Sustainability, Social Responsibility and Project Management

From the editor's desk
Yudha Pratama
PMI Puget Sound, USA

It is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the species that survives is the one that is able to adapt to and to adjust best to the changing environment in which it finds itself - Charles Darwin

P roject managers are change agents: they make project goals their own and use their skills and expertise to inspire a sense of shared purpose within the project team. They enjoy the organized adrenaline of new challenges and the responsibility of driving business results.

Additionally, project managers work well under pressure and are comfortable with change and complexity in dynamic environments. They can shift readily between the "big picture" and the small-but-crucial details, knowing when to concentrate on each.

Project managers are (or should be) comfortable managing any kind of projects - whether it is a traditional project or sustainable project. Of course, as part of their core values, project managers must use their critical competence to bring a positive influence on organization results and society - thus the goal of any project managers is to build sustainability into any of their projects.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) provide all the necessary knowledge as well as access to the knowledge towards developing sustainable projects. PMI Code of Ethics binds all project managers. PMI members have determined that honesty, responsibility, respect and fairness are the values that drive ethical conduct for the project management profession. It is built in within the PMI's DNA to help all project managers strive towards building sustainable projets.

Africa
Dr. Lynn Keeys

Question:

What's the difference between sustainable and traditional projects?

Answer:

Traditional projects and project management approaches focus more on the iron triangle—schedule, budget, and scope, dealing with output or the operational approach to project management and projects.

Sustainable projects aim to meet the content, ideals, values, and ethics of sustainable development and create value and benefits for the corporation and society. These values are equity (intra- and inter-generational), participation, dialogue, and fairness. At the core of sustainable projects is the engagement with stakeholders in a continual learning, understanding, and adaptation process. Organizations and stakeholders interpret sustainable projects differently depending on the local context involving the specific environment, social and economic issues of the community, nation, and region, the philosophical beliefs of the stakeholders and organization, and the legal and policy frameworks where projects and their organizations operate.

Question:

What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Answer:

The project manager should understand the corporate philosophy and culture concerning sustainability, be knowledgeable of general sustainability issues, and appreciate the vital role of stakeholders in ensuring sustainability approaches address stakeholder concerns.

The project manager needs to develop skills in micro strategizing in the project context which could enable the project manager to substantially impact the learning and integration of sustainability principles not only in the project but also in the parent or investor organization. Micro-level strategizing, at each life cycle stage, involves understanding how to interact and engage with stakeholders to formulate and implement sustainable development strategies and translating corporate sustainability approach to the project context

Latin America
Christina Barbosa

Question:

What's the difference between sustainable and traditional projects?

Answer:

Sustainable projects must produce social, environmental and/or economic positive impacts both during development processes even in the deliverables. Traditional projects are not commited to those impacts.

Question:

What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Answer:

Knowledge about social, environmental, economic and governance. Empathy - to understand stakeholders sustainability maturity and Collaboration - to improve sustainability practices based on stakeholders experience

Asia
Md Nurul Alam

Question:

What´s the difference between sustainable and traditional projects?

Answer:

Traditional Project management looks more on time, cost and quality, where sustainable projects should look at the environmental, economic as well as the social aspects too. Sustainable projects should be acceptable, equitable and viable. What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Question:

What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Answer:

Competencies for PM- partnership building, skills to involve key stakeholders, awareness about the social, economic as well as the environmental aspects of any project, aware about the clients' mandate and priorities, awareness on global trend (climate change and its future impacts etc.)

North America
Jon McVay

Question:

What´s the difference between sustainable and traditional projects?

Answer:

For us in construction, the difference between a sustainable project and a traditional project is often based on the costs and benefits associated with differing time horizons. Many traditional projects are established to have low costs today with the increasing costs lagging into the future. Sustainable projects more typically are designed and constructed by optimizing costs of the entire lifecycle: construction, operation, emissions, life span, and ultimate disposition. What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Question:

What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Answer:

Project managers that successfully develop more sustainable projects typical maintain competencies in interpersonal skills and systems thinking. Strong interpersonal skills are necessary to convey a vision and organize the human components around and towards that vision. A systems approach aids problem identification, problem solving, and an understanding of the downstream impacts.

Middle East
Nataliya Wiedemeyer

Question:

What´s the difference between sustainable and traditional projects?

Answer:

Traditional project management focuses on time, scope, and cost. It does not explicitly set any parameters to address sustainability. In a traditional framework, a project can be a success on those three dimensions but at the same time it might be damaging the environment or depleting global resources in a way, that they can not be replenished in the due course of nature.

Sustainable project management would explicitly address sustainability. One way would be to have certain sustainability-KPIs. Another way is to consider a broader definition of stakeholders and seek to satisfy their needs. That will mean, accounting for the needs of communities, future generations, and nature as a whole, additionally to the traditional stakeholders.

Explicit KPIs for sustainability and expanded circle of stakeholders will contribute to the project results being more sustainable. But what about sustainable project management? That could be achieved by creating fair and inclusive working conditions and compensation policies, as well as thriving to increase motivation for more engagement and social impact.

Question:

What competencies must a project manager have to be prepared to develop sustainable projects?

Answer:

Additionally to all the skills on the project manager's list, developing sustainability mindset is crucial. This involves systemic thinking and understanding the long-term as well as far-reach consequences of own project decisions; creativity and openness for non-lateral solutions. It also involves collaboration and attitude of life-long learning, through peer- and cross-industry networking.

This Insight Xchange Nugget
is powered by volunteers across the world:

Priya Patra
PMI Mumbai

Pedro Branco
PMI Sao Paolo, Brazil

Arief Prasetyo
PMI Indonesia

Dhammike Mendis
PMI Colombo, Sri Lanka

Collaboration

Yudha Pratama
PMI Puget Sound

CHAPTER EXCHANGE
A PMI CHAPTERS COLLABORATION