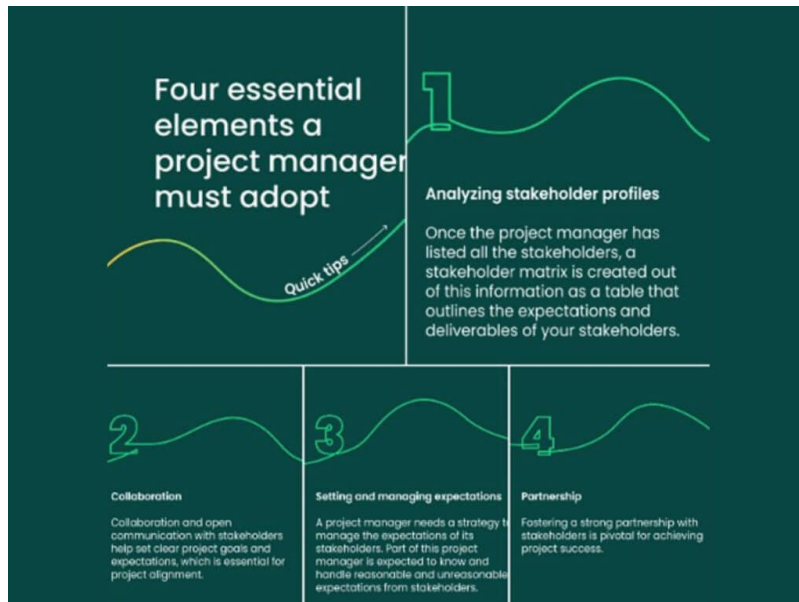


The cornerstones of Effective Project Management, according to APM research

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According to research by the **Association for Project Management (APM)**, four key elements underpin successful project management, all centred on the critical aspects of communication and stakeholder engagement.

1. Stakeholder Analysis and Expectations Management:

- Project managers must meticulously analyse stakeholder profiles, their expectations, and the deliverables required to achieve a positive outcome. This initial step ensures everyone involved is on the same page from the outset.

2. Collaborative Goal Setting and Open Communication:

- Clear goals and expectations are paramount for project success. Collaborative efforts and open communication are instrumental in establishing these parameters.

3. Setting and Managing Expectations:

- Effective communication extends beyond initial goal setting. Project managers must actively manage expectations throughout the project lifecycle for those involved and interested parties.

4. Stakeholder Partnerships:

- Building strong partnerships with stakeholders is essential to achieve project success. Effective communication and collaboration foster trust and a sense of shared purpose.

The underestimation of stakeholder management's importance has highlighted the need for a heightened focus on these critical elements.

The Role of the PMO in Supporting Project Managers:

The Project Management Office (PMO) plays a vital role in enabling successful project delivery by supporting project managers in honing their stakeholder management skills. Here are some ways a PMO can achieve this:

- **Community Learning and Sharing:** Foster opportunities for project teams to share best practices, identify areas for improvement, and refine their stakeholder engagement strategies.
- **Standardised Stakeholder Engagement Tools:** Develop toolkits with resources such as templates and online tools to ensure a consistent and positive experience for all project stakeholders.
- **Communication and Engagement Guidance:** Provide clear and concise guidance on best practices for stakeholder engagement and communication. This empowers project teams to effectively manage stakeholder expectations.
- **Stakeholder Education:** Educate both stakeholders and project teams to ensure a shared understanding of project communication protocols and interaction channels.
- **PMO as a Communication Hub:** Utilise the developed toolkits to define and streamline communication from the PMO. Foster a collaborative community through an online PMO hub, offering support, news, and even self-service resources.

Conclusion:

The core skills required for successful project management are equally essential for the PMO. By treating its customer base – stakeholders and project teams – collaboratively and applying these key elements, the PMO can cultivate positive and productive relationships with all parties involved in leading change.