

Summer Holidays are behind us - back to serious Project Management

Athens, 1 September 2010

Now that the summer is coming to a close, Project Managers in the Northern Hemisphere are returning to the serious professional concerns about improving their projects, and applying 'even better' approaches in response to the challenges they face on the job.



Earlier in the summer, the Hellenic American Union's Center of Excellence in Project Management, hosted the 5th Annual International Athens Conference on Project Management Best Practices. The recurring theme was '**LEAN & GREEN**' – and the seasoned Project

Managers who offered their insights and practical techniques illustrated the connection of Project Management in the Lean & Green context and what is going on throughout the world.

It was truly an inspirational 'time to think', and for the attendees a time to examine the impact of new ideas on their profession, their organization, and their own careers.

The event is organized on an annual basis in Athens, by the Hellenic American Union Center of Excellence in Project Management and Business Management Consultants with the sponsorship of many local, project-sensitive businesses and media.



The first two speakers set the framework:

► **Leonidas-Phoebus Koskos**, Executive Director, HAU, opened the conference, stressing the importance of strategic restructuring of Greek companies under the severe economic pressures, putting the environmental and lean management factor as a primary concern and a new business drive.

There are now many consumers who prefer healthier products but they are still sceptical to the higher expense of such products and as to whether these products come from "green" processes. Businesses have to convince and educate consumers that their products, sometimes offered at a premium price, can save money in the long run, as well as benefit the environment. Factors in today's economic and political climate make 'product' and 'project management' a challenge that will provide for the development and sustainability of the business and the society.

► **George Merguerian**, CEO of Business Management Consultants, a leader in Project Management practices headquartered in Brussels, commented on how the recent "Copenhagen Agreement" (or disagreement) "on climate control" has unleashed the imagination of many players throughout the world. Companies are definitely looking at innovative and creative approaches to contribute to the development of a greener planet, sustainability remains the mantra of others, because there is a consumer awareness that demands it in their respective markets. He reflected that Project Management has a key role to play in all these initiatives even though there are challenges.

The challenges are defined by the results-statistics on project success rates are still below the 50% mark – irrespective of which measures we want to consider. Key perpetrators for this performance include poor risk management, inadequate competences, inefficient processes and lack of methodologies.



Compounded to these issues we now have the reality of social pressure to think “Green”, “sustainable” and “Lean”. In other words, throughout the globe, “waste, excessiveness and environmentally unfriendly practices” are being called for a serious reckoning.

The following distinguished Project Management leaders presented their current and recent experiences to enlighten the audience - what follows is a brief synopsis of the content of their messages.

► **Guillaume Saouli**, Chairman Green ID SA, presented *“How to be green and lean from the get go”*

By incorporating early on Lean and Green Project Management, Green ID’s project team was able to deliver on target, while offering on the market a highly competitive product. In turn, this product and its services will deliver high incremental benefits in regard to the overall environmental impact of individual mobility vehicles, to their owners and users.

He addressed his current real life enterprise project, and how to develop a successful project, recognized for its innovation in the marketplace. Lean and Green PM have been core to the success of the Green ID project, without making compromises on the deliverables, the human capital, or the achieved level of technological development. The key points presented were:

- The lean approach, and Green PM incorporated in a project delivers high economic benefits,
- Why Green PM still means a highly interactive project, with a high volume of interactions among the participants in highly focused endeavour,
- How sustainable development can provide benefits to a project, by enabling alternative ways of sourcing, or managing the supply chain.

► **Anthony Coumides**, Director of Engineering and Environmental Initiatives, McBains Cooper described *“How the Interdisciplinary Approach promotes Green and Lean Project Management”*

Project Management is the tool to introduce changes and green standards into the building and

development process. A new paradigm in Project Management can be adopted to incorporate green issues throughout the duration of the project and its operational stage, even from the very beginning creative design stage and onwards. He contrasted the main differences with the traditional notion of ‘Project Management’. He showed how to incorporate ‘green’ and sustainability issues as a way of conducting the project with the Gloucester Police Constabulary PFI in the United Kingdom. The key points presented were:

- How to use Project Management and the ‘Interdisciplinary model’ as a tool to introduce sustainability to the building/construction process
- The basic elements of Lean Project Management found useful for higher economic return

► **Panagiotis Karamanos**, Manager Environmental Services, AIA, & **Leonidas Daravelis**, IT&T Director, AIA, showed us a successful green project management approach at the *“Athens International Airport, – Greening the Airport Business”*

The Environmental Services Department (ENC) of Athens International Airport “Eleftherios Venizelos” addresses all environmental issues from airport operations including noise, water, waste, air quality, and natural environment. Panagiotis and Leonidas focused on the Wildlife Control Team which consists of 4 specialists whose responsibilities include the observation/recording of wildlife activities (mainly birds) and dispersion of wildlife to reduce the risk of strikes to aircraft. In order to ensure efficient response to any incident, a mobile unit was created with a wireless system allowing for the timely real-time recording of a variety of operational, wildlife, meteorological, and other data, thus facilitating efficient data entry and analysis, transfer of information, and response to incidents. The project also faced procedural hurdles that were illustrated.

Information Technology & Telecommunications Business Unit (IT&T) of the Athens International Airport (AIA) operated by refined project management practices. Their role is that of an integrator and operator of reliable, state-of-the-art, cost effective and innovative services to its various customers- the Airport Community (airlines, handlers, passengers, concessionaires, governmental authorities etc.) as well as to customers outside the airport premises: private or



public bodies and International Airports in terms of Consulting and Integrated IT&T services projects. Projects were illustrated that involved initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint in the delivery of the IT&T services in a corporate level, and past & current projects that provide alternative technological solutions to reduce the technology environmental footprint itself, including the life-cycle roadmap for the old IT&T equipment.

► **Derek Oliver**, IT Audit Specialist from Ravenswood Consultants, explained how *“Governance leads to leaner, greener projects and deliverables”*

Derek illustrated how Structured Project Governance and the use of globally recognized Governance ‘tools’ improves the efficiency and effectiveness of projects and helps to ensure the business goals are met, in full, every time! His session featured genuine, “real life” examples of successful projects, showing Project Management governance and tools such as CobiT™, ITIL™ and the ISO27000 series of standards were applied to lead to leaner, greener projects and deliverables by getting it right first time

► **Philippe Ducret**, Global Programme Management Office Director at JTI SA showed us a real life example of *“Being Green-IT @ JTI”*

While being conscious of its ecological footprint on the environment, JTI adopted a series of quick wins and a pragmatic approach for green and sustainable IT. The rationale was that, despite the potential savings which might be generated based on the industry findings and forecasts and studies, it was very difficult to sell such initiative if cost effectiveness and true ROI cannot be demonstrated for real. Philippe showed the JTI approach and their rewarding experience using IT portfolio management capabilities, enhanced global governance and their emphasis on executing projects.

► **Yiannis Vougiouklakis**, Head of Market Development from the Center for Renewable Energy sources and Savings (CRES), illustrated *“Best Practices of Project Management in Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency projects”*

The Center for Renewable Energy Sources and Savings (CRES), within its role as the national centre in RES and EE, is active in developing and

implementing innovative market instruments for RES and EE projects.

The development of the Energy Services market in Greece is identified by CRES as one of the key initiatives for coordinating actions in the upcoming period. It offers huge potential advantages for energy end-use in Greece. In addition, it adds proved competitiveness to Greek companies in the field and supports entrepreneurship, achieves significant energy savings especially the development of a sustainable energy use for corporations. CRES participates in various European projects related with the development of the ESCO market in both the private and public sector and has developed pilots schemes for such initiatives, which were illustrated.

Yiannis demonstrated how these elements enhanced, both the social profile of the company, and their profit levels. In particular, as the target companies implemented these internal procedures and structures to address environmental factors and sustainable criteria for their core business- they identified niche markets, achieved much higher profit margins, targeted appropriate market segments and were able to effectively forecast the market demand- and this was made possible by incorporating and implementing green project management principles. This presentation showed the direct connection and dependence of business competitiveness and green entrepreneurship.

► **Nicos Kourounakis**, Adjunct Professor at Hellenic American University, offered an overview on *“Lean & Green Project Management as Two Synergetic philosophies Influencing Modern Project Management”*

Nicos illustrated current developments in lean and green approaches as applied to project management, and the consideration of the broader social and natural environments in the definition of projects. Green project management includes green objectives in the definition of the project scope, and apply a greener approach in managing project work. The purpose is to minimize any negative impact to project environments (negative by-products) while maximizing positive impact (positive by-products) by applying a less fragmented and longer-term holistic thinking, thus moving towards a more sustainable project management model.



► Complimentary to Nicos' presentation, Mr. **Thanasis Vamvakas**, Manager, Ether Applications, showed an actual case study of Green Project Tracking in a live environment. Thanasis showed how the customer monitors & verifies energy consumptions and verifies the benefits from implemented energy-saving techniques.

► **Kostas Tsirbas**, Technical Director from Ether Applications presented on “*Information & Communication Technology Tools towards Green Projects*”

Kostas introduced Project Tracking methods for use by Energy Utility managers who might draw wrong conclusions if they are relying on energy consumption measured only in a small amount of sites, while we may have hundreds of sites where a project was implemented. Project Tracking based on ICT tools eliminates this problem by utilizing powerful regression methods to forecast baselines and to derive the energy savings and the environment benefits from calculating the difference between the baseline and the actual consumption forward from a project implementation date.

► **Kostas Theofanides**, Technical Services Manager from Ellinika Kafsimia (BP-Hellenic Petroleum), focused on the human side of Green project management efforts explaining how to “*Sustain green and lean management approaches throughout the organisation*”

By establishing “fit for lean and green” structure, staffing, culture and behaviours in a project team, the team and individuals become self motivated and develop sustaining behaviors to support the implementation of the green projects in lean approach. He explained how to develop a culture to promote green and lean project approach, what kind of training is needed to develop skills and competences which enable green and lean approach and how to select and build teams and structures which support green and lean approach.

► **Anestis Demopoulos**, Manager, Advisory Services from Ernst & Young Business Advisory Solutions SA, elaborated on “*How to present a strong business case of Green IT projects.*”

Value from IT projects is achieved through a structured approach, enabling an organization to monitor tangible / intangible benefits. Green IT projects with a strong business case can demonstrate significant business value through the use of a value management framework. He explained the challenges for measuring and demonstrating the value of IT projects and focused on the value management frameworks that can be used for measuring the value of IT projects.

► **Miltos Tsoskounoglou**, Environmental Affairs, Health & Safety Manager from Toyota Hellas, presented the *business case of Environmental Preservation (decarbonize transport)*

Major sectors of the world and the Greek economy are faced with drastic reductions in their CO2 footprint. The target set by the EU for a reduction of -20% by 2020 and the probable target of a reduction of at least 50% by 2050 are both frightening and challenging. Transport is one of the industries that are already most affected. Miltos explained how Toyota is already on its way to decarbonize both its products and its operations, making this a top-priority project encompassing all parts of the company. Detailed plans have drawn up within the 5 consecutive year Environmental Action Plans and tools have been developed to assess the results. These plans contain:

- mitigation efforts on Climate Change that will effect several sectors deeply, amongst which transportation,
- efforts to decarbonize products and operations need to start immediately and must be made within the context of an overall plan
- increased investments in new environmental technologies are needed



*The conference concluded with a challenging presentation by **Mr. Peter Mello**, Senior Project and Risk Management Specialist, X25 Treinament e Consultoria, on Resource use optimization as key factor for green projects*

The recent events in world economy have brought a reality check to many companies around the globe, with repercussion in all areas of knowledge and industries. More than ever, the economic use of restricted resources has to be addressed adequately, not only to guarantee the survival of business ventures, but also our own habitat. When enduring situations with scarce resources, we may notice that Russians have developed extensive skills, surviving the Cold War with a slice of the resources made available to the United States.

Peter illustrated a Russian Method that addresses risks and scheduling optimization, enabling the project to “execute more in less time and with reduced costs” which for them was a question of survival. The ‘Success-Driven’ Project Management Methodology is a proven method for enduring greener projects and it provides an

opportunity for us to be convinced about our obligation to learn it and use it for a better tomorrow. Peter challenged our concept and understanding of optimized project planning with the application of resource critical path for reducing waste while executing projects.

Key points discussed:

- Resource Critical Path adoption with scheduling optimization
- True Risk Management integrated to project scheduling
- Project Management by trends, with the application of the Success Probability Index as a complement to traditional approaches to project management, such as CPM and Earned Value Management.
- Cost and Time reduction as means of providing green project management

In summary, participants were unanimous that their day was well-invested in their learning as project professionals.

Follow-up with any of the presenters at <http://project.hau.gr> and <http://projectmanagement.hau.gr>, and get in the loop so you won't miss out on next year's 6th International Athens Conference on Project Management Practices!

Conference proceedings are available to participants only.

Next year's event is scheduled on June 20, 2011. Our key theme and guest speakers' short list will be announced by the end of 2010. Any ideas, suggestions, paper proposals are most welcomed. Contact us at project@hau.gr.

