

*If P. U. Kamble sounds upbeat in this article of his, he has every reason to. To his team goes the credit of delivering 4 projects bang on time – and to the customers' delight! Not a mean achievement by any yardstick! (View online and discuss this article at <http://pukamble.tripod.com/dsq>)*

*If achievement is creditable, sharing one's thoughts on and the lessons learnt from success is even more laudable. Here Kamble gives us his views (what better wisdom than from one who has actually experienced it?) on what contributes to success.*



## Key Success Factors

People have asked me the secret behind this success. Frankly, I did not know myself, but their questions have prompted me to do some thinking, some soul searching and I think I have come to some conclusions. Right or wrong, I thought it was worth sharing my thoughts with you all.

I think the most significant factor which could have contributed to it is an understanding that each human being has some strength and weaknesses. Nobody is perfect. I am not perfect too.

This is a very important issue which is often forgotten. Different people have different strengths – some people **can do** certain things naturally and the same people may be very uncomfortable or messy while doing something else. At the same time, different people **enjoy** doing different types of work. While some people may enjoy doing one job, someone else may just not be able to sit down and get going with it. This is perfectly natural for human beings. A good manager would look at the strengths of people, and get the right jobs done by the right people within the team so that the team as a whole is strong, so that the team delivers. There are certain things my Project Manager is good at doing and certain things he may not be very good at. I help him sometimes do things he is not comfortable with if I can do it better. I don't get upset about it because I know that there may be umpteen other things he can do better than I do. What is important is that together we should team up and do great things.

In a team, it is important that one member's weakness is covered by someone else's individual strengths in such a way that each one contributes through his strengths and the team as an entity is solid. A good team is one where everyone puts in his or her strength and covers others' weaknesses - without any ego problems, without taking pride and without belittling others.

I am sure you will ask, "With this approach, you can never help people overcome their weaknesses". On the contrary, a good manager uses the strengths of his team-mates while slowly working on their weaknesses - so that the weaknesses are overcome without making the team-mate too conscious of his or her deficiencies. A person normally does a good job when working on the job which he loves to do. Success is a big motivator and the motivation of a job well done gives him the energy to do the other jobs which he does not like to do, and thus helps him to overcome his shortcomings too in the course of time. A motivated person can certainly work over his weaknesses better than a person, who cannot even use his strengths, can. I believe that it is the manager's job to see that the individual's strength is used and he feels motivated.

I have seen some people who mainly look at the weaknesses and keep pointing out errors and personal deficiencies. Nagging a person for his weaknesses makes him very conscious of himself and he cannot even use his strength. Only a very strong person, who is truly self-motivated and strongly believes in himself, can continue to perform

consistently in spite of continuous nagging by his superior.

The other very important factor is a strong commitment to deliver on time.

This may sound trivial, but it is this commitment which drives you to see that you deliver on time. When you believe that software projects are never on schedule, then you are unlikely to deliver on time. This commitment begins with and is evident in small things. Ask yourself a few questions: When you schedule a meeting at a particular time, or you are attending a meeting, how committed are you to be there on time and begin on time? Do you feel committed to keep your word given to your friend or colleague? When you can start honouring these small commitments, you can keep bigger commitments like delivering a software project on time.

The other factors which have contributed to the success are a strong belief in people, particularly IT people and immense trust in their integrity. I believe that most IT personnel will normally try to give their best. They do not need to be driven. They are self-motivated. A sure way to de-motivate them is to doubt their commitment.

And lastly, the right amount of freedom given to the PLs and team members motivated them to give their best.

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