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TOPIC:
AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY
LEVELS:

ROLES IN PROJECTS SUCCESS

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TABLE OF CONTENT

- INTRODUCTION
-
- PROJECT ORGANISATION
-
- AUTHORITY CONCEPT IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
-
- RESPONSIBILITY CONCEPT IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
-
- EGI COMMUNITY ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT
-
- APPLICATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY
-
- SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

Positive manifestation of Project initiation and execution is predicated on the organization and management process of a corporate system . Appraisal of the process of project organization gives a better insight on how management objective is realized through strategic move of project initiation. In course of the exercise of treating authority and responsibility concepts, roles of project managers were exposed.

A pilot construction project was used to buttress this insight into the role of authority and responsibility.

Egi electrification quickly comes into mind as the typical construction project. In this, the application of authority and responsibility and the associated mistakes at higher management level were highlighted. The effects of wrong adoption of concept of authority and responsibility in the typical project were equally stated.

Analysis of people's view and actual application of authority and responsibility were covered in the summary.

AUTHORITY CONCEPT IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

In oxford advanced learners Dictionary, we learned that authority is power or right to give orders and make others obey. It is also stated that authority is the right given to somebody. There is further understanding that Authority is the kind of right and power through which it guides and directs the actions of others so that the organizational goals can be achieved. It is also related with decision making. It is vested in particular position, not to the person because authority is given by an institution and therefore it is legal. Person, who assumes the position of the chairmanship of an organized setting with a goal, automatically starts exercising such powers associated with the position. The person is addressed as 'chairman'. The person's name is not chairman.

Authority can equally be delegated. All activities are not performed by one person. Authority should be provided to the subordinates too. Process of transferring authority and creation of responsibility between superior and subordinates to accomplish a certain task is called delegation of authority. It can take place without decentralization. It can be withdrawn by delegator at any time. It minimizes the burden of managers of unit, departments or plant. Relationship is between superior and immediate subordinates. It is technique of management used to get the things done through others. It is confined to manager and subordinates. Authority is only delegated, not responsibilities.

Very important to management process. Control remains in hand of superior who supervise the activities of subordinates. It is an art of management science. When authority is not given to subordinates there is no performance. Delegation is the process of sharing power and work (deliver the power from one to another). In fact, the concepts of authority and responsibility are closely related. Authority was defined by Henry Tayol as the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience. Responsibility involves being accountable, and is therefore naturally associated with authority. Whoever assumes authority also assumes responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY CONCEPT IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Responsibility also implies being responsible or accountable for an action. Authentic body of an organization is top level management, top level management direct the subordinates. Departmental managers and other personnel take the direction from top level management to perform the task. Authority is necessary to perform the work. So the obligation to perform the duties and task is known as responsibility. However, down the ladder authority can be delegated along with responsibility.

We equally understood that project management, in summary has to do with managing and organizing resources, which involves human being and others in such a way that a project, upon identification and initiation is completed within defined scope, quality, time and cost constraints. All these process come within the life circle of such project.

So, in project management, the impact of exercise or application of authority and responsibility concept will be evaluated from various angles.

In an organization, for viability or sustenance of a business entity, stakeholders continuously formulate policies and objectives. So the aspiration formulated by the stakeholders in form of corporate objectives is an end toward which all the strategies and actions are directed. And a corporate objective implies a network or hierarchical formation of the intended accomplishment through the strategic policies procedures programs and activities of an organizations.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION

To organize means to put into working order, arrange in a system.

Making preparation for project organization therefore implies arranging and planning sequence that will lead to a successful execution of a project.

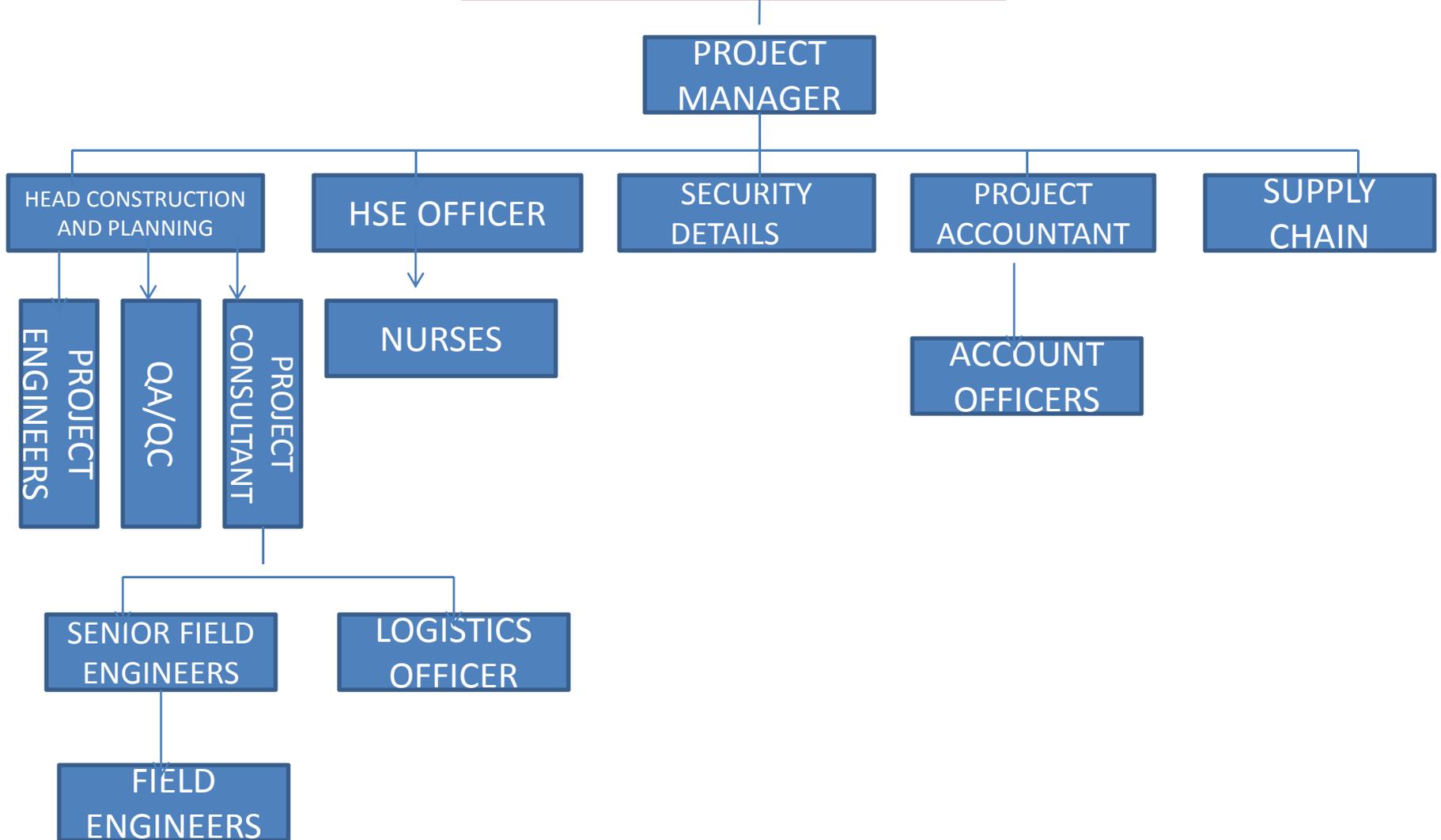
The Project Organization defines the human infrastructure of the project. This task is designed to define the project organization chart, the roles, and the relationships of the project team. The organizational structure clearly identifies roles and responsibilities of each position, augmenting the existing role definitions where necessary to cover all of the responsibilities. The Project Organization technique that is used in this step provides a standard set of roles and responsibilities which can be customized for the particular project under review.

This should cover all personnel resources required, both full and part time. If not selected in an earlier activity, it is now time to recruit the members of the Project Board. Project Board members are drawn from those in management who are senior enough to be able to commit all necessary resources to the project. Recruit project team members. It will also be necessary to determine outsourcing requirements that will drive the project plan by identifying types of external contractors required.

FIG 1

ORGANOGRAM FOR EGI ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT

Executive Director Project



Identify clients/users/business partners (stakeholders) to be associated with the project and determine the level of participation required and available. Identify any stakeholders who are to be consulted and informed of any status and organizational change regarding the project.

Identify any additional technical or business specialists required to support the project. This may include such areas as training, human resources, help desk, learning center, and quality assurance. The roles and responsibilities of these resources should be clearly defined along with the level of commitment over the duration of the project.

A well -organized and planned project advertises the level of authority and responsibility control of a project manager. So, the steps and ingredients of project planning and organization includes among others, information which comes in form of detailed feasibility studies. The financial and economic/social returns to a project depend on the timing of cash flows in the investment and operation stages of a project and these things can only be realistic if and only they are based on proper schedule of project activities.

Also scheduling of project activities can only be realistic if based on resource analysis in order to avoid economic and management objectives and a higher probability of completion within the available time. Other ingredient in successful project implementation involves contract planning, institutional arrangement, procurements and purchase of equipment, obtaining necessary permits and licenses, establishment of project organization structure and project staffing.

Therefore, being in consonance with the actualization of the objectives of a corporate organization, most often, projects are strategically initiated. Bringing the project to life and successful completion must be the task of a group out of the lots in the organization. Within the group, headship is assigned to an individual/ individuals who execute the strategic process towards the organization's objective. Terms of reference will be drawn which he has to use in delivery the company's' goal.

The strategically initiated project being an essential means to achieve in the objectives of growth of the company. The would be project leader must be somebody with sound technical (managerial) ability and personality. It is on this person that the responsibility of delivery a successful project lies.

A typical Electrification project in Egi land initiated by TOTAL FINA ELF, formally ELF (NIG) LTD which was used as a case study further buttressed the significance of sound authority and responsibility application in Project Management. The lesson of Egi Electrification Project will go further to draw the similarity and difference in authority and responsibility in project management.

CASE STUDY OF EGI COMMUNITY ELECTRIFICATION

Intellectual development due to education and information acquisition among the citizenry has brought about the awareness of amount of natural wealth that Nigeria is endowed with. Exploration and exploitation of this natural wealth for many years in the history of the country did not take care of the local community. The knowledge of this has consequently brought about the agitation for citing of developmental project within the locality where exploration and exploitation of such natural wealth is being carried out.

It has equally become a better practice for vibrant organization to pursue not only profit maximization objective but pay adequate attention to the social responsibility policy. Nigerian Government has equally made it mandatory for all the multi-national companies to directly contribute in development of their area of operation.

Therefore, with the joint arrangement of multifunctional oil prospecting company and Nigeria National Petroleum Company of forty and sixty percent Equity holdings respectively, projects are embarked upon jointly in areas of exploration activity. ELF Nigerian Limited has the right of exploration and exploitation of Natural Liquefied Gas within Egi community. So, in pursuance of her social responsibility, some selected developmental projects were mapped out to be carried out for the communities. Among these selected projects is Community Electrification of four towns, as phase one of the electrification project.

This project was accordingly conceived, designed and approved by NNPC monitoring unit after due feasibility studies has been carried out. The implementation which was to be carried out by EFL, was contracted out. Due bid preparation, processing and selection were made. Equally, a consultancy contract for the project was awarded to a firm. Owing to the policy of EFL/NAPIN in patronizing local contractors of project location only, contractors from Egi community were invited to bid. And successful ones among the group were awarded the job. Elf being aware of lack of adequate experience of some of the contractors in rural electrification job. Engineering supervision was awarded to another firm with verse experience in electricity projects.

By this arrangement, three parties were directly involved in carrying out the execution of the electrification project, viz; EFL- the client, local community contractors and consultant/supervising engineers. In the contract scope between ELF and Supervising Engineers, a clause establishing level of authority and responsibilities for the engineers was well spelt out. The supervising engineers were to ensure that the project execution respect all the project specifications while the ELF representative takes care of all correspondence pertaining to the project and based on the advise of the supervising engineer, raise certificate. The supervising engineers were to ensure that the target completion date was met while the ELF representative monitors the project budgeted cost which however , has to be achieve with the aid of the supervising engineers in the areas of variation and avoidance of down time.

APPLICATION OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY:

Upon completion of all the necessary hand over of site to the contractors and mobilization of contractors personnel and equipment to site , the issue of community problem set in. there were litigation and youth unrest in connection with the project. Contractors were at the center of the drama. Some factions were against the contractors while some were in support. Consequently, the mapped out procedure for proper project monitoring based on the already assigned authority and responsibility was adversely affected. In place of enforcement of specification adherence, public relation maneuvering took precedent. Authority of the supervising engineers and ELF project representative was reduced to mere reporting site offices.

This development, naturally affected the project target date of forty days, adversely. The project in question had to last for about one year. It equally, obviously affected budgeted cost. The company, EFL did not have the gut to terminate or suspend the project, less community will create a problem for the company in their base of operation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Authority and responsibility especially, in project management becomes a good managerial tactics in getting to expected goal through project initiation and execution. This, however becomes acceptable assertion when all the relevant managerial constraint are properly identified and handled. From the lesson of ELF Company handling of Egi electrification project execution, authority and responsibility issue left a lot to be desired. Authority and responsibility is expected to equally embrace particularly crisis management ability but this was not respected, hence the setbacks.

- Though it can be argued that a situation where corporate existence is threatened, managerial bureaucracy should be thrown into the air. Should this be sustained, the management exercise in human relation of determination and selection of heads for specific task is rubbish. It is expected that would be head of a unit or task in project implementation must have been picked after evaluating the persons understanding of corporate aim in a project and the ability of the person to disassociate personal objective from corporate objective. Also, personality and Communication ability of the individual must have been assessed. Equally assessed must have included technical and bio- component of the individual.

Therefore, adjudicating the authority and responsibility of project supervising engineers and company project/responsibility in Egi Electrification project adversely affected the project completion schedule, even the social responsibility policy of the company was threatened by the mix up in authority and responsibility application in the project.

Therefore, based on the typical project implementation approach and full understanding of authority and responsibility in project execution, it was observed that wrong application of these tool of human and industrial relation in management can lead to non realization of corporate objective through the strategy of project initiation and implementation.

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