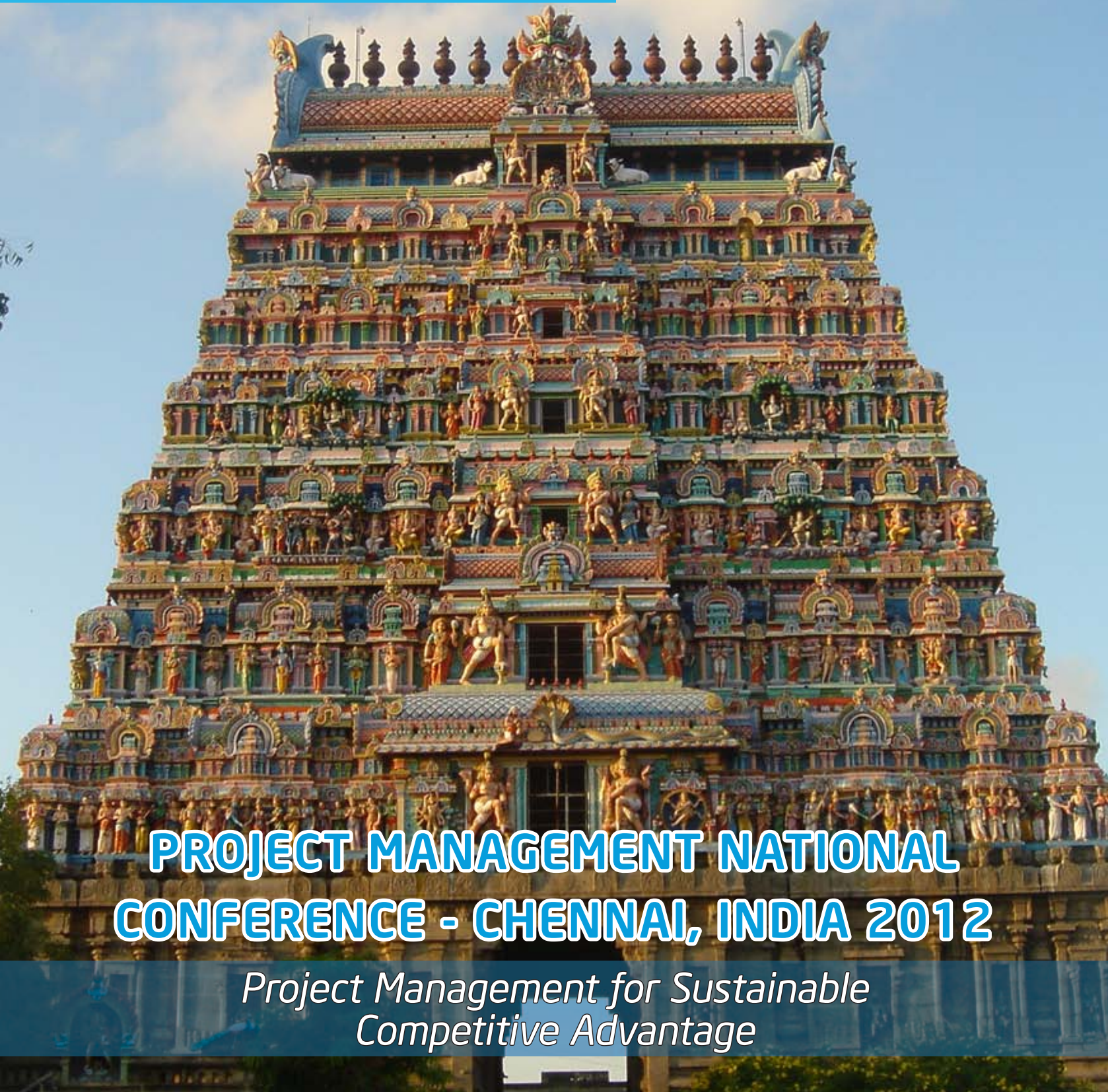


MANAGE India



**PROJECT MANAGEMENT NATIONAL
CONFERENCE - CHENNAI, INDIA 2012**

*Project Management for Sustainable
Competitive Advantage*



PMI India chapter presidents, regional leaders, and Mr. Raj Kalady with Dr. E Sreedharan

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Letter from the Managing Director, PMI India



Raj Kalady
Managing Director, PMI India

Dear Practitioners,

What we achieved in Chennai this September surpassed all our previous experiences and expectations. With nearly 1,200 delegates, PMI India National Conference 2012 has set a record in being the most highly attended project management conference till date in India. The conference organizers this time had a much bigger task cut out for them in terms of the kind of response they received for award nominations and technical papers. The team used project management best practices to turn these challenges into an opportunity to showcase the very best of success stories from across industries and the country at the conference.

The conference theme, “Project Management for Sustainable Competitive Advantage,” offered the perfect backdrop to discuss ways to mitigate risks that our projects may pose on our environment, community, and nation. Sustainable growth is of special interest to our country which has set an ambitious growth target in the next few decades. The organizers showed their commitment to sustainability by adopting a ‘go green’ approach in a number of ways, such as giving away eco-friendly delegate bags, trees planted on behalf of speakers, opting for SMS feedback instead of printed feedback forms, and technical papers being made available in reusable memory sticks.

Our eminent speakers touched upon a range of subjects close to a project manager’s heart – from the practical to the spiritual, from the strategic to the operational, from leading change for an organization to leading change for a nation. Whether they were icons of new, resurgent India or leaders who represented the country’s traditional values and spiritual foundation, each speaker offered unique insights into today’s work culture, emerging trends, and most interestingly, the edge that an Indian way of life often brings to a project! Not all lessons are learned in a classroom. The Mumbai dubbawallas showed us that in

order to be a successful project manager, what you need the most are strong values. The panel discussion and the Big Debate stirred up some lively discussions.

Over 90 percent of the delegates have given positive feedback on their experience at the conference and the content. The credit for the success of the conference goes to chapter volunteers who sacrificed their personal time and put in long hours in conference planning and execution. It’s a matter of great pride and honor for me to see the passion with which volunteers and all the chapters came together to ensure they delivered a great experience to the delegates.

I’d like to thank Mr. Mark A. Langley, president and CEO, PMI and Mr. Craig Killough, vice president, organization markets, PMI, for being a part of the conference. My special thanks and congratulations go to Mr. Karthik Ramamurthy, conference chairman, Mr. Rajeev Panicker, conference co-chairman, Mr. P. Ramasubramaniam, conference project director, and Mr. Sanjay Bhaskaran, additional conference project director, for a great conference.

The venue for the PMI India National Conference 2013 will be in the capital city, New Delhi. We are confident the bar will be raised once again. We will give you more details shortly.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Raj Kalady'.

Raj Kalady
Managing Director, PMI India

Message from Host Chapter Presidents



Mr. Karthik Ramamurthy

Chairman, PMI India National Conference 2012

Chairman, PMI Chennai Chapter

“Wow! 1,200 attendees at a Project Management Conference on a day India plays Australia in a World T-20 cricket match! Hopefully, by the time we end, we’ll get a big wow from you!” This is how I closed my welcome address to the delegates. It was gratifying that we indeed ended with “wows” from all stakeholders – delegates, PMI leadership, sponsors, speakers, and vendors. They unanimously expressed appreciation through emails, conversations, Facebook posts, and Tweets for both the quality of the conference and the hospitality received. At 1,200 attendees, India’s largest project management conference had many key success ingredients: a star line-up of speakers, seven

extensive knowledge formats, superb conference venue and cuisine, enthusiastic and participative delegates, thoughtful and earth-friendly measures, and exciting contests.

We received a record number of 293 technical abstracts, including, for the first time, entries from Sri Lanka, the UAE, and Pakistan. We received 76 award entries, the highest so far. While the PMI Chennai and PMI Trivandrum Chapters were the hosts, this was truly a PMI Team India effort. Every chapter made handsome contributions. The PMI India leadership and staff provided critical assistance with ideas, unstinting support, closing sponsorships, and critical leads to key speakers.

As a project management best practices practitioner, it was a matter of great pride for me that the team made optimum use of a mix of tools, including project charter, organizational process assets, detailed work breakdown structure, stakeholder register, communication plan, RACI charts, schedule with critical path tracking, and risk register with detailed response plans. We indeed practice what we preach! Starting 333 days before the conference, a very dedicated core volunteer team of 33 worked tirelessly to deliver an impeccable 3-day conference. It was their passion to provide the best delegate experience and lots of hard work that was a stand-out feature in the conference success.

Mr. Rajeev Panicker

Conference co-chairman

Chairman, Trivandrum Chapter

As most of the participants have openly expressed, the 2012 edition of the PMI India National Conference, which was co-hosted by the PMI Kerala and Chennai Chapters, has set a new benchmark by creating the wow factor. The response has been truly overwhelming and this was possible only with the dedication and professionalism shown by the volunteers, conference core team, the host and supporting chapters, and PMI India.

“Project Management for Sustainable Competitive Advantage,” the theme for this year’s conference, was certainly very relevant in today’s environment, where sustainability of competitive advantage is the need of the hour. I am very sure that the participants and volunteers had a very encouraging experience at the conference. I am confident that they received a lot of new learning to understand and improve sustainability to take with them at the end of three days of enrichment.





Conference volunteers with chapter leaders

a record 76 nominations from practitioners across industries. The nominations were evaluated by three different set of panelists who brought in unique strengths and perspectives into the evaluation process. True to the voluntary spirit of PMI, they prioritized award evaluation as the topmost item on their agenda, even sacrificing their personal time. I consider this was the key to my success in the award track.

Dr Vikram Kumar B T, vice president, finance, PMI Trivandrum Chapter & director, UST Global

In the run-up to the conference, we spent all our spare time on weekdays and weekends on conference activities. Sometimes meetings/conference calls went well past 11 pm. We dedicated every Saturday and Sunday for the past six months for conference work. The main learning from the conference was that nothing is impossible for a dedicated and hardworking team.

Mr. Prasanna Sampathkumar, vice president, membership, Chennai Chapter & project manager, Hewlett Packard

A major challenge was to manage a virtual team of 90 senior leaders (reviewers) and 290 authors with diverse skill sets and experiences, and of different age groups. The event was conceptualized and executed in a highly professional manner with a rigorous review mechanism that incorporated multiple levels of filtering. Finally, the success of this whole exercise was due to the involvement of right people for the right purpose connected with the links strengthened by passion towards volunteerism.

Mr. Jayakrishnan P S, vice president, membership, PMI Kerala Chapter & senior project manager, IBS Pvt. Ltd.

Having joined the Chennai chapter volunteer force recently, I was the “youngest” volunteer at the conference. These three days of the conference were the best days of my life. The success factors have been paying attention to the minutest of details for smooth program delivery, delegation, and supervision. Volunteering is a choice we make. We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.

Mr. Adi Tadikonda, delivery manager, Hewlett Packard Globalsoft Ltd.,

I have been a volunteer since 2009 and volunteering makes me happy. I can proudly say that all my volunteers are extremely passionate about it. Volunteers are not paid not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless!

Mr. C. S. Jaikrishna, vice president, volunteer development & track leader - welcome kit & senior associate, Cognizant Technology Solution

Volunteering for the PMI India National Conference was a tremendous learning experience for me. No one ever said ‘that’s not my job’ and worked towards getting the outcome delivered successfully. The other standout feature was that criticism or lessons learned were focused on the task and not on the person. Compliments and success were shared as a team. Passion, preparation, and perspiration in equal measure led us to perfection!

Mr. Koushik Srinivasan, program manager, Hewlett-Packard

I have been writing articles and compering at chapter events that have provided avenues for me to express my creativity. A non-hierarchical team where ideas are always welcome provides a great way to refresh ourselves from day-to-day routine. I find the enthusiasm of the volunteers infectious. The sense of commitment to make the conference a success reverberated through the team and made it a memorable event.

Ms. Srividhya Ramesh, quality lead, Scope International

Sustainability is the New Mantra: Chennai Shows the Way

High quality speakers, record number of delegates, and new and exciting knowledge forums mark the fourth PMI India National Conference

BY PANCHALEE THAKUR

At a time when organizations around the world are looking at sustainability as a business imperative, the PMI India National Conference 2012 provided a forum to take the discussion further. The theme for the conference, “Project Management for Sustainable Competitive Advantage”, set the stage for discussions on how project management holds the key to India’s quest for high, sustainable, and

supported by the PMI India team. For the past six months, the volunteers toiled every weekend and spare hours on weekdays to ensure the conference was a success. They used project management best practices to plan, design, and deliver the mega event.

Over the three days of the conference, speakers from India and abroad, who represented different industries and interests, touched upon various aspects of a practitioner’s life. There were sessions on leadership, innovation, nation-building, cultural sensitization, and spiritual well-being, besides pre-conference workshops, a panel discussion, a debate, and case study presentations. Delegates actively participated in the interactive sessions at the end of each presentation.

This time PMI India presented the Best Project of the Year awards in three categories as per the project duration, besides the Contribution to the Community award (refer to page 13-14 for details). Mr. Ramam Atmakuri, PMI Asia Pacific Regional Chapter Mentor, received the prestigious 2012 PMI Eric Jenett Project Management Excellence Award.

To go with the ‘go green’ theme, organizers did away with printed feedback forms and instead opted for SMS responses from delegates.

The delegate bags were made of eco-friendly material. The organizers planted 20-50 saplings in the name of each speaker and a certificate of that presented to the speaker.

inclusive growth. Business leaders, policy-makers, and social thinkers provided practitioners useful insights, food for thought, and handy tips on achieving project success.

The fourth PMI India National Conference 2012 was held on September 28-30 in Chennai. The annual conference has been growing in strength since the time it began in 2009. This year it broke all previous records – close to 1,200 attendees, over 76 award nominations, and 293 technical paper submissions. The conference was co-hosted by Chennai Chapter and Trivandrum (Kerala) Chapter, managed by 33 volunteers from both the chapters, and


Thought-provoking sessions, opportunities to interact with some of India’s opinion leaders, and a forum to network and share ideas with practitioners from different industries have made this year’s PMI India National Conference a resounding success. The facilities and hospitality at the spanking new Leela Palace, Chennai, which has not yet been formally launched, added to the experience of the delegates.



A high energy inaugural session in which delegates took part in a “human orchestra” conducted by the EVAM Group. The audience formed four teams with each team producing the sounds of musical instruments with their hands and mouth



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DEENA LEVINE

Most professionals in global organizations would have experienced awkward moments in conference calls, especially at times when team members from different countries do not understand each other well. The lack of understanding may not be just because of accent and intonation but deep-rooted cultural influences.



At a pre-conference workshop for early bird registrants, Ms. Deena Levine, principal, Deena Levine & Associates, brought out some of these undercurrents in conversations that can derail communications and upset relationships. She used role play to drive home the importance of understanding cultural influences in communication for better results at work.

Cultural prejudices arise because people expect others to behave like them and any social behavior that is unfamiliar is considered unacceptable. In the role play act, Ms. Levine created a scenario where a global bank with its headquarters in Germany, IT project lead in New York, and the technical team in India had a rather disastrous conference call. In the call, the German wanted a clear answer from the team in India on their deliverables; the American praised her team for their work but seemed unaware of the ground realities the project team in India was facing; and the Indian team appeared unprepared for the call and vacillated on the deadline commitment between “we’ll try” and “we’ve problems...it seems difficult.”

“There seems to be misalignment between what the different teams are saying. I’d like the workshop participants to say what went wrong in the call. What skills will you give the team members for more effective communication?” asked Ms. Levine.

In the next 20 minutes, participants formed teams to brainstorm on what the bank’s team lacked and recommend skills to improve their communication levels. Some of the problem areas the participants identified were: insincere praise and small talk by the project lead from New York didn’t help break ice like she had hoped for; the insistence on deadline commitment by the German made him seem inflexible and unconcerned about the team’s problems; and parallel talking by the Indian team showed their unpreparedness and the lack of a clear answer made them seem low on commitment.

“People in high-context countries like India and low-context countries like Germany communicate differently. Germans prefer unambiguous responses like ‘yes’ and ‘no’. They tend to take the ‘I’ll try’ by an Indian as lack of commitment. They often miss the implicit in ‘I’ll try’, which is ‘I don’t want to offend you by saying no...I’ll try my best but the outcome is not in my hands’. Organizations that expose their teams to these cultural dimensions can expect better communication skills in their employees,” she summarized.

Ms. Levine also addressed project managers on the second day on “Global Cross-Cultural Communication: Insight, Challenges & Good Practices.”

MAANEY PAUL

A team may have individuals with high intelligence quotient (IQ) and relevant knowledge but these attributes are not sufficient to create high productivity. The emotional quotient (EQ) is equally important to convert IQ into productivity.

Mr. Maaney Paul, motivational speaker, used anecdotes from his life to illustrate the need to develop EQ as a success factor at work. He drew insights from real-life situations and peppered his talk with some humor and wit during an hour and a half pre-conference session for early bird delegates.

“To begin with, we must understand ourselves and know our own strengths and weaknesses. We must know what can move our energy levels, or the factors that can increase our productivity and efficiency. It’s like in a marriage...I know my wife but don’t understand her. That doesn’t help,” he said, to an audience roaring in laughter. Incidentally, the marriage jokes drew the loudest applause throughout the talk.

Some of the key attributes that help in taking a project manager’s efficiency up are adopting the right attitude, appreciating cultural differences in teams, and love for what one does. “I believe in the ‘law of least effort’. When we do something because we enjoy doing it, we get good results; whereas when we do the same thing because we need to do it, the results may be disappointing. Do what you have to do with your heart and see the outcome,” said Mr. Paul.



MARK A. LANGLEY

Economies around the world are experiencing a roller-coaster ride of surge and slump in their gross domestic product (GDP) growth. This trend is affecting the prospect of companies that are vying for growth to remain competitive.

Mr. Mark A. Langley, president and CEO, PMI, spoke about the macro trends that organizations worldwide are pursuing to gain competitive advantage. Organizations are shifting focus to emerging markets, investing in the downturn so that they can surge ahead when the times improve, adopting changes in their operating strategy, and staying nimble to identify opportunities faster, to get ahead of competition. Organizations are also refocusing their energies on talent.

“Organizations realize the importance of getting value out of their investments into projects and

programs to stay ahead of competition. They are linking project success and value to talent, and hence there is a focus on building program and project management skills within the organization,” he said. There has been increased use of agile methods in project management, he added.

India, as a growing economy, will produce 400,000 project-related jobs for the next 10 years but the supply will not be able to match the demand. Recent research has shown that non-technical skills in project managers will weigh high on the minds of recruiters. Some of these skills are team alignment to the corporate vision, exemplifying integrity, and negotiation skills.

“Organizations are facing the triple constraints of technical, leadership, and strategic management skills. They want project managers who are technically competent, possess leadership capabilities, and understand the organization’s long-term vision,” Mr. Langley explained. He added that companies recognize the impact that project management training brings to a project. There is increased demonstration across organizations of how employing trained project managers results in greater project success, whether in terms of goals met, delivery within budget and cost, control over scope creep, and fewer projects deemed failed. “The greater focus on talent management is leading to better performance, which in turn, is improving the competitive advantage of organizations,” said Mr. Langley.

VINEET NAYAR

Mr. Vineet Nayar, vice-chairman and CEO, HCL Technologies, a man who led the transformation of his company from a struggling \$700-million entity to a \$4-billion IT behemoth, posed a question to his audience: “Are you leading organizational change?” He believes organizational change starts with an idea, that idea finds a face, and that face finds followers. The difference between a leader and a manager is simple: a leader leads the change and a manager manages change.

He said the focus has to shift from an individual’s historical greatness, or in other words, the great work that one did yesterday, to what one can do today for the future. He classified people into two categories—one looks for imperfections and makes excuses, and the other looks for opportunities in



imperfections. “Mr. Lewis Hamilton, Formula 1 champion, said something wonderful when I met him during the race last year in Delhi, which was the first in that circuit. He said races are run by computers and race drivers can predict how the race will go. A good driver waits for things to go wrong; otherwise competing in a predictable race is boring,” recalled Mr. Nayar

Mr. Nayar outlined three steps to create an architecture for organizational change. First, “create unhappiness”, or in other words, make people realize how the present is imperfect; second, have a vision for change that defines the change benefits to each employee; and third, have deep-rooted conviction in what you believe in and need to do.

He believes the biggest asset for an Indian is his or her ability to manage adversity and achieve the end objective come what may. “India has an innate ability to emerge strong from a downturn because India is wired for adversity. We Indians don’t allow adversity to distract us. Indians are wired to navigate through difficulties and get what they want, when they want. It is our biggest asset,” he commented.

AMITABH KANT

The tenure of senior bureaucrat, Mr. Amitabh Kant, IAS, as the head of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation and later India Tourism Development Corporation was marked by creative campaigns, innovative product development, speedy infrastructure creation, and organizational restructuring that turned lacklustre government departments into vibrant, profit-making entities. Now, as CEO and managing director, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (DMICDC), he wants to script a similar success story in urban infrastructure creation.

Mr. Kant believes the answer to sustainable development for the country is in its ability to create liveable cities which will be centers of growth and innovation for future generations. The rate of growth that India needs to post for the next four decades is more than what it did in the past 500 years. Quoting the late management thinker, Professor CK Prahalad, he said India needs to build 500 new cities by 2020, failing which every existing city will turn into a slum with unliveable conditions. “For consistent high growth, India will have to bank on manufacturing. The jobs that manufacturing creates will attract workers from villages. Our strategy should be to build cities as urban centers of growth and innovation that will not just fulfil the needs of its present dwellers but also accommodate the needs of migrant workers and their families for the next 100 years,” he said.

Building model urban infrastructure is about planning and designing. He stressed the relevance of project management skills to “plan, program, and projectize” these large infrastructure projects. He spoke about the DMIC project that will speed up transportation of goods from factories in Delhi and surrounding areas to the ports of Gujarat and Mumbai, and provide a boost to trade. “Today, 70 percent of goods move by lorries. By 2017 when the DMIC project completes, most of these goods will move by high speed container trains and bring down travel time from the present 14-15 days to 12 hours. It will also reduce the load off the road,” he explained. He stressed on the need for program management to pursue India’s goal towards manufacturing and urbanization. “We have insisted on PMI certified professionals for program management at DMIC. Program management is as much as passion as it is about science or art,” he added.



LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

Mr. Lakshmi Narayanan, vice chairman, Cognizant Technology Solutions, provided a glimpse into the workings of two mega public-private partnership ICT projects in the country where the project goals and approach had to change as the project progressed.

The Government of India, the State Government of Tamil Nadu, and private technology companies set up the ICT Academy to train teachers of engineering colleges who will in turn impart the right training to students. The objective was to improve the quality of engineering graduates and make them more employable. “We started with a pilot project to train 20 teachers in Chennai for a week. But when we wanted to replicate the same experience to train 5,000 teachers in the state, we faced several challenges. Teachers were unwilling to do the training; colleges were unsure of how they would benefit from it. So we had to simultaneously start several other projects to motivate teachers and convince colleges to bear the training costs. So what started as a project had to scale up into a program,” Mr. Narayanan said. Now, after the success of the project in Tamil Nadu, the stakeholders want to make ICT Academy a self-sustainable model and take it to other states.

He also spoke about the National Skills Development Corporation set up by the Government of India with the objective to provide skills to 150 million people in India in the next 10-12 years. “Here the approach had to be top down right from the beginning. We had to define the program and then the sub-components. Depending on the nature of a project, the goals may have to be redefined and the approach changed to make the project achieve its core objectives and be sustainable,” he explained.



V SUMANTHRAN

Mr. V Sumanthran, executive vice president, Hinduja Automotive, who has spent many years in automotive companies such as General Motors, Tata Motors, and now Hinduja Automotive, believes frugal engineering will be the differentiator for companies in tough market conditions. Indians, who have grown up on lessons of frugality, have an innate advantage in harnessing this capability. Frugal engineering is about doing just about what you're required to do to achieve the functionality that you want.

“The world is changing fast and there is no place for the predictable anymore. The new dimensions in program management today are innovation and dynamism. India, which has an advantage of affordability, is well poised to build an ecosystem of program management,” said Mr. Sumanthran.

Rejecting common perceptions that equate low-cost with cheap products, he said the cost advantage is an opportunity and organizations around the world facing resource constraints want to go low-cost. “The space constraints in Japan led to new management thinking such as Kaizen and Kanban. Cost innovation is not easy; it's much beyond native jugaad. Ikea, that makes low-cost furniture, says making a \$1000 desk is easier than making a \$50 desk,” said Mr. Sumanthran.

Technology, which is driving cost innovation, is the main force behind the Tata Nano experience. “The Tata Nano is well beyond jugaad. It is an example of less weight, high functionality, and good ergonomics, and it comes at an unbeatable cost,” explained Mr. Sumanthran.





SRI SRI RAVISHANKAR

Sri Sri Ravishankar, founder, Art of Living Foundation, offered project management insights from Indian mythology and some handy tips to improve the spiritual quotient of project managers. Talking about the importance of managing projects, he said it is believed that Lord Vishnu, the manager of the universe, was born before Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe. The essence of the story: first manage your mind and then you can create well; before you start building, know how to manage it.

Sri Sri, who is also known as the guru of joy, believes a smile can do a lot for you and the people you work with. "A child smiles 400 times a day and an adolescent smiles 17 times a day. As a project manager, you probably smile a lot less than that. Keep your smile; people won't take you lightly just because you smile," he said.

The other human qualities that must be treasured but are often forgotten at the workplace are trust and passion. "Trust is important; how will your project be successful unless you trust your team? The other important quality is to have passion for work. Passion is about ownership, motivation, and inspiration," he remarked. He made a distinction between passion, dispassion, and compassion, and said an individual must possess all these attributes. "Compassion helps us understand people but too much of compassion can be disastrous. Dispassion helps us handle criticism and failure better," he added. He advised project managers to "breathe in passion and breathe out dispassion."

His other advice for project success was following spirituality. "Spirituality helps improve confidence, and enhance intelligence and intuition. When the right thought or intuition is put into action, it brings about the desired results," he remarked.

The guru, who is known the world over for his yoga and meditation teachings, gave a 10 minute demonstration of what he called "desktop yoga." He prescribed "desktop yoga" to people who do not have the time for a long session and want to calm their mind and body and unmask their intuition to guide them through the day.

E. SREEDHARAN

Dr. E. Sreedharan, principal advisor, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, provided project managers insights on the challenges that large government projects in India face and the mantra that has helped him successfully manage complex projects. Dr. Sreedharan, who has earned the nomenclature of the "father of project management in India," spoke about his experiences in the Konkan Railway and Delhi Metro projects.

Konkan Railway connects Mumbai in the west to Mangalore in the south through undulating terrain. The 760 km railway line passes through 93 tunnels and 150 major bridges, of which the longest tunnel is 6.5 km and the longest bridge is 2 km. The piers of some of the bridges are as tall as the Qutub Minar and one embankment of 25 m runs for 2 km. The project was completed within seven years under Dr. Sreedharan's tenure. His next assignment was the technically challenging Delhi Metro project, India's first modern metro rail. The first phase of Delhi Metro was completed 2.9 years ahead of time and the second phase was done on time. The third



phase is currently on. The tracks cover 190 km on which 3,000 trains ply, carrying 22 lakh passengers a day. The service has been lauded as reliable, comfortable, and punctual.

Dr. Sreedharan credits project success to the work culture that he instituted in the organization. “The qualities that define the Delhi Metro work culture are punctuality, integrity, quick decision-making, professional competence and a sense of social responsibility. We have to be punctual for our trains to be punctual. I believe in delegation of powers along with responsibility so that people are able to take quick decisions. Transparency helped us gain the confidence of our stakeholders. If you know your job well, you have confidence in your own decisions. Delhi Metro being a technically complex project, it needed people with high professional competence. Social responsibility is about completing a project on time and within the budget allocated, as our projects involve tax payers’ money,” he explained. Dr. Sreedharan said he has found a touch of spirituality helpful in managing projects.

RAMKUMAR PICHAI

Mr. Ramkumar Pichai, general manager, Microsoft Office Division, spoke about the linkages between successful project delivery and achieving competitive advantage. Elaborating on the conference theme of “Project Management for Sustainable Competitive Advantage,” Mr. Pichai said sustainable competitive advantage was about repeated delivery of results through responsible management of resources.

“We need to have three Ps in mind while planning, designing, and executing projects, which are profit, people, and the planet. When these factors are ingrained in our projects, we will achieve competitive advantage,” said Mr. Pichai.

He pointed out the key forces that drive competitive advantage. Pricing alone cannot give a company competitive advantage. It needs to adopt innovative strategies, know how to market its products and services, and execute its projects well through project and program management. “The speed of innovation has gone up significantly in recent years. Organizations need to keep pace with that. In fact, innovation need not be within your own company. We must strive to create an ecosystem that enables and furthers innovation,” he added.

Mr. Pichai said the Microsoft project management offerings have evolved from a desktop application in 1997 to its 2010 version of the enterprise portfolio management suite of products and are a demonstration of the evolution of project management into the highly complex management of projects and programs.

Microsoft was the platinum sponsor for PMI India National Conference 2012.

VINEET TRISAL

Mr. Vineet Trisal, senior sales consultant, Oracle, spoke about the importance of enterprise project and program management to drive value across the economy. Organizations across sectors want to realize the value of their investments into projects, and efficient project and program management will help them achieve these goals.

An Oracle survey among executives showed that only six percent of projects are completed within time and budget. The reasons for this inconsistency in performance are many, such as conflicting priorities, lack of business alignment, lack of enterprise-wide visibility into projects, and redundant projects. “The lack of visibility into projects across the enterprise is a leading cause for project failure. It leads to slow reaction because information is not shared with the stakeholders on time. Organizations also struggle with timely mobilization of resources, which lead to resources being squandered,” said Mr. Trisal.

As projects get more complex, these issues will become more difficult to handle. “We believe the solution to project failure lies in financial discipline, operational excellence, and risk mitigation,” he added. He demonstrated with the help of case studies how Oracle has helped organizations across industries in achieving project success.

Oracle was the silver sponsor for PMI India National Conference 2012.



▲ Mr. Raj Kalady and Mr. Mark A. Langley with the Gujarat Power Corporation Ltd. team that won the Best Project of the Year - Medium Term Duration (1 to 3 years) for the Gujarat Solar Park project



▲ Mr. Raj Kalady and Mr. Vineet Nayar presenting the Best Project of the Year - Short Term Duration (less than one year) to the team from DELL ICC Expansion Project - CBRE South Asia Pvt. Ltd.



▲ Mr. Raj Kalady and Mr. Vineet Nayar presenting the Best Project of the Year – Contribution to the Community Award to Sevalaya's Mahakavi Bharathiar Higher Secondary School



▲ Mr. Mark A. Langley presenting the 2012 PMI Eric Jenett Project Management Excellence Award to Mr. Ramam Atmakuri

▼ Mr. Raj Kalady and Mr. Mark A. Langley with the team from Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Ltd. that won the Best Project of the Year - Long Term Duration (more than 3 years) for the 400MW Koteshwar Hydro Electric Project in Uttarakhand



Do Women Make Better Project Managers?

ANCHOR:

Mr. Sujith Kumar, *location head (human resources), Infosys Ltd., Chennai*

PANELISTS:

Dr. L. Sharada Ganesh, *program director (LDP), Tata Consultancy Services*

Ms. Vandana Malaiya, *director, delivery excellence, global business services, IBM India*

Mr. Ganesan Sekar, *head, BFSI, Mahindra Satyam*

Mr. Pascal Dupuis, *general manager, The Leela Palace, Chennai*

Mr. Kumar: First of all, why are we discussing this topic? I did some online research on men versus women project managers but didn't find much content on it. My question is: Is gender relevant at all?

Dr. Ganesh: Certain innate traits in women make them stronger project managers. They like to consult and decide, rather than men who like to influence decisions and tell others what to do. Women put their needs later; they are more intuitive, whereas men like to base their decisions on facts and figures. Women want to congregate, unlike men who always want to lead the pack.

Mr. Sekar: Project management is a highly focused activity with a definite objective and both men and women are suitable for it. But I have found that when it comes to change and complexity, women don't do a good job. They prefer projects with a definite scope. Women in business development roles aren't very successful. A project manager learns a lot on the job and when women discontinue work due to social pressures, it is a loss to the project.

Ms. Malaiya: Who manages your home, understands your implicit and explicit requirements and executes them, manages the home finances, takes decisions on anything from holidays to buying a home, tracking and monitoring every aspect of the family, and networks and maintains relationships? Managing the home is probably the most

complex project; hence women have inherent capabilities in project management.

Mr. Dupuis: The most beautiful project is to give life and it is always on time. Till the last time I checked, it is still a woman who does it! Whether you are a good project manager depends on what project you are handling and your passion towards it. However, if it's a lady managing a lady, there are problems.

Ms. Malaiya: Very often we push stereotypes. The belief that women will have babies and leave the job is a stereotype. Most of the time she is not even offered tougher assignments because it is believed that she will like a softer role.

Mr. Dupuis: In some fields, men are better suited. Women choose easy options and want what is good for them at the moment. They don't think long term.

Dr. Ganesh: A woman brings in diversity in the thought process and decision-making.



Debate participants – Ms. Vandana Malaiya, Dr. L. Sharada Ganesh, Mr. Sujith Kumar, Mr. Ganesan Sekar, and Mr. Pascal Dupuis

Mr. Sekar: Women have shortcomings, some of it due to societal pressures, but we need to provide them equal opportunities.

Mr. Kumar: I found a 2007 study that said that out of 38 traits needed for a project manager, women fare better in 21 traits. There are fewer projects handled by women that are abandoned. More women-managed projects are delivered on time and there is better scheduling and resource management. Hence, I'd say women make better project managers.

Has the Time Arrived for a Chief Projects Officer?

ANCHOR:

Mr. C. Mohan Kumar, *honorary president, National Human Resource Development Network, Chennai*

PANELISTS:

Mr. Avinash Keswani, *director, SAP technologies, Deloitte*

Mr. Craig Killough, *vice president, organization markets, PMI*

Mr. Madhavan Seshadri, *vice president and global head (testing services), Wipro Technologies*

Group Captain (Retd.) R. Vijayakumar, *VSM, executive director, Madras Management Association*

Mr. Kumar: Project management is becoming more difficult as geo-political dynamics make projects more complex. If a company delays in the commissioning of a crude oil refinery project, it could incur losses to the tune of Rs. 50 crore a day. Somebody needs to take the responsibility. Here the role of a chief projects officer (CPO) becomes important.

Mr. Seshadri: The world of project management has become increasingly complex. In IT services, we face a plethora of issues, such as new technologies, glut of data to process, challenges regarding the consumer, shorter project lifecycle, and tighter control over capital and discretionary spending. Tolerance of failures doesn't exist today. It is time to think of a CPO and create a charter to define its role.

Mr. Keswani: I don't think we need a new position of a CPO. Like Sri Sri Ravishankar said, we will have one more person who will stop smiling. This position must be created only if there is a need for it. If this structure makes your company more successful, then do so most definitely. But be careful

not to create more bureaucracy at the top by adding one more position.

Mr. Killough: The role of the CPO already exists in many organizations but it may not be known by that name. In organizations like Samsung Engineering, Bechtel, and Larsen & Toubro, the CEO is the CPO. In PricewaterhouseCoopers, the partner for a specific business area is the CPO. Let's not get mixed up with terminology.

Mr. Vijayakumar: It's important to understand the level of accountability in a project. In 1980s, the infrastructure in India was far better than China, but today the scenario is completely different. China overtook us because they put a higher degree of accountability on their people for each project. Make someone accountable and give him/her the authority to deliver right and on time.

Mr. Kumar: What should be the role of the CPO? I believe he/she should orchestrate between the many functions.

Mr. Vijayakumar: Be passionate about what you do. We also need innovation at the CPO level.

Mr. Keswani: There has to be a healthy balance of authority and responsibility. We don't want to create a czar that will kill innovation.

Mr. Seshadri: There must be accountability in terms of ensuring quality, timeliness, and delivery of projects. Organizations cannot afford failed projects and hence, executive power to the CPO is the need of the hour.

Mr. Killough: As the profession matures, more CEOs with project management background will be running organizations the world over.



Mr. Vijayakumar, Mr. Killough, Mr. Mohan Kumar, Mr. Keswani, and Mr. Seshadri at the panel discussion

Is your PM Learning 'STICKY'? How to design the best transfer climate

—Raed S Haddad

Has the investments in learning project management made an impact on the organization you work for? It's not just about what you know but also about how you use what you know. Mr. Haddad, managing director, Asia Pacific, ESI International, examined the current state of affairs, the common failure points, and how can one add value to any learning.

The role of a project manager in a global arena is mainly to generate profit, provide global consistency, and ensure customer and employer satisfaction. Being proactive is an essential pre-requisite and can influence the way a project progresses. He said attending a training class without proper post-course knowledge integration is a futile yet common practice. A recent study shows that organizations may estimate a high level of learning transfer but the reality does not bear that estimate out. The importance of measurement and the ability to predict the impact of learning programs with tools can help in building post-learning strategies to improve overall knowledge, absorption, and adoption.

Sustainable mathematical model for monitoring linear infrastructure projects

—Asim Prasad

Relying on his experience of executing and monitoring cross-country natural gas pipeline projects, Mr. Prasad, chief manager, GAIL India Limited, proposed a sustainable, easy-to-understand, and generic mathematical model to monitor and control projects with varying degrees of complexity, risk, and diversity to arrest time and cost-overruns. He said that once the objectives and business value of a project are identified, it was important to do a stakeholders' analysis by assigning a prioritization score, considering their importance, degree of influence, and impact on the project.

The first step of the mathematical model is to identify the elements of the work breakdown structure (WBS) and assign weightages to each element, so as to plan and measure progress. Next, calculate the incremental scheduled percentage progress per month for each of the WBS elements and then, the overall scheduled progress. The third step is to prepare the actual overall cumulative percentage progress for each month in a similar manner. This helps arrive at the fourth step of the model, which is to find out if the project is ahead of or behind schedule, along with the reasons for deviation. If the project is behind schedule, identify the WBS elements responsible for it, and prepare a catch-up plan. Implement it and keep measuring the progress of the plan until the project is completed.



Invited speaker, Mr. R. Vittal Raj, assurance and management consulting expert, highlighted the link between the right technology and project success, in his address on "Leaders Get IT Right for Project Success"

Potential of 'LEAN' construction concepts in promoting 'GREEN'er construction

—Ann Francis

The presentation focused on an issue of growing importance in the country. Ms. Francis, planning engineer, Larsen & Toubro, spoke about how to use technology innovation and Lean methodology can make construction activity greener. The basic principles of Lean—resource waste elimination, increased value to the customer, the first-time right approach, pull mechanism, and continuous innovation—apply to construction as well. Wastes could be related to waiting or idle time, motion, over-processing, over-production, transportation, inventory, and defects/rework.

Ms. Francis highlighted the findings of her study of six construction activities in four sites to establish that there is a direct correlation between the adoption of Lean methodologies and achieving a green outcome. "Lean makes construction more structured, thereby reducing the occurrence of variables. It then becomes easier to adopt technology and do micro-level planning," she said. Her study showed that Lean helped reduce the carbon footprint during the various stages of construction. She used Value Stream Mapping to identify value-adding and waste activities by tracking cycle times, lead times, and inventory levels. Lean tools that do not involve heavy investment costs can help organizations perform better and achieve environmental sustainability.



Mr. R. Sathyavageswaran, assistant vice president and global head – quality, Aricent Group, presented a case study in which he demonstrated a project management competency development success story

Overcoming a 'MYRIAD' of challenges as a woman in IT project management

—Aruni Siriwardene, PMP

Quoting a Gallup World 2011 study, Ms. Siriwardene, senior project manager, Navantis IT Pvt. Ltd., said that women are less likely to have full-time jobs that are well paid. The gender difference of 23 percent is particularly stark in South Asia. In IT, though there is no glass ceiling for women, there is clearly a gender bias. A study by Women in Technology forum reveals that it is difficult for women to reach the board level in the IT industry. Statistics point towards fewer women in IT project management and the reason could be barriers that women set on themselves, she said.

The Sri Lankan delegate had many words of advice for women at the workplace. “Don’t treat yourself as the weaker sex. It’s all in the mind,” she said. Life is about the choices you make. No doubt the fight is going to be tough, but what is life without a struggle. She took care not to turn her talk into a sermon and made an instant connect with the large section of women in the audience. At the end, it was not just about women in IT but an inspirational speech by a woman who has experienced the everyday challenges and speaking from her heart.

PM academy – an enabling platform for project managers

—Raghunandan Menon & Vikram Kumar B.T.

The session by Mr. Menon, advisory consultant, G. A. Menon Academy, and Mr. Kumar, director, UST Global, focused on the need to have a project management academy to enable project managers, including aspirants, to accelerate their

competencies and take their learning and talent further. In today’s global business context, the survival of any IT services organization depends on the capabilities of its project manager to manage projects and deliver them on time. The PM Academy is an enabling platform to improve their competencies.

A PM academy must align with proven industry standards like that of PMI’s *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, blend with the vision and internal dynamics of the organization, sustain enablement, and benchmark competencies through pre and post-training assessments. It must be an organization owned and managed by experts and practitioners who are willing to nurture and grow talent through continuous coaching and monitoring.

The real adoption of the PM competency framework depends on how open the organization is to understanding the aspirations of its employees, the business objectives of the organization, and how nimble and balanced it is to adapting to those needs.

Transformational and revolutionary projects: fuelling economic growth

—Prabhu K.B.

Mr. Prabhu, vice president, BA Continuum Pvt. Ltd., analyzed the reasons behind the success and failure of some of India’s biggest projects till date. He spoke about the national polio eradication program, the Tata Nano plant relocation from Singur in West Bengal to Sanand in Gujarat, and the Indian Premier League (IPL) sporting extravaganza.

The polio eradication program is a transformational project that applied innovative and thoughtful leadership, along with tools, techniques, best practices, and project management principles. Till 1988, polio crippled an estimated 200,000 children a year in India. The first nationwide polio immunization campaign launched in 1995 was to eradicate polio from India. The project faced distribution, stakeholder, communication, cost, and procurement challenges. It needed precise execution, closer co-ordination, and extensive cooperation among the stakeholders. The lessons learned from this project: stakeholder management, excellent delivery system, and innovative techniques to reach out to millions of children, and mass communication management.

In the second part of the paper, he highlighted the challenges that the Tata Nano project faced in Singur and the successful implementation in Sanand thereafter. The success at Sanand was mainly due to the implementation of lessons learned from the Singur project, such as

offering a higher price for the land than the market value, engaging the right stakeholders and involving them throughout the project life cycle, and scope, time, and cost management.

In the third part, he deliberated on how IPL transformed the Indian economy and generated lasting benefits for a wide range of industries. With its huge popularity, the event has the potential to expand to non-cricket playing nations like US, which will bring valuable trade flows to India.



Mr. N.K. Kumar, IES, chief general manager (finance), Chennai Metro Rail Ltd., spoke about the innovative project management techniques being followed for the Chennai Metro Rail project. He highlighted technical, environmental, financial, and human resource challenges that the project is facing and the project management approach that the organization is taking to solve them

The importance of social innovation and the implications for citizens and industry

—Alexei Levene

Mr. Levene, managing director, TGCi Foundation, delved on concepts of innovation and how innovation is a crucial aspect of building competitive advantage for an organization. Innovation for an artist, who considers himself as a visual thinker, is the ability to see something but imagine something else. Innovation for an organization is that ability to create and execute new ideas; it's that competitive differential that sets one apart from the rest. He posed a question to the audience. "When we say 'out of the box', where is the edge of the box?" Of the many responses that came in, he settled for this one: "The edge of the box is in our perception."

While taking up an innovative project, a question that is sometimes missed is: why are we innovating? It helps to keep the context for an innovation in mind while working on it. He gave a brief overview of a few social innovation

projects that TGCi Foundation has undertaken up in its campus in Trivandrum, Kerala. Projects, like the solar-powered bike, paddle-powered water pumps, solar reading lamps, and water tank with plastic bottles are not just projects to recycle waste but also give a boost to innovative ideas for social good.

Portfolio and program management – scaling sprints to run multiple releases cutting across 8+ technology teams

— Venkataraman L

Mr. Venkataraman L, head, project management, InMobi, discussed a framework to manage multiple releases using agile scrum and kanban project management approaches. In this framework, the release lifecycle is broken into a three-step process that makes it lean and swift.

In the first step, the teams conducted a gap analysis of the prevalent system. In the second step, the teams adopted a quarterly plan to address the gaps. In the final step or "the push/pull stage," the teams conducted releases in a phased manner. Each individual release went through the phases of pipelined, approved, in ideation, in execution, deployed, under review, and closed. Each team ran its sprint planning and sprints, and the scrum masters aligned the deployment sequencing with the help of key members of the team.

Among the key benefits of using this framework is the ability to get releases done in spite of multiple dependencies and the visibility that a global team gets on where their dependencies lie and take necessary action. The framework enabled the team to conduct 50 parallel releases in one quarter and over 120 releases in the past four quarters.

Agile adoption: the importance of demonstrated business value

—Nidhi Arora

Ms. Arora, senior manager, Cairn India Ltd. showed how by using agile practices in project management, she delivered an SAP project that involved huge data migration, and the development of many functionalities and workflows, ahead of the expected time. She went in for phased delivery of the project, with the active involvement of the client for timely feedback and iterations, shadow consulting so that even one team member's absence for a day does not affect the schedule, and daily performance tracking.

"The team had been using the waterfall methodology but I didn't find any active resistance to change. I chose to stay away from using any terminologies associated with agile

practices so as not to trigger any negative sentiments. Agile-inspired behavior helped the project greatly,” she said. The results were outstanding: 40 percent saving in time and zero escalations after the project was commissioned. The results have now created curiosity and interest in the team and organization about employing agile practices in project management.

Gearing up for project management: version next

—Ashish Sadekar

The paper by Mr. Sadekar, executive director, ProThoughts, demonstrated a new way of managing projects, which is in response to today’s trends of disruptive technologies and instant gratification. In this new, collaborative method, the customer sees value at each deployment rather than at the end of the entire project lifecycle, and can effectively measure return on investment as the project progresses. He presented a case study on the non-linear method of “risks and rewards” that put both the customer and the implementer into an incentive mode of working, thereby helping in seeing the project through.

In this method, both the parties shared the risks. For example, the customer paid 75 percent of the costs and the rest were to be paid only if the project earned the returns, the implementer had assured. The profits were also shared on a fixed and variable scale. In this method, the CFOs from both the sides assumed greater importance than the IT teams in the project management. The success of this model, for which the team had no historical data to rely on, hinged largely on effective communication among the stakeholders, successful user adoption of the analytics solution designed, a strong governance structure for project execution, and arrive at a set of robust key performance indicators to measure success.

How to displease the customer, to engage the customer

—Vimal Kumar Khanna

In this presentation, Mr. Khanna, managing director, mCalibre Technologies, established that it’s not always good to simply agree with the customer and produce what the customer wants. It is sometimes important to disagree with the customer and demonstrate how the service provider knows the job well and may have some better ideas than the customer. He said that the ‘customer-controlled approach’ for executing IT projects may fail to deliver successful projects due to the highly complex and dynamic nature of such projects. This approach, he argued, will help IT outsourcing companies in controlling schedule overrun issues. He called

this the collaborative approach in which the implementer provides inputs to the customer at every stage of product development.

He quoted from his experience of adopting this approach and spoke about the risks and opportunities involved. “The three mantras for customer satisfaction are to differ, disagree with, and displease the customer by offering something that will ultimately create higher customer satisfaction. But one has to provide the customer sufficient data to support what one is suggesting, perform a cost-benefit analysis, conduct prototyping, and make good use of negotiation and soft skills,” said Mr. Khanna.

Emerging trends in project management for competitive advantage in oil & gas, petrochemical sectors

—R. Balasubramanian & V. Sivakumar

With the steady rise in fuel prices and its demand, the size of oil and gas projects and capital investments into these projects are increasing manifold. Increasing size and complexity is leading to challenges around scheduling and risks.

Mr. Balasubramanian, general manager, engineering, and Mr. Sivakumar, manager, engineering management, Salpem India Projects Ltd. highlighted the trends across a project lifecycle. An oil and gas project has three key players in the conceptualization stage: the operating oil company who does the project conceptualization, a design engineering contractor that takes care of the front end engineering design (FEED), and the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) company that conducts the detailed designing. To reduce cycle time, operating oil companies are not waiting for FEED to be fully tendered before handing over the facility to the EPC contractor. As a result, the risks and responsibility for providing a safe, operable facility that meets the performance requirements is passed on to the EPC company. The new trend relies on the contractor’s technical expertise and ability to perform within a shrunk cycle time. The speakers discussed emerging trends and shifting risks, opportunities, and responsibility in all the stages of an oil and gas project, such as tendering, bid estimation and bid management, engineering management, procurement, construction, stakeholder commitment and cooperation, and cost control.

Performance effectiveness of women in project management

—Sandeep Khurana, PMP

This session focused on performance, determination, and the ability in women to tap their skills to rise in their careers.

The conference organizers this year received a record number of entries for technical papers. A total of 293 technical paper abstracts were submitted. The organizers applied a multi-level, rigorous review and filtering process and selected 31 presentations for publishing, and 13 for presentation at the conference. This is the first time that practitioners from Sri Lanka, the UAE, and Pakistan sent in their abstracts.

Mr. Khurana, founder and principal consultant, QuantLeap Consulting, spoke about the effectiveness of women in project management and classifying personal and environmental factors that concern women in a project.

He said that across developed economies studies have proved that successful women project managers have shown greater work-life balance. This asks for multi-tasking abilities, flexibility in thought and action, and an innovative zeal to adapt to new structures and paradigms.

In projects, the measurement of performance effectiveness has been a continuous challenge. “In the case of women at the workplace and their performance effectiveness, emphasis has to be placed on measuring the intangibles. The contributions of women are more long-term, in softer dimensions but not limited to team cohesion, ethical conduct, employee loyalty, and retention,” said Mr. Khurana. He said women can now work from home and maintain work-home balance, just enabling them to assure continuity of work, which is essential to any project.

The importance of planning for success: the dubbawallas’ story

—Arvind Talekar

The story of the Mumbai Dubbawalla always interests and inspires people. The success of this tiffin delivery network in Mumbai is a great management lesson and has been a subject of interest for global business schools, certification bodies, and organizations. It was not surprising that the hall in which Mr. Talekar, who is a third generation dubbawalla and trustee, Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Charity Trust of Mumbai, presented was packed to capacity; the time for audience interaction stretched well into the coffee break.

The statistics tell the story: 5,000 dubbawallas deliver and pick up two lakh tiffin boxes a day (the lunch box in the

afternoon and the empty box later), thereby making it four lakh transactions. Each delivery man covers 60-70 km a day by local train, cycle, and/or by foot. He usually carries a cart on his head that weighs 60 kg or straps tiffin boxes on his cycle to make the deliveries. The organization makes Rs. 30 crore in annual turnover. It has an error rate of 1 in 160 lakh transactions.

They have been able to achieve this feat because of simple principles such as accurate planning, punctuality, honesty, and a high sense of responsibility and ownership. As many as 85 percent of the dubbawallas are illiterate and have never heard of concepts like change management and a customer-focused approach. But their work exemplifies such management thinking. Mr. Talekar explained the simple codes that are painted on the top of each tiffin box that helps each dubbawalla identify the customer through his or her nearest train station, locality, building, and floor number.

The dubbawallas have fans all over the world, including Prince Charles of the UK and Mr. Richard Branson of Virgin Airlines. And that afternoon at the PMI National Conference, they made a hall full of new fans.

The new dimension in project management: the ‘value’ diamond

—Muktha Kartik and Deborah Devadason

The paper by the two consultants from Mahindra Satyam discussed techniques to ingrain business value into all stages of the project lifecycle and explained the concept of value management. They proposed the dart methodology that allows a project manager to customize the business value to be generated from the project through “value darts”. The methodology starts at the initiation phase of a project lifecycle.

The first step is to define customer objectives. The project

can focus on maximization of value for the customer through a thorough understanding of the customer's strategic needs. Second, assign target value darts determined by the project type, size, and the constraints. Target values are set for the selected darts and a value register is created that gets updated during project execution. Third, the project manager creates strategies to achieve the forecasted dart values with action plans. Milestones/check points for review and tracking are also decided. Fourth, periodic reviews are conducted to ensure the project progresses against the target. The value register is updated with actual numbers in program/business reviews.

The speakers offered a brief overview of the enabling factors of this methodology, the challenges in implementation, and brief case studies that show how organizations have benefited using the dart methodology.

Building a high performance agile project team: challenges and best practices

—Rathinakumar Balasubramanian

Mr. Balasubramanian, head, agile practice, Sabcons, said the success of a project that follows agile practices in project management depends largely on the people managing the project. "It is not an overestimate to say that an agile team either swims together or sinks together," he remarked. He focused on simple and practical tips to build a high performing agile project team. Agile teams are ideally small in size, 5-9 members. They are co-located and prefer face-to-face communication. They are cross-functional and self-organizing in nature. Their approach is collaboration rather than command and control. "It seems like a simple set of rules but managing the equation is harder than it seems," he added.

Mr. Balasubramanian listed the following as main challenges in building a high performance agile team: erosion of trust, lack of ownership, organizational culture, and fear of conflict. He recommended the implementation of best practices for a high performance culture around internal, external, people and process factors that influence the team. These factors are the agile coach, the team, senior management, and enterprise systems such as performance evaluation, and training and development.

Motivating for project results: three proven tracks

—V.T. Chandra Sekhar Rao

Mr. Rao, project management director, Foster Wheeler India Pvt. Ltd., began on the premise that if an organization wants excellent project results, it must start by recognizing and rewarding team members for their contributions. He identified the following three as the proven tracks to motivate team members to perform in large engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) companies: value creation, leadership opportunity, and gain share. The onus to implement these techniques and ensure high performance through motivation lies on the project manager. But how does the project manager instil motivation for better project results?

Mr. Rao discussed theories on human motivation and personal development. He said value creation was possible if there is client buy-in to recognize and reward the value creation efforts; the company's senior management supports value creation initiatives; and the company culture should encourage employees to come forward with their ideas. Leadership opportunities could exist in specific project roles or in volunteering assignments. Gain share is an employee motivational technique where an employee receives compensation for measurable performance.

“5,000 dubbawallas deliver and pick up two lakh tiffin boxes a day. It has an error rate of 1 in 160 lakh transactions.”

—Arvind Talekar

Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Charity Trust
(Mumbai Dubbawalla)



Each session at the conference gave delegates an opportunity to interact with the speaker. Here are some insightful and fun audience interactions.

Session: Mr. Vineet Nayar

Q: You have worked with many bosses. How should a subordinate handle an incompetent boss?

A: *Don't you ever worry about an incompetent boss. He/she is the best opportunity you'll ever have (to rise in your career).*

Session: Sri Sri Ravishankar

Q: In a project, we have five key stages, of which the first two are initiation and planning. Can you suggest how do I initiate and plan well?

A: *Silence. It is the mother of all creativity. Once you calm your mind, ideas will come to you.*

Session: Dr. E Sreedharan

Q: You said you've empowered your team to take bold decisions. How did you get approvals for these bold decisions?

A: *When I say a 'bold decision', I don't mean a reckless decision. One has to examine the implications of the decision well and make careful judgements.*

Session: Mr. Amitabh Kant

Q: You were talking about urbanization but it comes at some inconvenience to the ordinary public. I live in Delhi and we underwent a lot of difficulties during the construction of Delhi Metro.

A: *Dr. Sreedharan's team has done a wonderful job in Delhi Metro. We have a habit in our country to run down whatever is happening around us. Let us look at the positive side sometimes and take pride in some of our great project successes.*

Session: Dr. V Sumanthran

Q: When you talk about frugal engineering, are you not compromising on quality?

A: *Quality exists in a context; that is to say, if the design meets the specification, it meets quality. For example, if the Tata Nano did not have disc brakes, it would be wrong to call it a car of poor quality. Being a city car, it could do without disc brakes and still meet the specification.*

What Delegates Have to Say

Ms. Srila Ramanujam, business consultant, Fhyzics Business Consultants, Chennai

This is the first time I have attended the PMI India national conference. It has been a great learning experience. PMI India has done great work in organizing everything. The panel discussions were very interactive, and so was the line-up of speakers.

Ms. Nitya Ramakrishnan, Cisco, Bangalore

It's my first time at this annual conference. I have seen the force here that can change India. My opinion on project management was low, but since the time I have come here, that opinion has changed completely. Lot of scope, lots to learn, and imbibe the same in your professional lives. Incredibly impressed.

Ms. Leena Tipre, Tata Consultancy Services, Hyderabad

I enjoyed this enriching experience at the conference. I'm taking a lot back from the conference and I'll try to imbibe it in my professional & personal life. Very well-organized by PMI.

Dr. Jayshree Suresh, dean, SRM University, Tamil Nadu

I'm a first timer here and it has been a great learning experience for me. I'm surely taking a lot back for myself and my students. A creatively organized event.

Mr. D K Ojha, director, ISS, New Delhi

It was a well-done conference. Some of the speakers were really good, but the topics for discussions could have been more specific rather than being so generalized. I'd recommend core topics of interest to a practitioner, cases studies, and research findings in the future. It was otherwise a pleasant event and a good platform for interaction.

Mr. Shankar H, project manager, Foster Wheeler India Private Limited, Chennai

The conference was incredibly well-organized. I don't necessarily agree with the opinions of all the speakers but it was good to hear their side of the story. All in all, many lessons learned.

Mr. Larry Atkins, business unit manager, Mustag HTP, Kuwait

I enjoyed myself. The speakers were intelligent as were the delegates. I'd recommend PMI India to make the registration process friendlier for foreign participants from next time. I suppose they didn't expect too many participants from outside the country.

Mr. Susheel Kamotra, PMP, director contracts & commercial, Vinci Construction Grands Projects, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The quality of keynote addresses was par excellence. I have not seen such depth and thoughtful interactions in many of the PMI conferences that I have attended so far. The courteous staff at The Leela Palace added to my experience at Chennai.







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