bad project
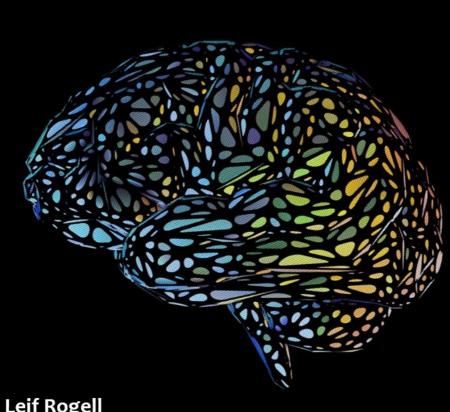
Psychological
Project Management

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"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up men to collect wood, assign tasks and divide the work, but teach the men the longing for the wide, endless sea".

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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2. Group roles in project teams

There are different roles in a project organisation, which all participants assume. First, there are the formal roles. These are the roles that are defined by the project organisation, the official employee names and roles. For example, a project principal is appointed, a steering committee is appointed, and the project manager is commissioned. Later in this chapter we will see that especially at the beginning of the project the formal roles are of high importance and relevance. The formal structure of a project team can be depicted very simply.

Figure 2: Basic structure of a project team

But there are also informal roles in project teams. These are the behaviour patterns that project team members spontaneously adopt in group situations. For this reason, they are difficult to recognise and cannot be depicted in a structured way. This behavioural preference can weaken the formal structure of the group, for example, if a dominant member tends to give instructions instead of the project leader. Or several project team members with similar behavioural

preferences may join together to form a "subteam". These informal roles are generally much more important for the project manager to observe than the formal roles. This is because the informal roles are subconsciously more important for interaction and communication among the project team members.

2.1.   Formal Group Roles

This section deals specifically with the formal roles that are normally intended as permanent participants of a project meeting (especially project managers and project staff). Formal roles that are located outside the internal project organisation, for example project owner or customer, are deliberately not described in this book, as they have only a minor impact on team building in a project.

Project Manager

The project manager organises and leads the project team through the daily work and the upcoming work packages. He is responsible for completing the project on time, with the desired quality and within budget. The project manager always works with the client, the steering committee, the project team, the customer and other stakeholders and participants to coordinate the goal, requirements, work packages, finances, meetings, communication and outcome. Among other things, the project manager is responsible for the following tasks: documenting the project scope and content, developing a project plan and work breakdown structure, monitoring all project activities,

communicating with stakeholders, handling all change requests, documenting project progress and results, creating project documents, and handling all unforeseeable events

Project Collaborators

A member of the project team who is selected to carry out the work in the project. They are basically responsible for contributing to the project goal, project result, and specific work packages and processes through their work performance. In case of problems, change requests or unforeseen events, this is reported to the (sub-)project manager. The members of the project team often have different professional orientations in order to cover as many aspects of the project scope as possible. Project team members can belong to the project team for the whole project or only for certain phases in which their expertise or support is needed. The specific activities and tasks of project members vary greatly from case to case, depending on the project.

2.2.   Informal Group Roles

In addition to formal roles, there are also informal roles, i.e. spontaneous behavioural preferences and patterns of behaviour with which people feel comfortable when they are in group situations. Numerous psychologists have now created a whole range of different models for spontaneous and formal group roles. Among the most established and well-known are the team roles according to Belbin.

4. Performance & Motivation

Motivation is often defined as human behaviour that is goal-oriented or purposeful. Being motivated is therefore characterised by a change in behaviour, oriented towards a specific goal. Thus, an inner drive is created which makes this goal-oriented behaviour possible. As a project manager, it is often neither possible nor desirable to have to constantly drive and control the project team members. Therefore, the project manager must be able to promote and support this change in behaviour and this inner drive of the employees, so that the project employees want to achieve maximum performance on their own initiative. In the following sections, we will therefore look at a number of different motivation models to provide a basis for explaining how this inner drive is created.

4.1.   Different Motivation Models

In order to better understand why and how people can motivate themselves to do different jobs and activities, psychologists have developed a number of different explanatory models.

Some theories and models explain motivation as an internal or external driving force to satisfy different human needs. So, if a human need has not (yet) been satisfied, a motivation to satisfy it arises. These models and theories include Maslow's pyramid of needs, Alderfer's ERG theory, Herzberg's hygiene factors and McClelland's theory of needs. For example,

McClelland's needs theory contains a long list of different needs that people want to satisfy. What is special about McClelland's theory is that, in his opinion, these needs have been learned and shaped by cultural and social influence.

There are also theories and models that explain motivation as being derived from personality traits. This means that people are born with different driving forces and are motivated by different influences. One of these influences is the X-Y theory of McGregor. He describes that there are two different types of people who are motivated by different factors. In theory X we find the unwilling people who shirk work, are lazy and always try to work as little as possible. Therefore, they avoid responsibility and have no ambition to achieve something significant in their careers. Theory X People are not motivated by organisational goals or self-realisation, but by strict and rigorous external guidelines, for example by superiors or laws. On the other side of the spectrum we find Theory Y people who are always very committed. They are eager to take responsibility and long to be able to fulfil the goals of the company or organisation. They seek self-development and thus enable themselves to make the best possible decisions in pursuit of this goal. The best way to motivate these people is to give them freedom. They need opportunities for self-determination, larger areas of responsibility, flexible organisational structures and challenging project tasks to feel motivated. These two theories were later merged into a theory Z, in which

people behave as a mixture of theory Y and theory X and through this framework a mixture of personal development and direct input is considered motivating. Another theory that deals with personality and motivation is the maturation theory of Argyris. Here the personality, especially the degree of maturity, of an employee is influenced by external factors, such as superiors or the organisation and changes over time. Passivity, little responsibility and unclear goals lead to a less mature personality and therefore to a lower motivation to pursue professional activities. On the other hand, factors such as long-term perspective, independent work, and engaging activities can lead to a matured personality and thus increase the motivation to pursue and complete further professional development.

Another category of motivation theories are referred to as expectation theories. One of these theories is called the VIE (Valency, Instrumentality, Expectation) theory and was developed by Vroom. In this theory, motivation has little to do with either innate personality traits or environmental influences, rather motivation arises from the situation and is therefore situation-specific. This theory only works in those situations where the person has the opportunity to take (or refrain from taking) an action that leads to a consequence. In order to explain why a person in a certain situation is motivated to undertake a certain action, we have to consider three aspects: the instrumentality of the result of the action, the valence of the sequence of actions, and the

corresponding expectation of the person. The instrumentality considers the consequences of the action, i.e. what will happen and what are the consequences if I perform (or refrain from performing) this action. Under valence, the individual expectations and evaluation of the consequences are considered. Different people value different things and therefore people can feel differently motivated even if their circumstances are objectively the same. Under expectation, we understand the probability that the instrumentality will actually come about. There are also a number of different extensions on this theory.

In the following sections, we will look in more detail at some of the most important motivation models, the findings of which are easy to understand and can be used directly in project work to better understand and promote the motivation of project staff.

4.1.1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

To better understand what drives and motivates people, Maslow has proposed that human needs can be arranged hierarchically. These needs are arranged in a pyramid, and only when the needs of one level have been met, can we be motivated to reach for the next highest level. There are five levels in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

In the first and lowest level we find the physiological needs of a person. These are vital needs like eating when we are hungry or drinking when we are thirsty. The needs for sleep or a normal body temperature also