Introduction

Project teams are frequently confronted with potential ethical issues. The changing composition of teams, aggressive timelines, pressure of high expectations, culture, values, personality, skill set and expertise, potential conflicts of interest, and often blurred boundaries between the organization's and the project's authority create environments where ethical issues are relegated to a lower priority.

The Project Team Ethics Assessment is designed to help project management practitioners. Its main purposes are:
- to increase self-awareness on ethical perspective, knowledge and understanding;
- to support any project team in increasing their internal functionality and improving their current dynamic;
- to create opportunities for alignment of ethical behavior within the team and promotion of an ethical culture

Description of the tool

The tool consists of a series of statements referring to team ethical knowledge, behavior, practices and performance. The statements can be answered with: "almost never," "occasionally," "usually," "always" or "N/A" (not applicable). Although the assessment can be conducted by an internal facilitator (the project manager), the engagement of an external assessment facilitator for the process should be considered. It consists of four major steps:
1. The assessment components (information about purpose, procedure and use of outcomes) are prepared.
2. Each team member completes the assessment sheet individually and anonymously, selecting one of the given answers.
3. The facilitator collects the individual assessments and proceeds to an assessment summary, highlighting the team's strengths, challenges and disagreements.
4. In a team meeting, the results of the assessment are presented, the outcomes discussed and conclusions and next steps defined. Based on the results of the assessment, the team sets up an action plan, aiming at the improvement of the team's ethical performance.

If a project has a longer duration, this process can be repeated to review the changes if considered necessary or convenient.

The potential outcomes of conducting this assessment are: (1) assess ethical knowledge of the team members; (2) identify knowledge gaps and learning needs for individuals and the team; (3) identify gaps and various alternative actions required; and (4) identify areas of immediate attention (short term) and plans for further implementation (long term).

This tool allows the main stakeholders of a project team, sponsor, team leader and team members to become aware of possible ethical issues the team might face and take preventive actions in timely manner.

Instructions for the Use of the Team Ethics Assessment tool

The Team Ethics Assessment tool can be used by any project team, no matter the industry or the project they are involved in.

Before taking this assessment, we encourage you to review PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, any similar code that is recognized by your company, and any document you signed when you accepted your position with the company or when assigned to the team.

Steps in using the tool:

- Step 1. The project manager organizes a meeting with the team. The objectives and the expected results of applying the Project Team Ethics Assessment are presented and discussed. The facilitator is introduced to the team (if different than the project manager).

- Step 2. Each team member completes the assessment individually and anonymously by assigning an answer for each of the 24 statements: "almost never," "occasionally," "usually," "always" or "N/A" (not applicable). Check only one answer for each of the statements.

- Step 3. The assessment facilitator anonymously collects all participants' assessments and completes the Team Ethics Assessment Summary. Each assessment corresponds to a column, and the assessment facilitator transfers information to the sheet assigning the following values: always (=4); usually (=3); occasionally (=2); and almost never (=1) from the received assessments.

  Once all the assessments are summarized on the Team Ethics Assessment Summary, the facilitator selects:

  - First, two statements with the highest variance (disagreements)
  - Then, two statements with the highest score (strengths)
    - If more than two statements have the same high score, the facilitator selects the ones that, in their opinion, will bring more value to the coming meeting.
  - Finally, two statements with the lowest scores (challenges)
    - If one or both of the statements with the lowest scores are already included in the disagreements list, then the second worst is selected.
    - If more than two statements have the same low score, the facilitator selects the ones that, in their opinion, need to be addressed in the coming meeting.

- Step 4. The project manager calls a meeting with the assessment facilitator and all team members to discuss the six selected statements and how to address them, including any received anonymous comment. During the meeting, a plan should be developed in order to:
  - Increase the team's strengths, perform even better, and leverage them

- o Proactively address the team's challenges, and work to solve them as quickly as possible
- o Understand the team's disagreements, and have the whole team aligned
- o Review previous evaluations (if applicable) and take corrective action where action plans are not effective from data collected

Recommendations

If the circumstances allow, it is highly recommended that the team make use of an external facilitator to avoid potential conflicts of interest or roles.

It is recommended that the assessment facilitator ensures consensus among team members about the outcomes, and that the plan is clear and shared via a set of appropriately detailed minutes.

The recommended frequency of applying the tool is at the beginning of the project, during the forming/storming stage of the team (as it would help with setting the norms) and once again, later in the project to check the alignment and be able to take corrective actions if necessary.

Team Ethics Assessment

The Team Ethics Assessment consists of 24 statements about ethical and professional conduct. The answers of each statement can be: "almost never," "occasionally," "usually," "always" and "N/A" (not applicable). Check only one answer for each of the statements.

01. Team values are defined at the project level and aligned with organizational values.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

02. There are trainings/induction into team/organizational values, and a code of conduct is given to all team members.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

03. Ethical aspects/indicators are included in the performance evaluations (control mechanism) of team members.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

04. There are correction mechanisms (processes and procedures) in place to manage dysfunctional relationships within the team.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

05. The team has a structure in place (person or committee with clearly defined roles and responsibilities) where team members are encouraged to address ethical issues.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

06. If ethical behavior is in question, there is a safe environment for debates and open dialogue.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

07. Team members have discussions about possible conflicts of interest due the project context (business owner, client, sponsor, project manager, specific roles in the team, etc.).

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

08. Team members use their authority solely to fulfill their responsibilities and not for self-interest or to further the interest of family, friends or associates.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

09. Team members demonstrate respect for their colleagues, superiors and staff.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Ethical concerns are openly discussed in the team, and time is devoted for developing appropriate solutions.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Team members fulfill the promises they make to colleagues.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Team members act quickly and decisively when colleagues are not treated fairly.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Deviations from the team/organizational values and code of conduct are allowed only in special situations.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Team members accept only those assignments that are consistent with their background, experience, skills and qualifications.

Almost Never	Occasionally	Usually	Always	N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. When errors or omissions are made, team members take ownership and make corrections promptly.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

16. Team members accept accountability for any issues resulting from their errors or omissions and any resulting consequences.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

17. Team members inform themselves and uphold the policies, rules, regulations and laws that govern their work.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

18. Team members conduct themselves in a professional manner, even when it is not reciprocated.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

19. Team members do not act in an abusive manner toward others.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

20. Team members demonstrate transparency in their decision-making process.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

21. Team members make commitments and promises, implied or explicit, in good faith.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

22. Team members strive to create an environment in which others feel safe to tell the truth.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

23. The team members' statements and actions are honest even when the circumstances would allow to confuse the issues.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

24. There is respect for the views of others.				
Almost Never ☐	Occasionally ☐	Usually ☐	Always ☐	N/A ☐

Any Anonymous Comment(s)