

the expertise of the professionals and/or tradespeople. If project managers do ignore or override the technical expertise of other professionals, they may expose themselves to liability issues that could have been avoided if they had separated themselves from the micro-management aspects of the project.

### **The Importance of Technical Expertise**

Even so, technical expertise is important for project managers, who are also integrated into the team and yet responsible for resolving its problems. In the construction industry, the project manager is often faced with having to solve various problems due to the multidisciplinary efforts of the various consultants. For this reason, it is important that project managers have technical experience so that they may contribute effectively to the resolution of problems. For example, an architect may be limited or delayed in the design of a space as a result of the engineers' mechanical and structural requirements. This limitation in effect may cause a construction delay that will have a monetary impact on the project budget. With this understanding, an experienced project manager can request that certain construction tasks be phased or increase the personnel when the construction documents are complete, in order to avoid delay. Although contingencies should always be considered in a construction schedule, it is through the interpersonal relationship with the team members that the project manager can address the problems at an early stage.

The project manager should possess another sort of technical expertise: understanding of management skills, in particular, management styles described in the social project management behavioral approach to team leadership. The project management industry identifies an effective leadership style as a critical skill. A successful project manager must develop various "styles" with which to interact with each project participant. The two most common behavioral approaches are the task and the employee orientation. The task-oriented approach is that of a project manager whose primary focus is to accomplish the required goal. This approach is achieved through the delegation of work tasks and responsibilities that must be completed within the requested time frame. This scope of work is closely monitored and supervised by the project manager to assure the fulfillment of the project's objectives. The employee-orientation approach is associated with the project manager who values relationships with the team participants. There is no one correct style or approach that has proven to be effective in every project team; the project

manager must choose an appropriate style depending on the team participants and the environment.

Project managers must monitor the project budget and schedule, but to succeed, they must also use their managerial skills to motivate and influence the efforts of the project team. The project manager must possess a strategic desire to get the goal of the project accomplished. To achieve the desired goal, an effective team leader needs the support and commitment of the project team. In order to organize the implementation of the project plan the team leader must establish standard procedures, systems, and methods. It is through this methodical and consistent approach that a project manager can create an integrated project environment that can function as a single “unit” to achieve a common goal. In addition, the performance criteria derived from the procedural standard can act as a motivating factor for the participants in achieving the project objective. The project manager must be cognizant of rewarding the participant when these objectives are complete. Depending on the project environment and/or participants, a project manager must come to the realization that various leadership styles may be required for different projects. To manage an integrated project team, then, the project manager must integrate various complementary professional skills—technical, organizational, and interpersonal.

### Notes

1

Montana, Patrick, and Bruce Charnov, *Management*, 3rd ed., Barron's Business Review Series, Barron's, Hauppauge, NY, 2000, p. 90.

2

Kezsbom, Deborah, Donald Schilling, and Katherine Edward, *Dynamic Project Management: A Practical Guide for Managers and Engineers*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1989, p. 183.

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Montana, Patrick J., and Bruce H. Charnov. *Management* (Barron's Business Review Series). Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 2000.