

Tamás Zombory-Balogh:

The Practical Application of Project Management Best Practices in an Entertainment Industry Project

A Detailed Analysis of "Dalfutár (Pop Messenger)" Project

Starting on a personal note, this thesis almost was written about some kind of IT project which would have looked as a „professional” subject for the author. Then I was encouraged from multiple sides to choose a topic that is close to me personally, and decided to write about Dalfutár – or Pop Messenger in translation – as a project. It is a TV/YouTube show about the creation of a song, bringing composers, lyricists, music producers, and singers who do not know each other’s identity until the studio, where they have got one day to finish the work together.

The relevance of the topic is demonstrated by the increasing value of the global entertainment and media market. According to a forecast published in 2021, approximately a hundred-billion-dollar (USD) growth is expected worldwide each year up to 2025. This number is considered to be realistic in case of a favorable market environment according to the statistics, but of course, external factors might affect it negatively (e.g., COVID-19).

Providing a theoretic foundation, I followed an approach to present a very basic structure of project management, what the relevant key components are and how they are interconnected. I also explained briefly what project success is and how it should be measured.

Furthermore, I investigated the connection of project management vs. the entertainment industry and art. There was also a specific example presented from Hungary: an art project company’s Director of Operations helped me by filling generally the same questionnaire as the one sent to Dalfutár’s Creators, so I can have the best comparison possible.

A hybrid research methodology was applied: I read all articles and listened to shows, podcasts with the program’s Producers available. The latter proved to be useful, I made notes of approximately 4.5 hours of discussions. I sent a questionnaire to the Producers as well. The questions were categorized around the PMBOK® Knowledge Areas, and I did the same with the information collected from media appearances. In the end, I even had the chance to have an in-depth interview with one of the Producers.

The main research question was: how consciously, or the opposite, how organically are project management standards and methodologies – if at all – appear in the process of the subject? I built two hypotheses around this.

The first hypothesis was that a successful entertainment industry project involves the key components of project management, whether they are utilized intentionally or organically. It was mostly verified; however, numerous tools and techniques are still missed that might help the work of a project manager for achieving the desired outcome.

The second hypothesis was that during the creation of Dalfutár, its Creators applied project management tools and techniques developed in an organic way. This presumption was verified, Dalfutár's Producers even emphasized multiple times they believe in organic development.

In conclusion, we can learn a lot from our own mistakes, although, it is always beneficial to search for relevant information and tools that have been invented by someone else, so that we do not have to reinvent something that is already available and working. Moreover, consulting or employing a project management professional can be helpful as well if we are able to take on a delegative leadership style.

The concept of Dalfutár has got its own limitations, it might not be receptive enough for an everyday consumer, at least not for big masses. To broaden the range of viewers, a more intensive communications and marketing plan would be advisable to be carried out.

If they would like to approach larger markets, the extensive know-how they currently have got should appear in a materialized way. Lack of documentation, standardized processes in writing, lessons learned knowledge base can be a disadvantage when selling a license to other production companies. It is possible to prepare them afterwards; however, it holds the risk that certain points have already been forgotten.

I would recommend for any person who is leading a project of some kind to acquire at least a certain level of knowledge on project management methodologies, and apply them where it seems to be necessary and serves the goals. This way occurrence of „professional blindness” might be reduced, which I found to be present in the case of Dalfutár on a certain level.

For future research, I see two possible directions that would be worth to go towards. Regarding Dalfutár, it would be useful to make a survey on a representative sample of the show's target audience which possibly would help the Producers in fine-tuning their future plans.

It would also be worth to research the appearance of project management standards within the entertainment industry, as it is turning out to be a profitable business. Both project managers and media corporations could generate mutual benefits in finding out which areas of project management methodologies would be practical (where these aspects are missed at the moment).