# When the Executor turns Manager

By
Anil Seth & Prashant K Sinha

*A teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn is hammering on cold iron.*

~Horace Mann

Project Management looks difficult to many when the transition from Executor to Manger is experienced. It is even more difficult when the executor was rated excellent and expectations are to repeat the performance as a Manager.

This fear that "I may not be in position to extract the same output as was done by ME" is extremely dangerous. This fear cycle is encountered at least once by each Project Engineer. So the question is, are the expectations getting affected? And believe me in ninety percent of the cases the answer is YES.

The problem becomes worst when the work is being executed on Distributed Execution Principle. The Team on the otherside of the Globe may not know YOUR capabilities and on each failure will brand YOU *the reason*. Sometimes this fear comes back again after 90% of the engineering completion (at the time when Design Change Notice is diminishing and Field Change Note is peaking).To manage this most of the Project Engineer resolve to reactive techniques (and not preventive ones) like calling emergency meeting with senior support or Department Managers/Department Heads-By doing this we are:

- ✓ Informing our inefficiencies.

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- ✓ Involving those who can ONLY contribute through experience and are unaware of day to day technical hurdles.

There are ways to handle such scenarios.

1. Use Effective Format
2. Issue Communication mails with action plan.

The solution seems to be simpler than thought for, what we mean by above statement is:

After 90% completion of Engineering, the site/construction engineering support demand increases. If the activities are not planned …at times leads issue project deviation notice to account for such needs. All such activities consume the contingency resources. This Situation is neither liked by Project Managers nor by Department Managers.

What is an affective Format?

The Format which helps in acquiring the information in right direction. The Project Engineers generally recommends Project Control Scheduler to make a list (& schedule without backwards /forward relationships).This list will have the activity listed with budget (Man-hours), resource (Person assigned) and the duration (Start and end date with weekly targets).Any format is effective if and only if it is utilized by the end user (here Project Engineer) affectively. One sample for reference is given below. It is important that we do not link the information availability with document …but responsible engineer/designer directly acquire from Team (Vendor or In-house Engineering).This is correct also, after 90% engineering completion relatively all the technical information is available…. otherwise the vicious circle will never end.

**Tail End Activities - Process** — **Status:** 12-Feb-16

| S.No | Activity Description | Responsible Person | To Go Hrs. | % Progress | Status | Start Date | Actual Date | Forecast Finish Da | Feb'16 | | | | Mar'16 | | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | Wk0 | Wk0 | Wk0 | Wk0 | Wk09 | Wk10 | |
| 1 | Study of Acoustically induced vibrations for relief valves and control valves discharging into Flare / Atmosphere | P1 | 12 | 100% | Finished | 1-Dec-15 | 1-Jan-16 | 1-Jan-16 | | | | | | | |
| | | P2 | 3 | 100% | Finished | 1-Dec-15 | 1-Jan-16 | 1-Jan-16 | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Surge calculations for pumped systems | P3 | 85 | 75% | In Progress | 1-Jan-16 | | 28-Feb-16 | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Calculation and Process data for nozzles to be installed in Reactor Handling area sump | P4 | 5 | 85% | In Progress | 8-Jan-16 | | 28-Feb-16 | | | | | | | |

Next is Communication mail!

----------Alert----------

Team,

Attached please find the Tail End Progress report as on week ending 19 th Feb '16.

| As on date | 19-Feb-16 | |
|---|---|---|
| **Discipline** | **Cumm Progress %** | **Cumm PF** |
| **Process** | 96.0% | 0.74 |
| **Piping** | 97.2% | 0.94 |
| **Mechanical** | 92.9% | 0.78 |
| **CSA** | 96.5% | 0.99 |
| **Electrical** | 90.2% | 0.82 |
| **Control System** | 91.2% | 0.83 |
| **Total** | **95.4%** | **0.92** |

ND _ Tail End Activities_ 19Feb'16.pdf

Piping:
28/73 are finished and No activity is under delay.
xxyyzz

Process:
28/73 are finished and 04 activities are under delay.
Demobilization of 01/03 planned from wk 08.

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In the end of engineering *the procurement of engineered (tagged) item* also ends …. but the procurement *for site construction needs(bulk items)* is about 70% complete. During this period to support site requirements various activities (related to dispatch, spares ordering, area development, underground etc.) crops up and this results in increase in staffing with low PF. And of course the effort hours are justified after activity completion but….till then the DAMAGE is done.

The solution lies in Communication, if the Project Engineer provides an (weekly) alert to Taskforce and stakeholders (with a report) the situation will remain in control.

The common mistake observed here is that Leads include the support for Site Queries also to the Tail End Activity List. The basic difference in Support and Prime activity is on its controllability. The Primary activity will always have an end date based on available information. The support activity will be on ad hoc and can only finish when the designed item is fabricated (and tested~ as per contractual obligations). In principle when we cross the 90% milestone in Engineering, we come up with construction queries (RFIs-*terminology followed by various contractors*) to resolve on day to day basis. Therefore for such support activities, the hours spent to resolve the query/issues should be tracked separately and not be added in total Engineering actual spent hours.

WHY: By doing such a mistake we will lower down our productivity and actually the Project is progressing well. Another suggestion is for all such site related requirements (FCNs-Filed Change Notices etc) the budget should come from construction dashboard.

Hence by doing "Alert Management " the engineering budget, productivity and progress can be managed effectively.

*Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.*

~Mary Anne Radmacher

## About the Authors

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