Contractor's Project Manager who is supposed to manage and direct the project, based on a full understanding of the requirements and the vision; and he should have a strong experience and confidence to delegate responsibilities and to stand by decisions.

In the case where the Contractor's Project Manager does not adopt and apply the proper basics of the managerial principles, such as focusing on the management system, the project progress may be delayed and will be affected. It is recommended to have a full support from top management for him, to help him understand and achieve the project objective which allows him to focus on the construction aspects of the project.

Leadership skills, communication, organization, team building skills, and technical skills are some of the important skills which the Contractor's Project Manager should have. Therefore implementing and understanding the fundamentals of the managerial skills of the Contractor's Project Manager is basic and essential, because most of their experience is related directly to projects (technical matters). In other words, managing people skills are essential as projects success depends on enabling individuals to work effectively together as a team.

Contractor's Project Managers have to incorporate a number of key functions into their role, these are:

- forecasting,
- planning,
- organizing,
- controlling,
- coordinating,
- motivating, and
- communicating.

These are aside form the management skills that he should have. The Contractor's Project Manager should be extremely having the strong character and he must be proficient in all aspects of management, with qualities that ensure their survival and, ultimately success on site. He also has to be a very dedicated individual in order to be successful on site. He has to be an effective link between Senior Management and the on-site work force. The most important part of the site manager's job is the control of day-to-day operations using clearly defined targets of performance.

The Contractor's Project Manager is the leader of the site staff for directing and managing the work activities, therefore it is necessary for him to appreciate the skills of others, stress the importance of requirements and respect the opinion of his staff. He must create trust and a good working atmosphere between his staff. This can be achieved in part by selecting members based on the experience and skills, setting a very clear rules, informing the staff with the updated information's,

asking for regular meeting and setting a major goals of a project. Meantime, he should inform his team how to guide, collaborate, understand and analyze the technical problem to avoid any delay during work in progress.

In a traditional contract, the contractor's responsibility is to build the project according to the contract documentation within the required cost and time budgets and the specified standards. The execution of the contract is administrated by the Contractor's Project Manager who should have the qualified technical staff, enough resources along with a group of subcontractors.

Projects normally present a special set of circumstances in which the Project Manager has to operate e.g. rapid growth in construction, tight construction times, the unique architectural features of many project designs, international contractors and consultants, a multinational work force and readily available investment. In many projects the Client, Consultant and Contractor contribute to the causes of delays due to the improper implementation of project management principles and a misunderstanding of the design process and the design management and procurement contract processes. These accumulated factors are considered as the principle reason for the problem experienced at the project construction stage.

The management of the Project Manager in construction projects depends upon the nature of project and the position in which the Project Manager is placed. While the first be fully aware of the functions and major responsibility will be to define processes applicable through out the the scope and the content of the project. The Project Manager will have to be experienced in the type of the project and will have to be sufficiently strong character to instruct the team of their responsibilities.

The blame for most project delays is frequently attributed to the contractor. Some delays could be better controlled by him and some could probably be avoided as well. But, some factors are out of his control such as slow permit issue by government agencies, nature of the site and some other unexpected factors (weather conditions) and for which incorporation into construction programme are difficult. Pressure to win a contract may result in these 'risks' being underestimated. One of the major common delays caused by the contractor is the mis-coordination with the domestic and nominated subcontractor. Many factors contribute in the project delay from the contractor side as an organization such as the tender department of the contractor organization, Contractor's Project Manager roles, responsibilities and authorities during the pre-construction stage and construction process (operational process), centralized policy of contractor top management and sub-contractors and the client nomination.

The Contractor's Project Manager of the contracting organization should understand the roles, responsibilities and practices of other parties working alongside the principal Contractor in managing the construction project.

Misunderstanding the principles of construction management by the top management of the Contractor's Project Manager many conflicts and disputes occurred during execution. Project Manager should understand the technology of the work and the characteristics of the project to enable him deal with many variables which he must consider in successfully delivering the project on time without any delay.

It is also advisable to concentrate and focus on the activities of the principal contracting organization when undertaking a construction project. The Contractor's Project Manager should be fully aware of the functions and processes applicable throughout the site works of a construction

project and should consider the basic concepts, principles, systems, and procedures which impact on the management functions carried out.

- Be familiar with the aims, policy, and mission, of the firm of the working place and the classification of that firm whether it is a first-class company or second class, etc. this is to understand the management system and basic managerial skills.
- Being aware and understand the technical knowledge in the field of application and method of preparing the work procedures by studying and discussing the major issue during the preconstruction stage.
- Establishing the framework of the critical activities. By doing the full analysis to the sequence of the work and verifying the project technical specification to propose an alternative solution (if necessary).
- Verifying and understanding the general conditions of the contract and particular conditions along with drawing, specifications and Bill of Quantities in details to establish the most economical way in which the job can be done and to prepare Project Organization Chart and the work break down structure.
- Identifying the elements of the project and the project component parts in details to become able to identify the requirements of the manpower, materials, plant, finance and Client requirements.
- Organizing and Determining all the resources necessary to undertake the project by construction planning to control the expenses and overheads during contract period and to define determining the labour requirements including breakdown of skills and size of gauge and the delivery schedules of the materials and storage arrangements.
- Analyzing the size of the nomination in the project and how they specified in the Bill of Quantities and, particular conditions of the contract to learn how to deal with any additional works or variations caused by nominated Sub-Contractor without affecting the work progress.
- Checking the project - location and how far is it from congested areas to deal with flexibility in delivering the materials and flexibility in issuing the necessary permits from authorities.
- Checking in details the construction methodology of the whole project including testing and commissioning plan to control the identified unique problems and propose alternative solution to reduce the technical conflicts.
- Being very familiar with all details of the contractual and technical obligations during pre-construction stage to mitigate any conflict which may arise during construction period and to follow up all necessary permits relates to regulation and authorities.

Controlling the documents is another major issue for the Contractor's Project Manager where he should appoint a qualified Document Controller to control all correspondences and contract documents in proper full detailed records in a systematic way during the construction period in day to day basis. Reports check lists; forms, charts, letter, drawings and all other correspondence help the Project Manager to follow-up and improve his work progress throughout a proper documentation system.

Moreover one of the most important issues that Contractor's Project Manager should be fully aware of dealing with domestic and nominated Sub-Contractors. Communication is a part of the principles of dealing with the Sub-Contractor. The Project Manager of the Main Contractor shall select the Sub-Contractor on the basis of their ability to meet the contract requirement. The selection of the Sub-Contractor shall be dependent upon the type of work; period and quality, on the records of Sub-Contractor previously demonstrated capability and performance. Therefore, the Project

Manager must prepare by himself the condition of the sub-contract agreement and terms such as work information, starting completion, mode of payments, disputes, insurance, termination and ensure these are compatible with the over all project objectives. Special care needs to be exercised in selection and choosing the lowest quotation of the Sub-Contractor. This depends on the personality, experience and communication of the Contractor's Project Manager who should be strong enough to take a proper decision.

Many questions relates to the work progress (technical, legal, contractual and financial side) must be raised and discussed by all participants during the project progress meetings to avoid conflicts

It is also is advised that the Contractor's Project Managers who are working in contracting sector to think deeply about the feasibility of' construction of their projects because usually construction requires larger number of people and a greater variety of activities than do the proceeding stage. The cost per day rises sharply based on many reasons caused by Client, Consultant and the Contractor resources. So does the potential for delay and inefficiency. Construction therefore requires more detailed to its planning, organization, programming etc. That is why Contractor's Project Manager should establish procedures for the following:

- Work breakdown, definition of authority and control of changes.
- Planning and progress monitoring of site manpower needs.
- Preparation and placing of contracts and other procurement
- Cost estimating and monitoring
- Equipment, materials ordering and delivery.
- Documents records and control.