Global IT Project Management Using Web 2.0

Behnaz Gholami, Multimedia University, Malaysia

San Murugesan, University of Western Sydney, Australia

ABSTRACT

For many businesses, managing globally distributed IT projects effectively is key to success in today's competitive environment. However, IT projects and their managements are notorious for failures, and managing globally distributed teams poses unique additional challenges. While the Internet, email and the Web have been major means of communication among such teams, new Web 2.0 technologies and applications which have emerged into prominence in the last few years present new opportunities for successfully managing global projects. This paper presents the authors' findings on awareness and level of use of Web 2.0 tools for project management among global teams. It also offers recommendations on how managers of global IT projects can manage their teams more efficiently and effectively using Web 2.0 tools.

Keywords: Communications, Global IT Project, Global Software Development, Project Management, Web 2.0 Tools

INTRODUCTION

Information technology project management (PM) encompasses activities such as planning, monitoring and controlling and managing IT projects (IT project management, 2008). Over the years, several new concepts, methodologies, and software tools for IT project management have been developed and promoted (Venugopal, 2005). However, increased demands placed on IT applications, increased complexities of development and integration of IT systems with business applications, and complex hardware, software and communications infrastructure make IT project management, particularly global IT Project management, a major chal-

lenge. Hence, there is need for, and a lot of interest in, improving IT project management (Asprey, 2005).

Studies and histories reveal that most IT projects fail to meet their objectives (Venugopal, 2005). Several reasons have been attributed to the failure of IT projects, including: poor or lack of communication among team members, lack of coordination, cooperation and collaboration, the high cost of development, lack of adequate time for development, lack of necessary IT knowledge/skills among development teams, difficulty in obtaining access to right advice with respect to IT, and lack of understanding of benefits that IT can provide (Suraweera, Pulakanam, & Guler, 2006). On the other hand, three key factors for success of a project are: user involvement, executive management support,

and a clear statement of requirements (Daniels & LaMarsh, 2007). Other factors of project success are simplified/standardized project plan, motivated/experienced staff, clear objectives, alignment of IT project with business strategy, careful planning of change process and top management support (Suraweera et al., 2006).

In today's environment, to remain competitive and agile, to improve productivity, to lower the cost of development, and to make use of expertise available globally, firms make effective use of project teams distributed across the globe. Ease of communication, coordination and collaboration foster global project teams. As Laurent (2007, p. 1) noted, "Globalization implies a strong networked and distributed development process; it offers high potential for businesses due to its innovation, flexibility, cost reduction, time reduction, and improving quality." Further, many projects that are multidisciplinary and complex nature require skills, experience, consultation, and decisions of numerous individuals who may be dispersed across many geographic locations (McDonough & Cedrone, 1998).

Software development industry is now taking advantages of global virtual teams such as access to larger pool of people having varied computing and managerial skills, reduce software development time by taking advantage of 24-hour shifts of distributed teams and decreased labor costs by outsourcing software development to low wage countries (Anjum, Islam Zafar, & Mehdi, 2006). Offshore outsourcing is increasingly common in IT projects (Braun, 2007).

Challenges of Global Virtual Teams

Managing global virtual teams, however, presents several challenges. For instance, adopting an agile style of development when teams are large and not co-located pose a unique challenge (Cusumano, 2008). Several others factors need to be taken into consideration in managing global teams as these factors that affect the performance and viability of virtual teams (Anjum et al., 2006):

1. Cultural differences between team members and teams.
2. Distance between collaborating teams.
3. Duration/lifetime of the team.
4. Frequency of communication between members/teams.
5. Meetings that take place between members/ teams.
6. Role allocation framework followed for each team.
7. Dependencies between team tasks.
8. Location of team members and team formation practices.
9. Technology requirements.
10. Time differences between teams.

Several studies reveal that the primary problem facing development houses that use globally distributed teams (GDT) is not with the application of information technologies but rather their failure to effectively manage the human side of global teams (McDonough & Cedrone, 1998). Lack of face-to-face interaction between team members and also team leader causes troubles for these kinds of teams because virtual teamwork is more complex than working face-to-face (Oertig & Buergi, 2006). Motivating GDT members, creating a safe, conducive work environment, and managing the electronic workplaces are key requirements of managing GDT. Developing a good trust and relationships among the GDT members - built over time, based on long-term consistent performance and behavior that created the confidence - is important for successful management of GDT (Oertig & Buergi, 2006; Zakaria, Amelinckx, & Wilemon, 2004).

Major issues and challenges in managing global virtual team are grouped into five categories as:

1. Strategic issues: These kinds of issues concern with the essentials and requirements of a particular project to be developed by globally dispersed teams, as well as how to divide it across sites (Evaristo, Audy, Prikladnicki, & Avritchir, 2005).

Related Content

Dataveillance: Employee Monitoring & Information Privacy Concerns in the Workplace
Regina Connolly and Cliona McParland (2012). *Journal of Information Technology Research (pp. 31-45).*

www.irma-international.org/article/dataveillance-employee-monitoring-information-privacy/72709/

Crossing the Digital Divide in a Women's Community ICT Centre
Clem Herman (2008). *Information Communication Technologies: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 904-910).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/crossing-digital-divide-women-community/22711/

Integrated Analysis and Design of Knowledge Systems and Processes
Mark Nissen, Magdi Kamel and Kishore Sengupta (2000). *Information Resources Management Journal (pp. 24-43).*

www.irma-international.org/article/integrated-analysis-design-knowledge-systems/1206/

Success of Public Knowledge Management in the Light of the Rossian Ethics
Mehdi Shami Zanjani, Hossein Dabbagh and Roshanak Rouzbehani (2013). *Managing Information Resources and Technology: Emerging Applications and Theories (pp. 124-137).*

www.irma-international.org/chapter/success-public-knowledge-management-light/74504/

Fit Between Strategy and IS Specialization: A Framework for Effective Choice and Customization of Information System Application Modules
Marc N. Haines, Dale L. Goodhue and Thomas F. Gattiker (2006). *Information Resources Management Journal (pp. 34-47).*

www.irma-international.org/article/fit-between-strategy-specialization/1295/