



## Reflexion on "How to achieve Global Project Success?"

Alexander Matthey, PMP Experienced Multi-Cultural Project Management Executive and Strategic Programmes Manager.

Benjamin Disraeli stated: "The secret of success in life is for man to be ready for his time when it comes." I found this to be true, including in Project Management.

The only hiccup in projects is that there are too many moments to act. So to succeed, a Project or a Programme Manager needs a lot of readiness, knowledge and experience, yet she/he needs to understand the process of how the success is to be declared. One needs to understand the judgment itself, which declares success. Or the judgment is done by a group of persons, based on their criteria, which may be both subjective or objectives, and some measurement, which are always objectives.

For many years up to roughly the 1990s project success was nearly exclusively determined on the latter, on the measurements (Based on the classic Scope/Quality, Time and Cost triangle). This necessitated technical skills of gathering and structuring requirements, determining the level of acceptability of the final product from a quality perspective, scheduling and budgeting. Those are "hard" core elements, more or less complex, certainly so in the case of Engineering Project management, and somehow more "fluffy" in Information System projects. Mastering those hard-core skills was a must to secure success. Colleges, universities, specialized seminars, vocational trainings delivered the knowledge. Hands on experience, making trade-offs, prioritizing completed the picture. Success was essentially declared if product of the project, the "what", was corresponding to preset values.

From the mid 90's facilitative functions completed the picture in judging projects successful. Communication, Procurement, HR matter and Risk started to matter more. Did not replace the core elements, but were added to. So the PMBOK® obtained its "Nobility", yet Project Managers got their life more complex. Those new functions concerned the "how". So success started to include the judgment of the "how" as well. Why? Because of the tight link and close integration between any of the core elements and the facilitative ones. Essentially if those facilitative functions to be exercised well one need to have rather extensive experience, based on deep interest and some training.

Recently, Project, Programme, Portfolio management, Strategy Implementation and applied research resulted project success to be achieved at an even higher level of maturity of both of the Project manager and the Professional project management practices. This time answering the question of "whom for".

Engineering Project Management leads the way in here, if we think about the realization of mixed use infrastructures like Burj Khalifa in Dubai or Khalifa Port and Kizad in Abu Dhabi. In order to be successful the Project Director needs to be End User centric, to interface well with both Internal and External Stakeholder, to align all contractors' objectives with that of the client's, to listen attentively to the sponsor and to establish unity of command and the chain of command under one "commander". Anything less than that, the success evaporates on a megaproject. And again, these are Critical Success Factors on the top of what was considered earlier enough to declare success. In this case, neither learning, nor experiencing is enough. This new set of success factors needs to be part of the "genes" of a successful Project Director. Definitely more soft skills than hard skill, and character based. This happens when knowledge, experience and passion meet, when "finally" the occasion presents itself to the Project Director, who was ready, but found himself at the right time, at the right place.

I wish this to happen to all my fellow professional project parishioners at a moment of their career.