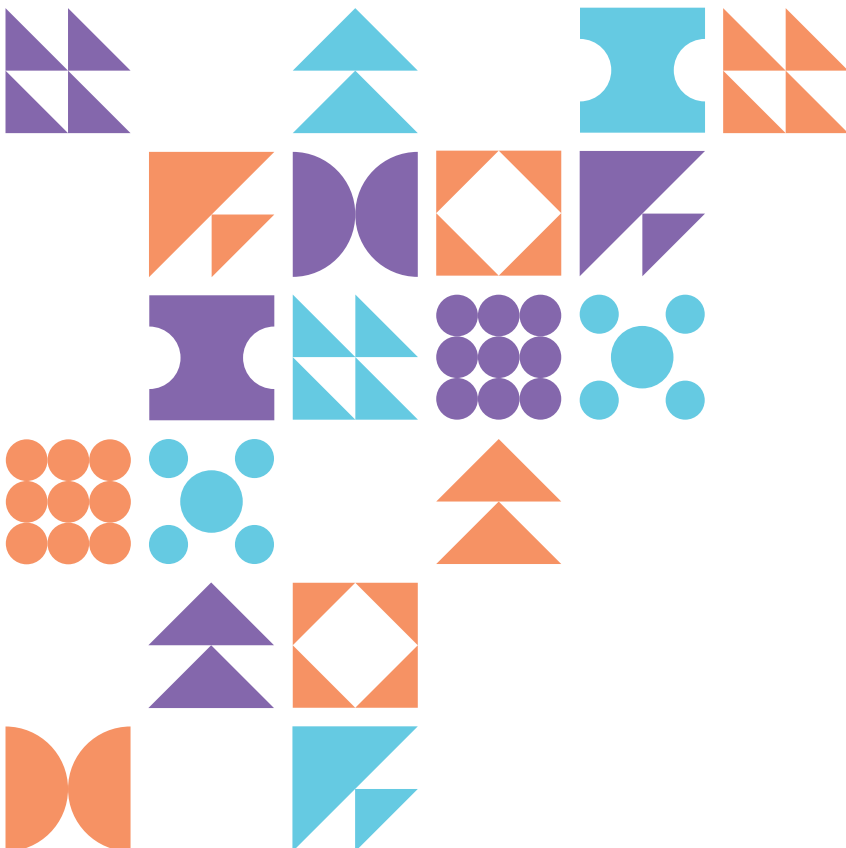


[2024] Differences between Micro Management and Managing Details in Mega Project

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Introduction

Project management in mega projects such as those in the oil and gas sector is a complex and intricate process. It requires the precise coordination of numerous activities and the management of diverse personnel to achieve project objectives.

Two distinct but related concepts in the field of project management are *micro-management* and *managing details*. Despite their conflated similarities, micro-management and managing details are distinct in terms of their tenets and implications for project efficiency, team morale, and overall project success.

However, these two approaches are often misunderstood, leading to their misuse in practice. This misunderstanding largely stems from a common perception that paying attention to small details - a characteristic inherent to both concepts - is a singular, uniform approach.

However, the context, intensity, and purpose of such attention vary significantly between micro-management and managing details, forming the basis for their distinction. In the context of mega oil and gas projects, managing details is a more effective and productive approach compared to micro-management, given the former's potential to foster creativity, autonomy, and a collaborative work environment



The Distinction Between Micromanagement and Managing Details

Micromanagement is a common occurrence in project management and organizational settings that often carries a negative connotation. This concept has been understood as the tendency of some leaders or managers to exercise excessive control or attention to details and being overbearing and intrusive (Ndidi et al., 2022). (Mehraein 2023) associate micromanagement with leaders who display “dark leadership” behaviors, alongside authoritarianism and bullying.

Micromanagers tend to harbor trust issues, leading them to take on tasks themselves rather than delegate, thereby underutilizing the skills of their team members. In addition, micromanagers often interfere with assigned tasks, undermine employee autonomy, and focus excessively on long-term goals and neglecting the importance of daily, short-term objectives (Aguilar & Kosheleva, 2021). Micro-managers often fail to provide effective supervision due to their tendency to involve themselves excessively in their team’s work.

This controlling approach tends to stifle employee creativity, fuels employees’ distrust in their leaders, causes high employee turnover rates, and results in decreased satisfaction, morale, engagement, and productivity (Mishra et al., 2019). Thus, micromanagement behavior interferes not just with employees’ performance but also with the integrity of systems and processes.

These negative outcomes differentiate micromanagement from managing details.

Managing details is a desirable approach and behavior in project management. It refers to the careful monitoring of various project aspects, ensuring alignment with the project objectives without intruding on team members’ responsibilities or independence (Boddy, 2017).

In contrast to micromanagers, detail-oriented managers are knowledgeable about their teams’ activities and keep track of how daily tasks contribute to the project’s overall objectives. These managers trust and value their team members and understand and appreciate the processes their team members implement in achieving long-term goals, fostering an environment of respect and collaboration.

They encourage a collective approach towards goal achievement, striking a balance between attention to detail and allowing their team the autonomy to accomplish tasks, thereby building confidence and incentivizing creativity.

As a result, overall team performance is enhanced, leading to successful project and organizational outcomes



The Best Approach in Mega Projects

In the context of a mega oil and gas project, a detail-oriented management style is more desirable than a micromanagement approach. Mega projects are complex and require diverse skills and expertise, great coordination of numerous tasks, and collaboration among diverse teams of professionals. In such complex projects, the detail-oriented manager's approach of trust, appreciation, and collaboration proves more beneficial and conducive to project success.

Managing details implies overseeing the project's larger picture, ensuring all elements are running smoothly, and intervening only when there's deviation from the plan. However, under micromanagement, instead of facilitating teamwork and innovation, the manager becomes a roadblock, constantly monitoring every task performed by employees to the point where they feel constantly watched.

Micromanagement behavior interferes not just with employees' performance but also with the integrity of systems and processes. Rather than allowing systems and processes to function organically, micromanagers disrupt them with their excessive involvement.

This kind of behavior can also negatively affect the professional relationship between managers and employees, leading to a toxic work environment.



Conclusion

Project management, especially in the context of large-scale endeavors like Mega Oil and Gas Projects, requires a delicate balance between attention to detail and the provision of autonomy. Micromanagement, characterized by excessive control and an overbearing approach, tends to undermine project efficiency and team morale.

It stifles creativity and autonomy, leading to dissatisfaction, high turnover rates, and reduced productivity, thereby jeopardizing project success.

Conversely, managing details emphasizes understanding the broader project objectives and encourages autonomy, fostering a collaborative environment that boosts morale, enhances creativity, and improves overall performance.

In high-stakes mega oil and gas projects, the choice of management style significantly impacts project outcomes.

Adopting a detail-oriented management approach, rather than micromanagement, facilitates project success, as the latter approach promotes trust, appreciates the diverse skills and expertise of team members, and provides a framework for effective coordination and collaboration.



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