

If you can change you will see how others change¹

Alfonso Bucero

Perhaps you are happy as a project manager about the way you manage your project, your people or about the relationship you have with your project sponsor or your customer. Perhaps you are not. In many occasions in my professional life I was unhappy about one of those situations, but you know what, I did not do anything for changing it. Does it sound familiar to you?

To be a complete project manager is always a challenge for all of us. I mean developing the right skills to contribute for project success is not an easy task, but we can do much more that we can imagine. Working over the years, as a project manager, I was a doer because I felt the obligation of doing everything under my management and organization umbrella without any doubt. However I learnt over the years that organizations expect some added value from us, as project managers. I am not talking about disobedience in front of our top managers or not following the corporate procedures, rules and guidelines; I am talking about thinking differently and trying to figure out what would happen if we'd do it in other way. Please reflect upon the following questions:

Have you spent time thinking about what you would change in your organization regarding the way the support you in your projects?

Have you spent time thinking about the way you are dealing with your customer when delivering a project for them?

Have you spent time reflecting about how are you dealing with your team members and project stakeholders?

Are you happy about that, or would you change anything? If your answer is "I would change something", I would say "WELCOME TO THE CLUB". In my life as a project manager I wanted to change many things regarding every area I talked about, but I did not have the courage to do it. And I believe that I lost great opportunities with my behavior. Finally I was burnt out. Let me share with you the following story:

Some years ago, I worked for a multinational company managing a large IT project. The project sponsor was the customer IT manager. I was in a good relationship with him; I gained his credibility over the time. However, my manager talked in my back all the time with negative criticism. He said: Alfonso you defend the customer point of view all the time. You seem to belong

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to the customer organization instead of the project provider. I was alone without my manager support, playing the role of the project manager and the provider's executive. I personally lived a stressful situation with my manager in that project. However, I did not change my behavior. I supported the customer pressure and my manager's pressure all the time. When the project finished, we ran a lessons-learned meeting internally in my organization. Based on the experiences from that project I proposed to prepare Sponsorship training. My manager recognized that he did not spend enough time with the customer Sponsor.

My message for you today is: Please do not wait to be demotivated or frustrated about the things you want to change. All of us are small ants that need to walk and move forward for the benefit of our profession. Organizations do not change things, people do. I suggest you do not lose that opportunity now. I have some best practices that were useful for me in my career. Try it and see if they help you:

1. **ASK:** Ask yourself if you would like to change something in your project environment, and select one thing you want to change.
2. **REFLECT:** Reflect on how to change it. Figure out which actions need to be taken in order to move forward. Ask questions to your project stakeholders to validate your idea
3. **LOOK FOR ALLIES:** Find some allies that believe in your change, and use them as change agents
4. **LEAD:** Lead by example. Encourage your allies and work together with them. You need to start strong.
5. **CHANGE IT:** Adapt and ask to adopt the new pattern or behavior in your organization. Be the change you want to see in your project environment.

Don't be lazy. If you believe that something can be changed please take action and move forward. Apply your courage, organizations and top managers are expecting you, as a project manager is adding value to the organization. Projects are learning processes in organizations, but project managers need to seed, add water, and cultivate that learning process in organizations all time.

TODAY IS A GOOD DAY!

About the Author



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