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Entitled

A STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ABU DHABI

by

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Abstract

Stakeholder management (SHM) is a recent managerial discipline that has gained much importance due to the need by most organizations to achieve global competitiveness by delivering complex projects within the time, budget and minimum risk levels while ensuring optimum quality standards. The present study deals with the principal objective of analysing existing stakeholder management practices in Abu Dhabi government organizations and aims to propose a strategic SHM model for handling stakeholder issues within these entities. The study also evaluates the barriers and enablers to stakeholder management by revealing several gaps in SHM especially during delivery of government services and execution of various projects. In this dissertation, the SHM subject has been studied through critical review of literature related to SHM theories, frameworks and models available globally and regionally, particularly in relation to the UAE context. Further, the researcher reviews primary data through qualitative cum quantitative study of managers and employees employed in different government organizations. Qualitative data was collected through interviews from organizational managers while quantitative data was gathered from employees through survey questionnaire. Study results found that the level of awareness related to SHM ranked average for both managers and employees of the different organizations of the Abu Dhabi government. Regarding implementation of SHM, organizational managers reported a very weak level of SHM practice in their organizations, which was reinforced by the quantitative data from employees. The study findings indicate that government departments in Abu Dhabi require a formal SHM model to improve stakeholder relations and ensure successful delivery of complex projects. Further, the study highlights that both internal and external communication form a critical factor for dealing with organizations' stakeholders. Expert opinions from managers reveal that three major and significant benefits can be gained from implementing a formal SHM model; 1) better strategic relationships with stakeholders, 2) improved workflow and 3) better management of the stakeholder affairs. Finally, the most significant findings of the present study pertain to the identification of deficiencies in the current stakeholder management practices followed by Abu Dhabi government entities. Qualitative data from managers reveal that government organizations have four major lapses: 1) lack of formal processes for stakeholder management 2) lack of any formal unit for dealing with stakeholder issues 3) less integration and coordination with stakeholders and 4) absence of a systematic methodology for improving the SHM practices in place. In addition, quantitative data gathered from employees indicate three major flaws in the SHM practice: 1) lack of professional practices for managing stakeholders 2) lack of centralized management and 3) lack of separate unit for handling stakeholder affairs. Based on these findings and using insights from literature, the researcher proposes a strategic SHM model and checklist for handling stakeholder issues within Abu Dhabi government organizations and presents the same as a foundation for policy makers in government to tackle the SHM challenges identified in the study.

Keywords: Stakeholder management, strategic relationships, SHM practices, professional stakeholder management, stakeholder issues