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The Project Reformer's e-Tip of the Week

029: Coordinate Action for Project Success

Last week I wrote about Measure Plan Reliability as a first and necessary step for improving project performance. People regularly ask me, "Why do projects go bad?" and "What should we be on the watch for?" While project team members are quick to speak about the outside influences that derail their projects, my experience is teams are mostly responsible for the plight of their projects. In other words, the factors for succeeding and failing are within your control. The main issue is coordinating action.

I view a project as a **network of commitments**. One person makes a promise for completing a task that others depend on for starting their work, and so on, and so on, and... Many project teams never articulate and activate the network of commitment. Instead, they try to manage and take direction by a schedule. This is a recipe for failure. The future is uncertain. No schedule can possibly anticipate what the team members will be doing with each other or in their lives. Consequently, planning must continue on a weekly and even daily basis if the team is to stay on track.

Top 5 Ways to Eliminate Miscoordination Variances

1. **Get reliable promises.**
Listen critically for the presence of all elements of reliability.
2. **Anticipate possible breakdowns.**
Prepare actions for circumvention.
3. **Stay engaged with the performers.**
Show interest in others' success and provide help.
4. **Pay particular attention to those actions that *make work ready*.**
Minor interruptions can result in major task variances.
5. **Acknowledge performers for their success and their efforts.**
Timely appreciation makes the difference.

By honing your project team's skill at coordinating action they will be able to adjust and stay on the desired overall project plan.

Next up: Securing reliable promises.

Based on lesson 23 of **The First 30 Days on the Last Planner System™**

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