

Chapter 7

GreenPM®:

The Basic Principles for Applying an Environmental Dimension to Project Management

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ABSTRACT

The world is going green and we are collectively realizing that we do not have an unlimited amount of natural resources to utilize as we have done in the past. Material Handling Industry of America (2007) notes, “Not only do we have climate problems but we are also dealing with a resource depletion issue.” However, the project management profession seems to be in its infancy in applying green standards. How can we apply these “green” concepts to our project management discipline? One obvious way is that we can manage green projects more efficiently. For example, if you are the project manager on a project that will result in using less packaging in your products, it would be good if your project completed on time. The sooner that project ends, the sooner the green benefits will be achieved. On the other hand, if you are dealing with projects such as installing a new software package or upgrading network infrastructure, how can these projects become more environmentally friendly? The answer is Green Project Management (GreenPM®). Green project management is a model that allows project managers to think green throughout a project and make decisions that take into account the impact on the environment—if any. It is a way to ingrain “greenthink” (or green thinking) into every project management process. Greenthink connects the environment with the decisions that are made, whether project-related, professional, or in our everyday lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Green, environment, sustainability – these are words that continue to become more and more common in everyday vocabulary. Esty and Winston (2006) state they were told by a McDonald's Executive, "In a prosperous society, you really have only two assets: people...and the ecosystem around them. Both need to be carefully tended." (p.32). Natural resources are limited and there are steps to preserve these resources. In private life, some of the most common environment-related discussions include neighborhood and school recycling programs, environmentally friendly vehicles, carpooling, and water usage. Businesses primarily focused in sustainable industries have also been adopters of green standards, whether in new product development, collaborating throughout their supply chains, or working with environmental groups. Material Handling Industry of America (2007) states "There are many facets of the supply chain that could be improved by looking at it from a sustainability standpoint. The first issue that sustainable companies are focusing on is the design and production of the product.," and Velis and Linich (2012) state "Leading companies create value by modifying their supply chains to manage five key inputs and outputs: energy, carbon, water, materials, and waste."

Increasingly, organizations think green and strive for sustainable results. Interbrand produces a report, *Best Global Green Brands 2012*, noting the top globally green brands and in describing its methodology states that "Sustainability has proven to be a strategic and profitable aspect of business and a brand-strengthening asset, as long as organizations take measurable steps to reduce their social and environmental impact and credibly convey benefits that are relevant to consumers." Additionally, there are many organizations who have adopted the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for environmental management systems, ISO 14001:2004. The International

Organization for Standardization (2010) noted in *ISO 9001 certifications top one million mark, food safety and information security continue meteoric increase*, "Up to the end of December 2009, at least 223 149 ISO 14001:2004 certificates had been issued in 159 countries and economies. Annual growth is stabilized at almost the same level as in 2008 – 34 334 in 2009, compared to 34 242 in 2008, when the total was 188 815 in 155 countries and economies."

With this focus on creating sustainable products, the question that arises is how this focus on green can be extended to all projects. Is thinking green in project management as common and apparent if the result is not an obvious environmentally friendly product? With people and organizations more environmentally conscious, there is an opportunity to continue the practice of thinking about and applying environmental decisions to each specific project conducted within an organization.

This chapter proposes a model/concept that adopts or promotes green thinking in project management. It shares ideas for placing the environment into the project management profession and how organizations' existing processes may be extended to incorporate GreenPM:

- Supporting ISO 14000 Standards through Project Management Processes
- A Closer Look: Applying Greenthink to Project Management Processes
- Taking Green Projects to the Next Level in Your Organization: PMOs and Portfolio Management

BACKGROUND

Companies incorporate sustainability ideas into business strategies. As noted in Environmental Leader (2010) "Large U.S. companies continue to be involved in sustainability, and most com-

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