

## The Pillars of Project Leadership<sup>1, 2</sup>

Hadi Colakoglu

In today's economy, not only the businessmen and companies but also the countries unfortunately file for bankruptcy. The reason for this to me is bad management and furthermore the lack of good leaders. I believe that we need good leaders now more than ever.

No company or organization can exist without successful projects. In today's world, the success rate of projects is below 40%. This points out the importance and necessity of good project managers. Then the key question is, "How can we increase the chances of success for our projects?" First of all, of course we should be skilled and good project managers but is it enough? Well, not most of the time as it seems...We should be **Project Leaders...**

The five key pillars of Project Leadership are as follows:

### **Vision**

***Numbers aren't the vision, numbers are the products and I don't talk the numbers.***  
Jack Welch

Great leaders always have a vision and they really work hard to realize it. Since "vision" is basically a concept of strategy, it is directly related to strategic leadership. "Our project is only a six month project. What vision are you talking about?" I hear you asking. You could be right in time perspective but you should also use the power and leverage of the vision. You could imagine the end of the project, illustrate it, find a hitting slogan and share all these with your stakeholders.

### **Influence**

***The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.***  
Ken Blanchard

Leadership means influence. You could observe the best and lean examples of this in the volunteering organizations. In other organizations, your job is rather easy. The one who has the status, also has the legitimate power. If you are a boss, you may fire your people or promote them. In volunteering organizations, you cannot force your people for anything. If the leader has no influence, the volunteers won't follow him. As Dale Carnegie

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emphasizes, “There is only one way to get anybody to do anything and that is by making the other person want to do it.”

### **Motivation**

***“Management is nothing more than motivating other people.”***  
**Lee Iacocca**

Common motivation theories so far, are becoming inadequate day by day in this era of changes. Daniel Pink, in his book “Drive”; says that the employee’s motivation can be evolved in three stages in history. Motivation 1.0 approach is about maintaining the life such as eating, drinking, breeding etc. In other words, that is the bottom of the Maslow’s Pyramid. Motivation 2.0 covers rewards and punishment mechanisms. So, that is the “carrots and sticks”... Pink implies that old school rewards such as money, benefits or promotion are not often working today. The bottom line of the Motivation 3.0 is the employee’s autonomy to do the job the way and at the time they want. The three main elements of this approach are autonomy, goal and the mastery.

### **Learning**

***“Through learning, we re-create ourselves.”***  
**Peter Senge**

After having a survey among 90 leaders, leadership experts Warren Bennis and Burt Nonus, discovered something about the relationship between development and leadership: “*What distinguishes leaders from the followers is their capacity to develop and improve their skills.*” The ability to become a student again is the factor that distinguishes the successful leaders or organizations from the others. Actually it is not surprising, leadership means teaching and helping others to realize how joyful it can be to be provided with new knowledge and how important the continuous learning is...

### **Effective Team Building**

***“Project team is the heart and soul of the project.”***  
**Thomas Juli**

Project management means absolute teamwork. Thus I like the quote from the Legendary NBA Player Michael Jordan so much, “Talent wins games but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

Tufan Darbaz -One of the extraordinary Turkish CEO’s” emphasizes the importance of being a good team; “Team spirit is the key to success and creating it is never easy. First, you should feel this deeply in your heart and show it by leading by example.”

Big games are won with big team players. Get the best people to your team, clear the obstacles on their way and celebrate the success all together.

## About the Author



### **Hadi Colakoglu**

Ankara, Turkey



**Hadi Colakoglu** is a management and leadership expert, an international leadership speaker, and the author of the book “Be the Leader of Your Projects”. He is also an author at Harvard Business Review-Turkey. Some of his presentations and trainings have reached thousands of people.

Starting with the defense industry, he has more than twenty years of experience, as a senior software engineer, leader, and project manager and led many teams. He has been a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI) Turkey Chapter Board of Directors and he holds the PMP® Credential.

He has a thorough working project management knowledge and experience so that he has been trained hundreds of people for the last seven years. The first edition of his book is sold only in eleven months. Hadi and his wife Nursel live in Ankara. They have 2 children- Mete and Miray. He likes motorcycling and climbing the mountains.