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TRANSFORMATION OF MODERN PROJECT MANAGEMENT: A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS WHO SHAPE THE FUTURE

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Matsola M. M., Trukhan L. M., Sheketa Ye. Yu., Kaziuka N. P. Transformation of Modern Project Management: a New Generation of Leaders who Shape the Future

In today's world of global transformations and transition to a knowledge economy, project management is undergoing significant changes. Digitalization, the development of artificial intelligence, changes in work formats, and increased social responsibility of businesses are forcing companies to rethink their management models. This article is devoted to researching the transformation of modern project management and the role of a new generation of leaders who are capable not only of managing projects, but also of forming a strategic vision, inspiring teams, and adapting to constant change. An analysis of the evolution of approaches to project management is carried out – from rigid hierarchical structures to flexible models based on collaboration, trust, and openness to feedback. The key factors influencing the transformation of the role of a leader are considered: digital technologies, globalization, cross-cultural interaction, the values of new generations of employees, and the high level of dynamism of the external environment. A list of key competencies for the new type of leader is highlighted, including emotional intelligence, digital literacy, strategic thinking, flexibility, the ability to work in a multidisciplinary environment, and the ability to create an environment for innovation. The main components of setting goals correctly using the SMART technology are analyzed. The types of employees and their characteristic leadership levels have been classified and described. It is shown that successful project management in the 21st century is impossible without a deep understanding of interpersonal dynamics, the ability to learn, and the development of trust within the team. The article also highlights the shift in project activity goals: from achieving operational efficiency to creating long-term value for customers and society through sustainable development. It concludes that the new project management paradigm should take into account both technological and social and environmental aspects of management. The article proposes a conceptual vision of the leadership of the future, capable of integrating strategic and emotional-social factors to achieve sustainable project development.

Keywords: project management, leadership, transformation, adaptability, digital competencies, flexible management, sustainable development.

Fig.: 1. **Tabl.:** 2. **Bibl.:** 15.

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Мацола М. М., Трухан Л. М., Шекета Є. Ю., Казюка Н. П. Трансформація сучасного проєкт-менеджменту: нове покоління лідерів, які формують майбутнє

У сучасному світі глобальних трансформацій і переходу до економіки знань проєкт-менеджмент зазнає суттєвих змін. Цифровізація, розвиток штучного інтелекту, зміни у форматах роботи та зростання соціальної відповідальності бізнесу змушують компанії переосмислювати свої моделі управління. Ця стаття присвячена дослідженню трансформації сучасного проєкт-менеджменту та ролі нового покоління лідерів, які здатні не лише керувати проєктами, а й формувати стратегічне бачення, надихати команди та адаптуватися до постійних змін. Проведено аналіз еволюції підходів до проєкт-менеджменту – від жорстких ієрархічних структур до гнучких моделей, які базуються на співпраці, довірі та відкритості до зворотного зв'язку. Розглянуто ключові фактори, що впливають на трансформацію ролі лідера: цифрові технології, глобалізація, міжкультурна взаємодія, цінності нових поколінь працівників та високий рівень динамізму зовнішнього середовища. Виділено перелік ключових компетенцій нового типу лідера, включаючи емоційний інтелект, цифрову грамотність, стратегічне мислення, гнучкість, здатність працювати в мультидисциплінарному середовищі та здатність створювати умови для інновацій. Проаналізовано основні компоненти провального цілепокладання за методикою SMART. Класифіковано та описано типи працівників і характерні для них рівні лідерства. Показано, що успішне управління проєктами в 21 столітті неможливе без глибокого розуміння міжособистісної динаміки, здатності навчатися та розвитку

довіри в команді. У статті також підкреслюється зміна цілей проектної діяльності: від досягнення операційної ефективності до створення довгострокової цінності для клієнтів та суспільства через сталий розвиток. У висновку зазначено, що нова парадигма проект-менеджменту повинна враховувати як технологічні, так і соціальні та екологічні аспекти управління. У статті пропонується концептуальне бачення лідерства майбутнього, здатного інтегрувати стратегічні та емоційно-соціальні фактори для досягнення сталого розвитку проектів.

Ключові слова: проект-менеджмент, лідерство, трансформація, адаптивність, цифрові компетенції, гнучке управління, сталий розвиток.

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The constant changes taking place in the modern world are due to the dynamic development of technologies, globalization of economic processes, instability of the market environment, an increase in the number of armed military conflicts, etc. In this dynamic environment, project management is becoming increasingly important as one of the most important tools for achieving strategic goals, controlling changes and introducing innovations. Today, classical project management models based on a rigid hierarchy, linear planning, and centralized decision-making are increasingly proving to be ineffective in an unpredictable and highly turbulent environment.

Digital transformation, based on flexible and hybrid management approaches, the use of artificial intelligence, and the introduction of remote and distributed teams, not only changes the project management tools, but also requires a revision of the functions of the project manager. The classic manager, who focuses mainly on controlling and timely completion of tasks, is being replaced by a mentor, change facilitator, coach, and inspirational leader who is able to work with people on an equal footing in an open, dynamic, high-tech environment. Project management is not just a set of management tools. It is a philosophy of action based on precise planning, flexible response to environmental challenges, effective coordination of resources, and team focus on achieving specific results [1, p. 6].

In modern scientific and practical terms, a new generation of leaders deserves attention, forming their own vision of management based on trust, cooperation, sustainable development and social responsibility.

This generation is actively implementing new rules of engagement in project management, integrating technological innovations, flexible methodologies, and a value-based approach to team management.

In this context, there is a need not only to rethink the transformational changes taking place in the field of project management, but also to form a systemic vision of a new leadership paradigm that allows for effective action in the face of complexity and uncertainty. These issues are the subject of this article.

The purpose of the article is to study the transformational changes in project management based on digital tools and to identify the characteristics of the new generation of leaders who shape the future of project management.

Project management originated as a tool for planning and implementing large technical and production projects in the second half of the twentieth century. Classical methodologies, such as PMBOK and PRINCE2, were focused on a formal management structure, clear phasing of processes, and strict adherence to deadlines, budget, and quality.

However, with the proliferation of digital technologies and the growing complexity of projects, these approaches have begun to give way to flexible methodologies that favor team autonomy, rapid adaptation to change, non-standard types of thinking, and resilience in unforeseen circumstances.

Flexible approaches, such as Scrum, Kanban, Lean, DevOps, have become a response to the need to respond quickly to changes, reduce hierarchical pres-

sure and increase the level of autonomy of teams [2, p. 7]. Currently, project management is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of a networked, cross-functional model, where relationships are built not on the principle of “manager-subordinate”, but in the plane of partnership.

In the context of management transformation, the role of the project manager is also changing. If earlier the main function was to coordinate tasks and control, now the focus is on building trust, creating psychological security in the team, facilitating decision-making and managing change.

According to a study by the Project Management Institute [3, p. 17–20], a successful project leader should have the following key competencies (Fig. 1):

- ✦ emotional intelligence (understanding of oneself and others, ability to manage emotions);
- ✦ digital literacy (ability to integrate technology into management processes);
- ✦ adaptability and flexibility (readiness for change and work under conditions of uncertainty, tension, stress);
- ✦ strategic thinking (ability to see long-term prospects).

In addition, a modern leader in project management should be a carrier of a certain culture – open to innovation, mistakes, and continuous learning. Such leaders not only manage, but also serve as an example, demonstrating the values of trust, transparency, and responsibility.

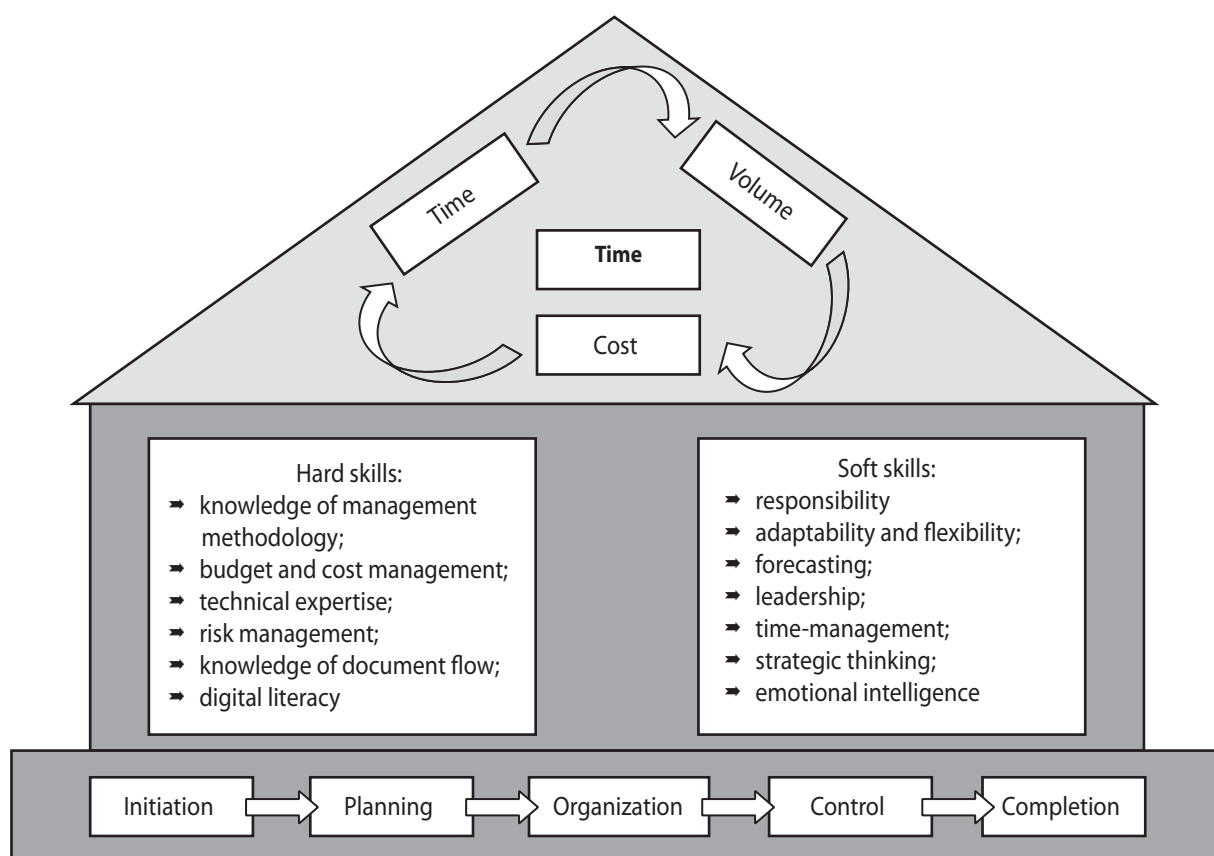


Fig. 1. Project life cycle and key skills of a project leader

Source: built by the authors on the basis of [3].

An international study by Deloitte Human Capital Trends, conducted in 2023 in more than a hundred countries, only confirmed that organizations, in order to succeed in the new dimension of work, need to abandon the idea of total control and work with employees to form new rules and boundaries that will determine how they will work on projects to achieve goals [4]. The main tools for achieving goals in the management of any project are innovative digital technologies that

automate processes, increase productivity and reduce operating costs [8, p. 97].

Digital tools change both internal management processes and external forms of interaction. Task management systems (Jira, Asana, Trello), cloud platforms (MS Teams, Slack, Miro), big data-based dashboards – all of these are integrated into the project environment, forming a new digital ecosystem.

At the same time, digitalization creates new challenges: the need for data protection, ethical use of artificial intelligence, and cyber risk management. Project managers operating in such an environment should not only navigate IT tools, but also understand the strategic implications of digital change for their teams, organizations, and clients [5, p. 2635].

The modern digital environment in project management is saturated with various platforms, some of the most famous of which are presented, grouped and described in Table 1. Since each of these tools has its own architecture, interface, logic, and work structure, this leads to a number of inconveniences when using them.

The difficulty is caused by the fact that integration between tools is often complicated, there is no single “ecosystem” solution for all processes, and duplication of data reduces management efficiency. Excessive use of platforms that do not integrate with each other leads to a loss of focus and productivity in project work.

Digital project management systems store confidential information such as budgets, schedules, risks, and intellectual property. However, the transfer of such data through cloud services creates risks of information leakage, unauthorized access, non-compliance with the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and other privacy standards. In this case, it is very difficult to ensure a reliable level of security without complicating access to digital resources for all team members.

Another challenge faced by project managers is the insufficient level of digital competencies in the team. Even highly educated professionals may have a low level of digital literacy, which becomes a barrier to the implementation of new systems.

Low employee motivation, unwillingness to learn new platforms and adapt to new digital tools, and the need for constant training, retraining, and skills development create a number of problems when working with staff.

The solution in this situation is to work systematically on the digital development of the team, integrat-

Table 1

Digital tools in project management

Tool category	Functional purpose	Name of the tool and its main functions
1	2	3
Planning and task management tools	They allow you to visualize processes, set up workflows, control deadlines, and allocate resource	1. Jira (agile project management, backlogs, reporting, sprint control). 2. Asana (task planning, team collaboration, project templates, deadlines). 3. Trello (visual project management based on a Kanban board, easy interaction). 4. ClickUp (universal task manager with built-in chats, dashboards, and time tracking). 5. Microsoft Project (classic project planning: Gantt charts, critical path calculation)
Team collaboration and communication tools	Provide synchronous and asynchronous interaction in distributed teams	1. Slack (team communication, integration with task managers, file sharing). 2. Microsoft Teams (video meetings, chats, workgroups, joint document editing). 3. Zoom and Google Meet (online meetings, webinars, integration with calendars, and customer relationship management)
Visualization and collaboration tools	Platforms for visual modeling, process mapping, brainstorming, and documentation	1. Miro (online whiteboard for brainstorming, process mapping, and facilitation). 2. Figma (collaborative interface development, prototyping, design communication). 3. Lucidchart (a tool for visual modeling, creating diagrams, schemes). 4. Notion (a universal workspace with notes, databases, and task types)
Analytical tools and dashboards	Used to analyze the progress of projects, visualize key performance indicators, identify bottlenecks and risks	1. Power BI (analytics, dashboards, real-time visualization of project indicators). 2. Tableau, Google Data Studio (data visualization into clear and accessible graphs, charts, tables, reports)

1	2	3
Knowledge and documentation management systems	It forms the team's knowledge base, stores key project information, and ensures the document management process	<i>Confluence (documentation management, team knowledge base, integration with Jira).</i> <i>SharePoint (a platform for storing, organizing, searching, managing documents, and collaborating in teams).</i> <i>Dropbox Paper (cloud-based text editor focused on real-time collaboration)</i>
Artificial intelligence and process automation	They help to predict deadlines, optimize resource allocation, and identify risks before they occur	ChatGPT (an AI-based tool that can generate texts, codes, letters, scripts, etc. in real time). Notion AI (combined knowledge base, planning, documentation, note-taking). ClickUp AI (AI to automate team work in project management, documentation, communication, and decision-making)

Source: created by the authors based on [6; 9].

ing training into project activities as a key to success and sustainable development of the team.

It is important that digital tools not only facilitate operational activities but also create a new “digitalized” management culture: transparent, open, flexible, and result-oriented. They form a new leadership ecosystem where the project manager acts not as a controller, but as a process integrator, team facilitator, and change agent in the digital environment. Also, digital transformation has provided management with unprecedented communication and control mechanisms that have enabled them to monitor the activities of almost the entire organization in real time, including identifying bottlenecks and effectively eliminating them [7, p. 252]. It is important to regulate work processes, clearly formalize the deadlines for completing tasks, which helps to reduce the overall tension in the workplace [10, p. 554].

The most important component of effective project management is the correct formation of the team's goal. A goal is what you strive for, what you try to achieve. Any organization is created to achieve goals. Goal management as a management technology begins with their awareness and formulation. It is important to distinguish between goals and objectives. A goal is the end result, while an objective is a specific step or action necessary to achieve the goal. In project management, it is important for the manager to propose their own business goals and justify why they are setting these particular goals. Innovative management also involves managers encouraging their employees to propose goals themselves – this will force them to develop, think, and take responsibility for achieving the goals. The correct setting of goals is achieved using the SMART methodology.

The SMART methodology was invented in 1981 by George Doran, former head of corporate planning at Washington Water Power Company. Each letter represents a separate criterion for setting a goal:

- ✦ S – specific;
- ✦ M – measurable;
- ✦ A – achievable or attainable;
- ✦ R – relevant;
- ✦ T – time-bound [12, c. 2667].

1. The goal should be specific (S – specific). The goal should remind the team of what exactly they need to do. Therefore, when setting goals, use verbs in the perfect tense, as well as clarifications. For example, instead of “more customers” – “attract new customers”. Clarifications should detail what exactly the team or company wants to achieve: what kind of customers you want to attract, where from, and from which segment. Therefore, the goal should be clearly formulated, without vague wording. It is important to know exactly what needs to be achieved.
2. The goal should be measurable (M – measurable). The letter M in SMART means that the goal should be measurable in order to evaluate the team's efforts. These are specific numbers and dates: for example, “attract 200 new customers by the end of 2025.” To understand if your goal is measurable, answer the question: how can you tell if the goal has been achieved?
3. The goal should be achievable (A – achievable or attainable). Research in the field of motivational psychology and organizational behavior has repeatedly confirmed that achievable goals motivate people better than unattain-

able ones. To understand whether your goal is achievable, answer the following questions: Is it realistic to achieve this goal within the set time frame? Does the team have enough experience and knowledge to achieve the goal?

4. The goal should be relevant (R – relevant). Relevant means topical, significant, important, “something that matters”. The goal should correspond to the broader goals of the organization, project, or personal strategy of the team. For example, if your strategic goal is to increase sales, then a relevant goal would be to “attract 20 new customers per month.”
5. The goal should be time-bound (T – time-bound). Time-bound means that you need to set a deadline or time frame for achieving your goal. Questions for formulating a time-bound SMART goal: How long will it take to achieve the goal? By what date should the goal be achieved?

In project management, it is inappropriate to set one goal for the entire team; each employee should be given a separate goal. If such a goal is set for a group of people, “collective irresponsibility” is activated, and there is nothing worse for management. Also, do not think that there are situations where it is impossible to set a goal. A SMART goal can always be set. Setting specific goals for each employee but not tracking their progress and not taking an interest in the results of their work indicates irresponsibility on the part of the project manager. It is not enough to set a goal clearly and correctly and assign a bonus for achieving it. The project manager needs to monitor the work on the goals.

According to Hersey-Blanchard’s theory of situational leadership, there are four leadership styles: directing (S1), coaching (S2), supporting (S3), and delegating (S4) [13; 15]. Hersey-Blanchard’s theory of situational leadership suggests that a leader should choose a type of behavior based on the level of development (maturity level) of his or her subordinates [14].

The directive leadership style (S1 – directing) is associated with authoritarian leadership. This style can also be called directive or “leadership by order”. When applying the directive style in project management, the manager makes all decisions without consulting his subordinates. He informs the team about his decision and expects the team to follow his instructions. The leader decides who, what, how, why, and where on his or her own – the team’s opinion does not matter.

In the coaching style of leadership (S2 – coaching), the manager continues to define functions and tasks. However, unlike S1 (directing), he or she pays more attention to the opinions of his or her subor-

dinates. Such leaders “sell” their ideas and plans to subordinates if they decide to do something new. The mentoring style of management involves a combination of high task and people orientation.

A leader with a supportive management style (S3 – supporting) will participate in the creation of ideas and decision-making, but most decisions will be made by the team. S3 is characterized by leadership through participation in the organization of work processes: high focus on people, low focus on tasks. This type of leadership may seem “quiet” because the leader is positioned as an equal member of the team, not a boss. A leader with a supportive leadership style seems to put himself or herself on the same level as the entire team.

Delegative leadership style (S4 – delegating) is based on non-interference and is similar to the liberal management style, in which the team makes most decisions independently while working on a project. The leader delegates authority, rights, and responsibilities to other team members. This type of leadership is usually focused on shaping the picture of the future more, than on day-to-day management.

The leader works on the strategy and vision, but the subordinates are left to decide how to achieve it. Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard [13; 15] distinguish four types of employees according to the “wants/can” gradation: a novice enthusiast (D1), a frustrated employee (D2), a capable but uncertain performer (D3), and an independent professional (D4). Through the prism of “wants” and “can”, it is easy for a manager to see the level of professionalism of employees. Understanding whether specialists are “willing” and “able” to work allows the manager to use a certain leadership style with them (Table 2).

A novice enthusiast (D1) is a new employee with a low level of professionalism and a high level of motivation. Such a subordinate has low competence but high dedication. He is inexperienced and full of enthusiasm. He or she may be willing to work and learn, but lacks the specific skills needed to complete tasks.

A disillusioned employee (D2) is an established employee who has an average level of professionalism and a low level of motivation. The employee has worked in the team for some time and now has certain competencies. But his enthusiasm has waned, and so has his motivation. This can happen if a junior-level specialist was thrown into the maelstrom of work at the very beginning, with no one helping them with adaptation, training, and development.

A capable but uncertain performer (D3) is an employee who has high competence but variable motivation. He or she is capable of performing better and achieving greater results, but for some reason does not

Table 2

Classification and Characterization of Employee Types and the Level of Leadership they Require

Types of employees	Gradation can/will	Level of professionalism	Level of motivation	The level of leadership
Beginner-enthusiast (D1)	cannot, but wants to	low	high	pointing (S1 – directing)
Disappointed employee (D2)	cannot and does not want to	medium	low	mentoring (S2 – coaching)
Capable but uncertain performer (D3)	can, but does not want to	high	changeable	supportive (S3 – supporting).
Independent professional (D4)	wants and can	high	high	delegating (S4 – delegating).

Source: built by the authors on the basis of [13; 15].

want to. Perhaps he lacks confidence or has some psychological circumstances. It is necessary to help and motivate such professionals to get out of the “don’t want” state.

The independent professional (D4) is a competent and self-motivated specialist. They are confident in their own abilities to perform tasks and willingly take responsibility for them. This is the type of ideal employee in project management.

For more effective team management, Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard recommend that a manager consistently apply appropriate management styles to certain types of employees [15]. That is, directly:

- ✦ Directive style (S1) > Beginner-enthusiast (D1);
- ✦ Mentoring style (S2) > Disappointed employee (D2);
- ✦ Supportive style (S3) > Capable but uncertain performer (D3);
- ✦ Delegation style (S4) > Independent professional (D4).

Today’s young people, who are increasingly active in management positions, bring new values to the art of management: social responsibility and environmental friendliness, sustainable development, balance between personal and professional life, inclusion, transparency, and lifelong learning. They demonstrate a high level of digital integration, a focus on mentoring, intolerance of bureaucracy, and a desire to work for a purpose, not just for profit. The new generation of leaders does not accept vertical power and management structures. They build horizontal communications, work through influence rather than orders, and use soft leadership tools based on empathy, support, and open dialogue.

Modern project management is being reconceptualized in the context of ESG approaches (environment, social responsibility and corporate governance),

where each project is evaluated not only by the final result, but also by its impact on the environment, society and culture of the corporation.

During the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, sustainable development was defined as the development of society that meets the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability to meet the needs of future generations [11, p. 417]. The main principles of sustainable project management include: cost-effectiveness and profitability of the project; social value for the team, community or country; environmental friendliness and lack of environmental impact; transparency and public responsibility.

At the same time, the process of integrating the principles of sustainable development is accompanied by a number of challenges: lack of clear standards for assessing the sustainability of projects, limited access to professional expertise, conflict between short-term business goals and long-term strategic intentions, and the absence of a universal regulatory framework. Nevertheless, sustainable development is a new benchmark for effective management that helps ensure the long-term success of projects in a dynamic, regulated, digital world, and its integration into project management is not a trend but a necessity.

In the context of such global challenges as climate change, depletion of natural resources, social inequality, and growing corporate responsibility, the integration of sustainable development principles into project management practices is no longer an optional option, but is becoming a mandatory requirement. Sustainable project management is becoming a new performance standard based not only on achieving project goals in terms of time, budget and quality, but also on creating long-term value for society, the economy and the environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Project management in a new dimension is becoming not only a way to achieve business results, but also a powerful tool for developing organizational culture. It is through projects that companies introduce innovations, experiment with new work formats, test management decisions, and prepare leaders of the future. It is important that leaders in such an environment act as change agents who are able to combine strategic thinking with a deep understanding of human potential.

Project management in the context of digital transformation is undergoing significant changes that cover both instrumental aspects and the leadership paradigm. Modern project management is no longer reduced to classical planning and control: it is evolving towards flexible, adaptive, technologically savvy systems that respond quickly to external challenges and internal changes. The study found that the focus of modern project management is on people, technology, and the collaborative environment, not just budget, time, or resource constraints.

One of the main vectors of this transformation is the emergence of a new generation of leaders who not only possess traditional management competencies, but are also able to integrate digital tools, manage knowledge and communications, and create a culture of trust and openness. They demonstrate a high level of emotional intelligence, systemic thinking, and readiness for innovation. This leadership model is a response to the demands of the times and the new realities of working in hybrid teams, in an environment of uncertainty, rapid change, and information overload.

Modern project management is going through a period of profound change, where adaptability, digital competence, and a new type of leadership are coming to the fore. And while new tools and methodologies open up unprecedented opportunities, they also pose a number of challenges for managers. That is why today we need an in-depth, interdisciplinary understanding of transformations in project management, in particular with a focus on the interaction between people and technology.

Training a new generation of project leaders who not only possess digital competencies and strategic thinking, but also deeply realize the importance of responsible resource management, social impact of projects, and environmental consequences of their activities is a top priority today. It is these leaders who are able to transform the traditional project management model into an innovative and sustainable approach that will ensure not only commercial success, but also the preservation of the planet and the well-being of future generations. ■

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