



Meeting the Challenges of International Project Management

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PMI WDC Tools session

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Boris Blechman

The Adroit Manager

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The Adroit Manager



- **Foreign Culture Adroit Manager**
 - Sensitive to cultural differences
 - Knowledgeable about local practices, customs and laws
 - Knowledgeable about legal, political and socio-cultural traits
 - Partnering with Foreign Nationals
 - Bilingual/Multilingual



The Adroit Manager



- **Business practices - Methodology - problem solving**
 - High level of skills
 - Able to assess foreign environment
 - Knowledgeable of other countries' infrastructures and business practices



The Adroit Manager



- **Language and Communication Barriers**
 - Translation
 - » Quality control
 - » Potential pitfalls
 - » Time zone difference disadvantages and benefits



Meg Findley

International PM in Developing Countries



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The Developing Country Work Environment



- Unreliable power, water, transport services
- Socio-political instability
- Different cultural norms and gender expectations
- Different work ethics
- Lower skills and qualifications



Resulting Impact on PM

- Less control of economic, social, environmental project conditions
- **Lowered efficiency**
- Risks to quality of work
- Delays in scheduling and project completion
- Unpredictable resource expenditures
- Higher stakeholder communication needs



Stakeholder Communication: *A key to project success*

- Sponsors
- Colleagues and coworkers
- Beneficiaries





Adaptive Project Management



- Subdivide project into smaller tasks and subtasks that can be measured by stakeholder feedback at discrete intervals
- Feedback informs the process for improved outcomes
- Enables flexibility
- Small increments of change within subtasks save time and money



Marc W Jasper

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PMBOK: Its application worldwide



“Virtually all projects are planned and implemented in a social, economic, and environmental context.....

The project team should consider the project in its cultural, social, international, political, and physical environmental contexts.”

- PMBOK® Guide, 3rd Edition (Section 1.5.3)

- Site dependency: urban, rural, desert, rain forests
- Culture dependency: fluid schedule, growing budget, questionable quality, tolerance of inefficiency, go slow
- Environmental dependency: hot, humid, dust, monsoon, power availability, water supply, sanitation
- Ethics: demand for bribes, corruption in society
- Human/national landscape



Human/National Landscape



- National interests
- Conflict between national pride, venality, desire for change, reality
- Conflict between USG/corporate desires and reality



Culture change in the FSU



- From closed society to open society
- Central planning to diversified planning
- From authoritative to democratic decision making (in only a few rare cases)
- From nationalized economy to free trade economy (seldom)
- Inefficient labor force to resource-driven economy (Primarily oil)



Paul Mahata
International PM & Culture Change
in India



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PMBOK: how it applies to India



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PMI Chapters in India

- Seven PMI chapters: New Delhi, Mumbai (Bombay), Chennai (Madras), Bangalore, Hyderabad (aka Pearl City), Pune, and Trivandrum
- TEAM INDIA represents all seven chapters. PMIWDC has CTC relationship with all chapters
- Visited Mumbai Chapter: 700 members, monthly meetings attended by about 35. Starting to have paid events
- PMI is trying hard to infuse PM principles in industry
- IT companies are active in PMI. Government agencies are far behind in implementing PM principles



Culture change in India: last 30 years



Lived in India 30 years ago. Now visit India frequently. These are personal observations:

- From closed society to open society
- Central planning to diversified planning
- From authoritative to democratic decision making
- From nationalized economy to free trade economy
- Inefficient labor force to globally competitive companies



Specific examples of changes in recent years



- IT industry is globally competitive (Wipro, Infosys, Satyam, Tata Consulting)
- Airlines proliferating domestically and internationally (Jet Airways, King Fischer, Deccan, Spice Jets, Air India, Indian Airlines)
- Wireless telephones growing exponentially
- Bombay-Pune highway: speed limit 100 kmh (60 mph) with toll booths (no bullock carts allowed)
- Covered Malls cropping up. WALMART is opening in India with a local retail chain



Specific examples of changes in recent years (cont)



- Restaurant chains growing: McDonald, Ruby Tuesday, TGIF, KFC, Domino's
- Five-star luxury hotels in all major cities
- Younger generation changing jobs every 2 -3 years, unlike their parents who stayed with a company or government for life
- Younger generation taking risks, questioning authority, challenging status quo, doing business globally. In contrast, older generation believe in cottage industry and do not trust foreign investments (primarily inherited from Gandhian principle of self-reliance, i.e., make your own salt and weave your own clothes)