

Civilizations' challenges for Project Management strategies

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Abstract

World's finance and economic crisis has met under question the core structures of the modern world. Civilization approach is one of the most integrating and gives possibility to bring together separated parts of the humanitarian knowledge. Deep differences in departure point, world-view, ethnic psycho-mentality, culture, tradition, ethic, geopolitics environment etc constitute key components of the civilization's kit. Civilization genotype translates itself in Project Management (PM) as national models and standards.

PM's activity is one of distinction of human species. PM's mission is to identify, represent and affirm management culture in every Civilization's Project and civilization's projects.

The civilization content of PM is too important to be given for operational level, it is purely strategic one. If project team fails to understand and implement it, then project risks to get trouble with its soft power.

PM has to acquire civilization context as great strategy mission of IPMA and its National Associations.

Keywords

Civilization genotype, civilization paradigm, globalization, national standards, polylog of civilizations, soft power, strategy mission.

Introduction

IPMA WC 2010 works in the area with very reach history and promising future. Birth, death, clash and cooperation of civilization were seen here. It is the special honor and responsibility to approach in such place the issues of Civilizations' challenges for Project Management strategies.

1. Civilizations' paradigm and genotype in PM optic

World's finance and economic crisis has met under question the core structures of the modern world and its drivers.

Students and practitioners are looking for reasons and solutions, whereas the world's picture turns more and more complicated. There are in the post modern world a lot of phenomena which have lost (or pretend to have lost) their identity, value and vital force: nationality, myths, religion, tradition, moral, habits, ideology, national economy, state, sovereignty etc. Strange enough, that dissipation of old reality goes together with a lot of projects with mission to create something new on the unstable basis of devaluated values.

Unstable foundation is no good choice for any project, that's why the project teams, even the most post modernist ones, look for and are proud of mastering of soft power. Which one? After ages of consecutive depreciation of every particle of old fashioned, later on modern and at least post modern values, the substance of the soft power should be corrupted irrevocable. In which way does it still exists and works?

Proud of our science, technology, economy and social progress we would like to find in phenomena like sustainable development and leadership the key stones of the *raison d'être*, but often in vain... The breath of life of human beings is articulated through, but is not limited to technical specifications, business plans, project charters, transnational corporations etc. They are only tools: sophisticated high-tech with part of our soul but having no soul in own.

The diversity of anchors connecting persons, organizations and projects to the life displays itself in lot of community of different levels, dimensions and content. As said above, all of them have lost the part of their power with the run of time. But even strong individualist people consider (at least sometimes) as useful, consciously or not, to associate himself (at least temporary, for project time) with every opportune community, not matter how stable it is. They will be happy to deal with some more solid and stable things. The most practical one is civilization.

Civilizations stay above projects, enterprises, nations, states, parties etc, they are near but not equal to ethnos and religions. The dividing lines are going more and more into virtual space. Strange enough: it is easier to say "I feel myself belonging to the civilization X", than to list really critical points of difference with any of your contemporary feeling belonging himself to the civilization Y. But it does exist. There were tenths in the history and there are still about ten nowadays. Globalization works as booster for consolidation and disintegration process and fears the clash of civilizations.

In our unstable world, the civilization approach is one of the most integrating and gives possibility to bring together separated parts of the humanitarian knowledge. All components of the civilization paradigm are important, but the most interesting for us is its core, the civilization genotype, connected with basics of the soft power:

Deep differences in departure point, world-view, ethnic psycho-mentality, culture, tradition, ethic, geopolitics environment etc constitute key components of the civilization's kit.

Management's know-how reflects in special way all these components and belongs to the basic structures of the civilization's kit, or to the civilization genotype.

Civilization genotype translates itself in PM am best through the national models and standards.

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2. Civilization's challenges for PM

Civilization project belong to the most fascinating ones. The huge amount of projects, from small to mega ones, with different stakeholders, missions, results etc results in some giant and unavoidable flow of civilization. You can dream to influence it or simply to obey yourself to it – anyway we have at first to be acknowledged of.

It's like navigation: if you prefer to ignore anything outside your part of river, then be ready to lose to guys informed about lakes, channels, seas and oceans...

PM's activity is one of distinction of human species. If we will climb from relative small and simple project of persons, organizations through more complicated projects of industrial branches, national economies, national states to the projects of civilizations, we'll get not only wider horizon of knowledge and possibilities, but deeper responsibility as well. With that climb, PM scope grows from corporative content to universal one.

PM's mission is to identify, represent and affirm management culture in every Civilization's Project and civilization's projects.

We are all in the same boat and have to manage Earth's economy to common wealth. But we are not the same. There are at least two civilization's poles in geopolitics. There as well eight existing or coming civilizations in modern world. Every one of them has deep differences and a lot of points of common interest. Smart PM is aware of, but the world's level models and standards can't go into details of every region and nation.

It's not a criticism, it's statement of fact. The localization is simply delegated to the project team. If local project environment ignore its own identity in management sphere – then it simply gets what it can and approaches available PM's models and standards as ultimate truth given from above, with logical regrettable results of simplified mechanical approach.

It's a kind of globalization, partly communicational, partly expansionist one. To stay with that approach means the decrease of diversity level in system and reduction of its stability margin.

Look at nature: the main protein standard of the Earth's life is represented in oxygen and non oxygen versions and hundreds of thousands diverse forms, which have mastered sea, earth and air thanks to their advanced localization ability, not to the mimicry tricks.

The reverse example: not many people can speak Russian in Istanbul or Turkish in Moscow, but there are a lot of training courses in Russia presenting PM as pure ICB or PMBOK translation from English to Russian. It is dead-ended way, a way of destructive globalization.

3. PM strategies

The civilization content of PM is too important to be given for operational level, it is purely strategic one. If project team fails to understand and implement it, then project risks to get trouble with its soft power.

Actual version of globalization was before crisis rather expansionist one. It means projection of one type of civilization (namely West one) on the whole world. It works good enough until the rest of the world believes to be happy with. It works no more when we get deeper understanding of global limits of development, not only sustainable, but sometimes even zero one. Exactly such global and realistic vision moves to vote for diversity in the PM embodiments.

The real alternative to expansionist globalization is dialog and polylog of civilizations, including PM area. But, to be worthy of, PM has to acquire civilization context. It could be the great strategy mission of IPMA and its National Associations. Mainly - National Associations or others friendly organizations at national level, because such ideas can only grow up from local soil.

World operating but in Europe borne IPMA has to take care of vital and positively acting aspects of civilization diversity. We can see from time to time the corresponding impulse in IPMA WC papers as well, and it supports the vision presented above.

In Russia's local practice it is not only vision, since 2007 is implemented in activity of community supporting Eurasian Project Management Standard. As initially regional one, it starts from local vision of key points of interests, but keeps as core values the developed interface with methodologies implemented in ICB and others respectable PM theories and good practice.

Conclusion

Civilization approach is an actual modern practice for PM development, the real alternative to the expansionist globalization. Growing up from national and regional soil, that trend holds close relations with international IPMA family and achievements and can play the role of precursor in R&D, methodology and organization strategy development.

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