CityUniversity
of Seattle

EFFECTIVE BUILDING AND MANAGEMENT OF PROJECT TEAMS

WITHIN THE MULTINATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENT OF ALITALIA S.P.A

By

THEODOROS I. KALYVAS

A THESIS REPORT
Presented to the Project Management Program in the
School of Management of
City University of Seattle
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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This Master Thesis was elaborated in the frame of the collaboration of the City University of Seattle and the Graduate Technological Education Institute (T.E.I.) of Piraeus to fully implement at TEI of Piraeus Campus the CU's MS in Project Management Program approved by the Hellenic Ministry of National Education and Religion Affairs as by decision E5/58291 published in the Hellenic Government Gazette (FEK) B/924/5- July-2005.

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Dedications

To my beloved mother Sophia Kalyva†

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the American and the Greek faculty of this program, for sharing with me their hard won knowledge. They revealed to me a new world of knowledge and experiences.

Special appreciation goes to Dr. Kurt Kirstein, Kathy Milhauser and Dr. Kostas Kontesis, for their support and their insightful comments.

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Last but not least, I am indebted to my wife Stavroula, my daughter Iliana, my father Ilias and my sister Maria, for their support throughout the MSPM program.

Theodoros Kalyvas

Athens, June 2009

Biography

Theodoros Kalyvas was born in Athens on the 31st of October, 1974. After his graduation from the High School in 1992, he was accepted by the University of Piraeus in the Department of Informatics.

On the 6th of October 1997, he was hired by Alitalia, the national Italian airline as a system administrator. He got various promotions during this career path and arrived to the position of the Regional Information Technology Manager for the South East Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. He continued to work for this company until the 31st of January, 2009.

The author enlisted in the MSPM, CityU/TEI of Piraeus program during the academic years of 2007-2008. Currently is preparing a research paper regarding the measurement of quality in a Virtual Project Team under the supervision of the faculty of the program. Alongside with the research, he is preparing for the PMI's PMP certification exams.

Theodoros Kalyvas is married and has one three years old daughter.

Abstract

The modern financial and economic models have forced the organization to use resources around the globe in order to enlarge their margin of profit. This trend however, is a very challenging one as people have to be managed by their leader remotely. This challenge is even bigger when projects have to run under this perspective. The figure of the Project Manager has to be able to form and built a Virtual Project team and has to understand the difficulties of this task. The Project Manager has to possess also special skills for the management of the team that physically, can perform the work packages, thousands kilometer away from the Head Office of the Organization. Today's technology can provide some very useful tools for this kind of management but some interpersonal and personal characteristics for the profile of the Project Manager are essential too.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Employment Position

Theodoros Kalyvas was working as a Regional Information Technology Manager for Alitalia S.p.A, the national Italian airline until January, 2009 holding this position for the last eleven years. I was one of the ten Information Technology Managers that Alitalia was employing around the world and my operations' area was the geographical area of the South East Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. I was involved in many projects and that is the main reason for my enrollment in this Master's of Science program. I strongly believe that this Master's Degree will boost my career towards a senior position related with the science of the Project Management.

Nature of the Study

Until today, the selection of a person for the position of a Project Manager in my company is based only on the technical skills that this person possesses. Furthermore, for the planning and the implementation of international projects, the company requires only the knowledge of the English Language from the persons that will act as Project Managers. Certain essential skills in leadership or in the team building processes are often overlooked by the management. The lack of these skills has led to a very large number of failed projects due to the bad collaboration of the project team.

The author with the use of the modern academic bibliography will try to point out the additional skills that a potential Project Manager must own for the successful completion of the project.

Needs Assessment

This thesis will provide an academic research to the Higher Management in order to make them understand the different and demanding nature of the international projects.

More specifically, this thesis will provide:

- o A historical flashback of the international projects that have failed

- o A summary of academic research regarding the leadership skills that an international Project Manager needs.

- o A summary of academic research regarding the Team building skills that is required.

Purpose of the Study

The author believes that certain skills of the Project Manager, in leadership and in the team building processes, are fundamental for the positive outcome of a project that will run with multinational / multicultural teams.

Significance to Your Workplace

The author is confident that this thesis will help the Higher Management of the company during the selection procedures of a Project Manager. The special characteristics regarding the project teams that are built by people of different nationality and/or culture will be presented for the first time to the Higher Management in order to make them understand the diverse and complicated nature of these projects.

Relation to the Program of Study

Throughout our studies in the program, we have studied in a very extensive way the team building processes. During the PM506 – "Managing Projects with People and Teams" we had a very clear view of the team building processes at the beginning of the lifecycle of a project. In this course, we examined also the leadership skills that a Project Manager must have. Furthermore, in the PM503 course, "Communications Management", we had the chance to look into the communication part of transnational projects.

Definition of Terms

Virtual Teams - These are project teams that are collaborating together but physically they are not operating in the same country.

Transnational Project- A project that its project team is not performing in the same geographical country

Project Management Information System PMIS – This is a centralized Information system that help the project team to share the necessary information almost in real time. This system gathers, elaborates and makes public the outcomes of the various processes throughout the project's life cycle (Project Management Institute, 2004). In order to perform flawlessly, this system has to be adopted by the project's stakeholders within the organization and has to comply with its philosophy and project management maturity.

Project Management Office PMO – This is a part of the organization that is responsible for the centralized management of the organization's programs and projects (Project Management Institute, 2004). The responsibilities of this office vary from the direct involvement to a project's planning and execution to a higher strategic approach of the selection of a project for the organization.

Chapter 2 – Problem Statement

Problem Statement

The lack of effective management of multinational / multicultural project teams can lead to project failures.

Rationale

Until now, a significant number of internal projects that have been managed by a project manager in the company's Head Office in Rome and implemented by project teams abroad, have failed or have faced serious problems with the deliverables. Such projects were "the transfer of the airline activity in the new airport of Teheran, Iran" and "the implementation of a new accounting system for the offices that are located outside Italy". These projects have faced problems because the project manager could not realize the distinctiveness of working with people of another culture that are positioned thousands of kilometers away from his office.

After these failures, the company realized that there was a problem with this kind of project. However the solutions that have been proposed did not make any difference as they were focused on the operational and execution phase of the project. New procedures have been established with the use of new technology. However, the results were not as positive as they had been expected to be. Nobody realized that the problem resides in the project team and that the

corrective actions must target the project manager's interpersonal and managerial skills.

Apart from the effective planning, the careful control and the accurate implementation of a project, the effective project team management is another crucial factor that assures the success of a project. In particular, the strong team-building and leadership skills of project managers will help them towards the completion of the goal.

For the reasons mentioned above, I believe that if my company would consider that these problems were the result of the lack of an effective project team's management and work towards their solution, the projects would be turned to successful ones. By reviewing the current techniques and procedures of building the multinational project teams, during the initial stages of the project, along with controlling the effectiveness and the level of leadership that the project manager demonstrates versus the team, the higher management should be confident that these problems will remain in the past.

Hypothesis

In my thesis, I will try to demonstrate to the higher management that project managers, who have good team building skills, understand the cultural differences among their teammates and have advanced leadership skills, will lead the projects to their success even if their teams are working thousands of kilometers away.

Chapter 3 – Review of Literature

Preliminary Literature Review

This is the initial review of eleven academic articles and papers which focus on the Projects that must be carried out by teams of different nationality and culture.

The following five papers demonstrate the particular nature of the Multinational organizations. The authors are emphasizing the differences and the particularities of the projects that must be carried out by teams of different nationality and culture. The implementation of the Project Management theory must adapt to these differences, and the Project Managers must understand that additional problems will arise if these differences are not being taken into consideration.

- Atamer and Schweiger (2003) presented a paper that describes in a very detailed manner the particularities of the project teams that are operating across the borders.

- Calori, Turgul, Leif and Peter (2000) wrote a paper that identifies the problems regarding the management of transnational teams and introduces actions for the solution of these problems.

- Wills and Kevin (1994) demonstrate in their study, the current trends in the international business environment and how important are today the cross – border projects.

- Oliver (2001) focuses on the differences of people (cultural and religious) and how this diversity will not create problems but effective partnership.

- Schweiger Atamer and Roland (2003) wrote an article that is introducing a number of solutions and considerations that have to be taken by a Project Manager in order to keep his project team unite and effective.

The papers that are described below, are focusing on the leadership skills that Project Managers must have in order to lead their multinational/multicultural teams.

- Den Hartog, House, Hanges and Ruiz-Quintanilla (1999) wrote an article that focuses on the leadership skills that will help the manager towards success with the help of his multicultural team.

- Spreitzer, Shapiro and Von Glinow (2002) presented a study, that is trying also to demonstrate that the leadership skills of the project manager play a significant role for the project's accomplishment.

- Iles and Kaur Hayers (1997) in their paper, the authors demonstrate the diversity of the transnational teams based on the Social Identity theory. With the use of a case study, they are focusing on a problem that arose during a project and are indicating some aspects that the Project Manager has to take into consideration during this kind of projects.

Finally, these papers are focusing on the nature of the communication that must be adopted between the people across the borders.

- Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) focus on the communication aspect and the relevant problems that can arise inside a multicultural project team.

- Moenaert, Caeldries, Lievens and Wauters (2000) in their study, the authors try to answer to the following question: What are the communication requirements a transnational project team is facing and what are the mechanisms that have to be adopted in order to initiate and develop a advanced communication model through the project's life cycle.

From the papers I reviewed, it is obvious that the nature of a project, that takes place not within a single country but within the global environment, is particular. Project Managers must understand this particularity and must be able to adapt to the diversity of their co-workers. They must be the leaders that will inspire their teams even if these teams are located on the other side of the ocean.

The definition of the virtual team

Today' s economy has boosted the organizations to seek cheap and effective solutions for the implementation of their business .Globalization introduced new frameworks that have alter the traditional way of working. Cheap labor that exist in some parts of our planet, forced the creation of new ways of performing. One of these novelties is the introduction of teams that are working

towards a common target but the team members are not physically connected with each other. These groups of people are the famous virtual project teams.

This trend started to spread from the western hemisphere after the Second World War because of the need for development was more coercive than never. During the 60's, when the science of the Project Management become popular, the idea of remote collaboration started to gain more fans and soon the whole developed world started to realize the advantages of its use. Today, North America is the most active continent in the e-business and the use of virtual project teams (McClenahen & Jusko, 2000).

The need of adopting a new model different than the traditional one, came out from pressures for organizational changes. Financial, technical, informational and political factors are pushing towards this way. The increased global competition and the speed of technical and market change demand from the organizations to be flexible in order to adopt these new trends in their favor (Pettigrew, Massini, & Numagami, 2000).

Giving the definition of the virtual team, it is not an easy task as there are different aspects that can be described and defined. These aspects are the way of collaboration, the distance between the team members or the lack of physical contact.

Hertel, Kontradt and Orlikowski (2004) state that virtual teams are work groups that are composed of people who do not belong to the same geographical location, are collaborating remotely by using electronic tools for their

communication. These groups are reflecting the recent trends of globalization and the interdependent teamwork. The team is working together with special applications such as the Microsoft® Netmeeting® by sharing the same files and emails. In the end, the users have the feeling that they are working one next to the other and therefore, their collaboration is an effective one.

Ariss, Nykodym and Cole-Laramore (2002), define that a virtual team is a group of skilled professionals that are working together and are communicating through a computer, the telephone or the fax. These pieces of equipment help the team to communicate and collaborate towards its goals. This approach mentions for the first time that the team members are skilled persons. This is really very important for the effective communication and therefore, the effective collaboration of the team.

Another definition states that virtual teams are people who collaborate closely even though can be separated by space, time or organizational barriers (Jennings, 1997). Moving further on the aspect of distance, this has to be more than 50 feet. A team is considered a virtual one, when the teams are operating at distances more than 50 feet (Pape, 1997). Modern studies, however, have shown that virtuality exists even in teams that are almost co-located (Johnson, Heimann, & O'Neill, 2001).

Critics of this approach state that it is a not-so-cheap solution because it uses technological advancements. These advancements include the lines of communication and their bandwidth that cost a noticeable amount of money today. However, day by day, their cost is decreasing. All the evidence that we have from

the current economic and financial trends, indicate that the use of this virtual

teaming will increase as the cost of the internet will decrease (Haywood, 1998).

Moving on the same perspective, Fernaback is suggesting that the

communications that are supported from the computers and help the project

teamwork will help the organization to excel through the projects that undertakes

by overcoming the constraints of the geographical boundaries (Fernback, 1997). In

fact, today's rapid advancement in the Internet era supports this statement and the

results are visible to the senior management of these companies.

Modern bibliography indicates that virtual project teams are performing

better when the project is short in terms of duration. Results have shown that at

least for projects of short duration, virtual teams are performing more efficiently and

the costs are kept on a lower level. They are achieving a positive effort-to-result

ratio when the project is a short term one (De Pillis & Furumo, 2007). Another point

that is very interesting is the transport of knowledge and experiences from one

country to the other through these teams. They bring their national distinctive way

of thinking and performing and are absorbing from the hosting country things and

lessons for adoption (Ferner, Quintanilla, & Varu, 2001).

A number of characteristics are shown in the Table 1. These characteristics

are four common criteria that can be found in almost every definition of a virtual

team. They are related to the geographical locations, the way of collaboration and

the common purpose. The authors move further and demonstrate some other

characteristics that are related to the size of the project team and its life cycle (Bal

& Teo, Implementing virtual teamworking. Part 1: a literature review of best

practise, 2000).

Characteristics of Virtual team	Descriptions
Four common criteria	Geographically dispersed
	Driven by common purpose
	Enabled by Communication technologies
	Involved in cross-boundary collaboration
Other characteristics	It is not a permanent team
	Members solve problems and make decisions jointly and are mutually accountable for team results
	Small team size
	Inconsistent membership
	Team members are knowledge workers

Table 1: Characteristics of Virtual Teams. Note. From "Implementing virtual

teamworking. Part 1: a literature review of best practice" by Bal and Teo, 2000,

Logistics Information Management Journal, 13, p. 303

The same characteristics appear also in the definition that was given by

Chudoba, Lu and Watson-Manheim. However, they are the first to mention another

critical factor that it can vary between the team members˙ the different language

that may speak. As these teams most probably belong to different countries, they

are including individuals that are having different mother tongue than the rest of the

team (Chudoba, Wynn, Lu, & Watson-Manheim, 2005). In Figure 1 there is a graph

with the characteristics that are considered as the most important in a survey that was carried out by the authors.
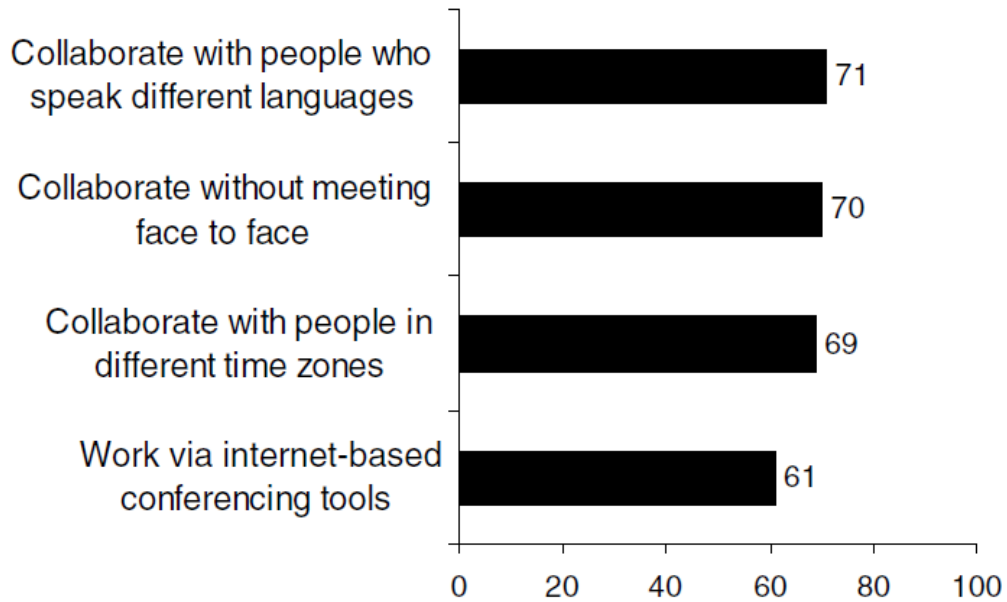
Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who experience aspects of team distribution. Note. From "How virtual are we? Measuring virtuality and understanding its impact in a global organization" *by* Chudoba, Lu and Watson-Manheim, 2005, *Information Systems Journal*, 15, p. 289

In Table 2, the same authors are lining up the elements that can be measured in order to measure the degree of "virtuality" that a team has adopted in the flow of its everyday work. The higher the number is of these characteristics in their routine work, the higher the degree of their collaboration in a virtual environment.

Geography
  1. Work at home during normal business days
  2. Work while travelling, e.g. at airports or hotels
  3. Collaborate with people in different sites or geographies
  4. Collaborate with people you have never met face to face
Temporal
  5. Work extended days in order to communicate with remote team members
  6. Collaborate with people in different time zones
Cultural
  7. Collaborate with people who speak different native languages or dialects from your own
  8. Collaborate with people from different cultural backgrounds
Work practices
  9. Work on projects that have changing team members
  10. Work with teams that have different ways to track their work
  11. Work with people that use different collaboration technologies and tools
Organization
  12. Collaborate with people from different Intel business groups
  13. Work at different sites
  14. Have professional interactions with people outside the organization
Technology
  15. Work with people via internet-based conferencing applications
  16. Participate in real-time online discussions, such as chat or instant messaging
  17. Meet with people via video-conferencing tools
  18. Work with mobile devices

Table 2: Complete list of original items intended to measure virtuality. Note. From "_How virtual are we? Measuring virtuality and understanding its impact in a global organization" by_ Chudoba, Lu and Watson-Manheim, 2005, _Information Systems Journal_, 15, p. 303

Fortunately, managers around the world and of different industries, understood early the advantages of utilizing this kind of teams and adopting a similar approach for their projects too. However, apart from the benefits that could be gained, the factors that influence the effectiveness of these teams, have to be studied carefully (Atamer & Schweiger, 2003). It is extremely easy to miss these

benefits because of exercising the wrong management on the virtual teams and start fighting the problems and their consequences.

Working with virtual teams

Working with virtual project teams in a multinational and multicultural environment is not an easy task. Managers that have to lead this type of teams must be aware of the challenges and the difficulties that this task has. There are several articles in the modern scientific bibliography that try to illustrate these challenges. In Table 3 there is a list described in an article for the Project Management that involves virtual teams, with the elements that has to be well planned by the Project Manager (Joaquin, Hernandez, & Aspinwall, 2008).

1. Leadership strength
2. Intuition
3. Support from Senior Management
4. Communication
5. Roles and Responsibilities
6. NEVER assume
7. Collaborative Tools

Table 3: Elements required for the effective utilization of a Virtual Team.

Lee-Kelley and Sankey(2008), extended the number of the points that have to be taken into consideration. Their article suggests that managerial decisions and directions that come from the senior management can influence the performance.

They also mention that trust is another factor that can affect the overall

performance. Cultural differences are also considered that can play a role on the

efficiency of a virtual project team. The Table 4 demonstrates the elements that are

considered as important for the successful management of a virtual team. It is

obvious that managing a virtual team is finally a very challenging task.

1. Management agenda and decisions
2. Requirements creep
3. Asymmetry in processes
4. Unclear roles and responsibilities
5. Time zones
6. Over-communication
7. Dissonance
8. Cultural differences
9. Trust
10. Training

Table 4: Additional elements required for the effective utilization of a Virtual Team.

Casey and Richardson (2008) speak also about the importance of trust.

They suggest that fear must be eliminated because it influences motivation in a

negative manner. The most important thing is that fear eliminates the trust that

must exist between the team members. Trust is a requirement for the smooth

operation and acts as a facilitator for the collaboration of a cohesive team.

"A lack of trust resulted in a decrease of productivity, quality, information

exchange, feedback, and morale among the employees, and an increase in

relationship conflicts" (Moe & Smite, 2008). The same authors add that the team

members who lost the feeling of trust, tended to self-protect, tried to achieve the

personal goals and not the common ones and finally they reduced the level of their commitment to the project.

When there is trust in a project team, the team members like his or her colleagues. They are enjoying working together in a shared environment (Klimoski & Mohhamed, 1994). Moreover, as the same authors are stating, when there is trust, there is greater prosperity within the group and positive emotions that promote the group cohesion. This cohesion is much needed when the team members are dislocated and distant.

The need to promote the trust between the team members appears in numerous articles in the scientific bibliography. The positive outcomes on the performance of a team, that its members trust each other, are helping the Project Manager to concentrate to the project itself (Piccoli, 2003). The Lessons Learned documentation of Global projects that took place in the past, demonstrate that in a project that the team is collaborating well and its members trust each other, the Project manager focuses more on the project and its problems so the management of the overall project is more efficient (Bhat, Gupta, & Murthy, 2006).

Building a virtual team

The correct and effective building is a very challenging task that the modern Project Manager has to deal with. The model that was proposed by Tuckman (1965) seems to be a trustworthy and reliable reference even for today's cross border environment. This model suggests that there are four stages that a team

has to pass before it will start producing results. These stages are the stage of Forming, Norming, Storming and finally Performing.
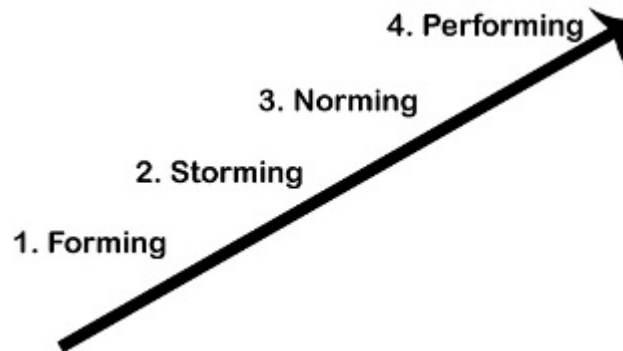

Figure 2: The four stages of Group Development *by* Tuckman, 1965

A team will enter the Forming stage as soon as it will start to exist. When all the group members will be present, then it will pass to the next stage, the stage of Storming. During this period, the members will start to familiarize themselves with the other parties. Conflicts may arise and generally, this is a "high tension" period. After the completion of this period, the team will go through the next level, the stage of Norming. Now the rules that will regulate the relationships and the links of the various members will be set. These rules that will be valid until the end of the project will facilitate the Project Manager to lead and manage his team. After the successful completion of this stage, the team will move forward to the next one and will start perform and work on the requested tasks.

This model that was first proposed by Tuckman (1965), has a wide validity. However, can it be applied for the creation of a virtual project team? Furst,

Blackburn and Rosen (1999) presented an article that answers affirmatively to this question. They suggest that every team, including a virtual one, has to pass through these four stages in order to start performing efficiently.

Apart from the stages that a team has to pass, several factors have to be taken into consideration during the building of a project team. Bal and Teo (2001), list a number of these factors that have to be taken into consideration. These factors are:

- Setting of clear team guidelines

- Selection of the appropriate team members

- Setting of the goals and the objectives

- Setting the time limits

- Setting the rewards for positive performance

Gatlin-Watts, Carson, Horton, Maxwell, & Maltby, (2007) are supporting the above mentioned factors and demonstrate through their article and its results, how important are these factors for the positive outcome of a global project. The lessons learned of this project show that a reason for its positive result was the efficient building of the multinational project team that was based on the points that were described above.

Apart from these factors, some challenges related to the human nature have to be reviewed too. Zakaria, Amelinckx and Wilemon (2004) in their paper, give a list of the human challenges that have to be reviewed. These are:

- The creation of effective team leadership

- The management of conflict and the global virtual teams dynamics

- The development of trust and relationships

- The understanding of cross-cultural differences

- The development of intercultural communication competence

The Project Manager must distinguish the positive aspects of the character of the person that will be chosen for his team. "Positive attitudes, in particular higher levels of satisfaction and commitment, have been found to influence whether individuals are willing to go above and beyond what is required by their job" (Gilson, Shalley, & Blum, 2001).

Moreover, the manager should try to distinguish that a potential member of the team has developed the sense of trust in a very high level (Chen, Chen, & Chu, 2008) propose, in their work, methods and models in order to evaluate the level of trust among the members of a team. These methods could help the Project Manager with the decisions of choosing the right people for the team.

The effective building of a team could be facilitated also by the use of exercises that can be held within the organization. Grzeda 2008 states that "a team-building exercise is useful in teaching the importance of team process and developing team process skills".

Management of a virtual team

A central element of the management of a global project team is the human resource policy that is followed by the organization (Chiesa, 2000). This policy will set the foundation for a global attitude and the cultural awareness that the modern project managers need. Almost every transnational project remains under full control of the central company's headquarters (Mendez, 2003). Therefore, it is vital for the organization to develop its future managers under this framework.

Morris (2008) in his article, presented a checklist that a modern Human Resource office could use in order to select the individuals that will manage a multinational project. This checklist that is presented in the Table 5, sets the requirements and the abilities for the selection of a manager.

- basic ability and comfort with the technology provided;

- ability to effectively contribute to audio conferences and video conferences;

- ability to influence from a distance;

- ability to start up and maintain virtual relationships;

- ability to work independently;

- the self-awareness to understand their impact on others, not just know their intent;

- ability to prepare for and manage effective meetings by phone;

- ability to manage core processes virtually – issues management, problem solving, decision-making;

- ability to be experienced as human from a distance; and

- insights and ability to work across cultures.

Table 5: Morris' checklist for the necessary managerial abilities. From "Virtual team working: making it happen" *by Morris*, 2008, *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 40, p. 131

This checklist contains almost all the essential abilities and skills for a successful global project manager. This individual must be comfortable with the technology and the modern methodologies as these would assist on accomplishing the project's goals (Baltes, Dickson, Sherman, C., & LaGanke, 2002). The new technologies provide an excellent platform of remote collaboration. "The intranet, when combined with the proper managerial groundwork, makes it easy for group members to see the results of their work and compare that to where they want to go" (Denton, 2006).

Another ability that is described in the checklist is the ability to influence from a distance. This could be proved very important during the execution of the project, as it will increase the performance of the team (Piccoli, Powel, & Ives, 2004). The above mentioned opinion is extended by Vakola and Wilson (2004). In their article, they state: "However, the importance of the human element and the way that people co-operate with each other should not be taken for granted, particularly in a virtual context"

Finally, another ability that is required for the effective management of a virtual project team is the ability to understand the differences on the way of

thinking and performing that derive from cultural diversity within the environment of the team. We believe intercultural teams can be managed more effectively by understanding the importance of cultural background and its impact on individual values, emotions, and behavior (Humes & Reilly, 2008).

Apart from the abilities that are required to be present for the successful and effective management of a team, modern bibliography tries to introduce guidelines about the correct timing of entering in the various administrative and managerial elements. Hunsaker and Hunsaker (2008), in their article try to assign the various administrative procedures with the project phases' timelines.

Pre-Project
- Establish and communicate project mission, priority and success criteria
- Select Team Members
- Define Roles
- Determine Technology Requirements

Project Initiation
- Establish and Manage Team Boundaries
- Develop Shared Mental Models
- Create Maintain Awareness
- Manage Communication Processes

Wrap-Up
- Lessons Learned
- Annotate Success

Mid Stream
- Steps taken in Initiation continue through
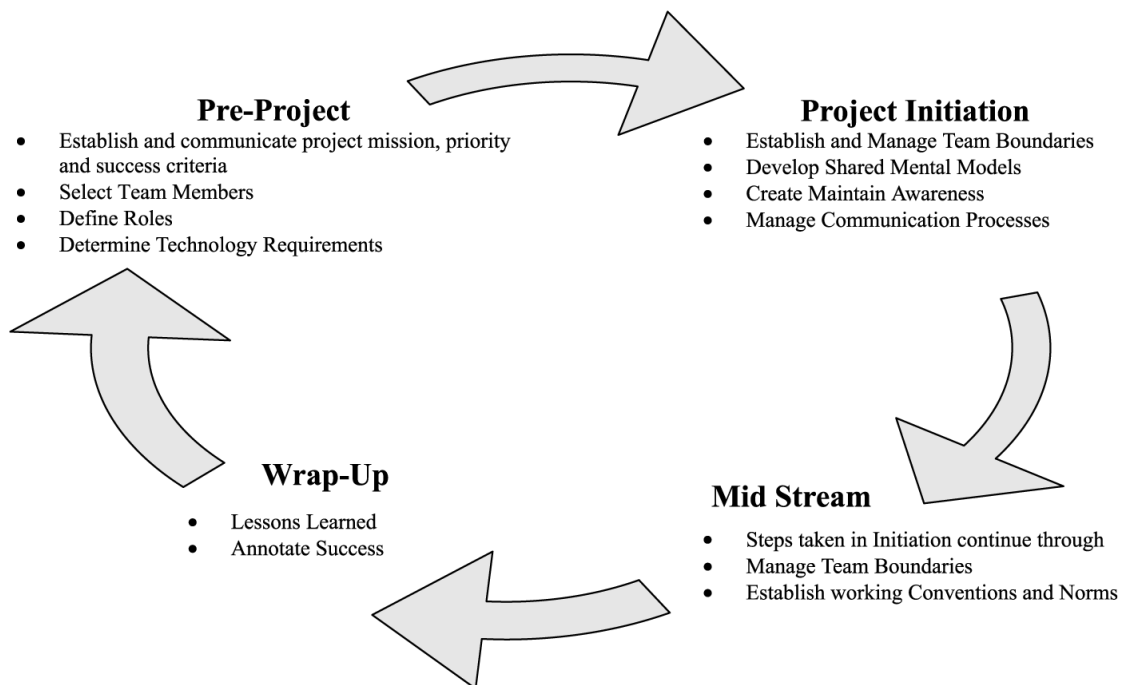- Manage Team Boundaries
- Establish working Conventions and Norms

Figure 3: Guidelines for managing virtual teams over the life of a project. From "Virtual teams: a leader's guide" *by* Hunsaker and Hunsaker, 2008, *Team Performance Management*, 14, p. 87

Leadership skills

Leadership skills are also necessary for the effective guidance of a virtual team. As the modern bibliography states, leadership and more specific ethical leadership must be defined within the environment of a virtual project environment. "Ethical Management of virtual project teams will improve organizations' ability to produce and distribute products and services, increase job satisfaction and efficiencies in employees, and provide valuable leadership to move the business forward" (Lee, 2008). The Project manager of a virtual team has to be a true leader apart from a good manager, in order to take the maximum out of his team performance and gain positive results.

Modern studies are suggesting that the leadership skills of an individual are closely related and often embedded within the national culture (Davis & Bryant, 2003). These skills are adopting characteristics and distinctive marks from the cultural background of the bearer. The same principle applies also to the members of the team that will be guided by the project manager. Their cultural values influence the development and acceptance of the leadership prototypes that their manager possess and applies on them (Davis & Bryant, 2003).

Moving on the same direction, scientific articles about leadership mention that there is a connection between the culture and leadership attributes."Several other charismatic attributes are perceived as culturally contingent. These include enthusiastic, risk taking, ambitious, self-effacing, unique, self-sacrificial, sincere,

sensitive, compassionate, and willful" (Den Hartog, House, Hanges, & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1999). Results and follow ups of studies that conducted for multinational projects, like the GLOBE project, support this suggestion of a connection between leadership and culture.

Concluding thoughts

The success of a multinational project is even more difficult to achieve than the success of a project that is performed locally (Atkinson, 1999). The success is based in many factors that may go beyond the traditional project management theory. The modern Project Manager has to take into consideration all this into consideration when he is building his team (Zakaria, Amelinckx, & Wilemon, 2004) and when he is managing this team remotely from his desk in the Head Office (Lagerstrom & Andersson, 2003).

At individual level	Description	At team level	Description
1. Self management	• Become one's own coach and leader. • Set personal agendas. • Motivated to take appropriate action. • Behave proactively and manage themselves.	1. Establish team's goals	• Clearly establish goals and define team's roles. • Preliminary face-to-face meeting & series of team-building exercises. • Reach consensus around goals and roles.
2. Communication	• Select appropriate transmission medium. • Learn to interpret the signals sent by team members. • Clarify misunderstanding by overcoming language and cultural barriers.	2. Establish team's norms	• Develop a code of conduct and a set of norms. • Use specific modes of communication and acceptable response times. • Document archiving in shared space. • Establish task priorities.
3. Cultural sensitivity & awareness	• Cognitively understand the myriad differences. • Perceptively aware of the team members' cultural values, and patterns. • Ability to identify and recognize potential cultural conflicts.	3. Team problem solving & conflict management	• Ability to solve complex problems by bargaining, and negotiating. • Develop creative mechanism by combining computer technology and videoconferencing. • Develop early warning systems to alert potential conflict.
4. Trust	• Develop trust based on perceived similarities, responsiveness and dependability. • Understand worthiness is assessed based on behaviours and not merely good intentions.	4. Team learning	• Learn from each other. • Build on each other's work. • Create a safe, secure team environment. • Encourage easy collaboration. • Create a 'community of practice'.
5. Comfort with technology	• Competent and confident to use information and communication technologies. • Openness to learn new technologies. • Changed mindset for use of technology to collaborate in new ways.	5. Balancing relationship & task team	• Take opportunities to build social ties. • Share learning experiences. • Get together and reconnect in space as much as possible.

Figure 4: Attributes for effective building of a virtual team. Note. From "Building a Winning Virtual Team" *by* Blackburn, Furst and Rosen, 2003, *In Cohun, C.B. and Cohen, S.G. (eds.), Virtual Teams that Work: Creating Conditions for Virtual Teams effectiveness*, p. 95-120.

Finally, apart from the personal effort of the Project Manager, the organization itself has to be ready to understand the differences between a traditional project and a project that involves people from other countries that have to work from a distance. Hodson and Ciemil (2007), suggest that the incorporation of industry standards within the company's policy, will give a positive thrust towards the better comprehension of these kind of projects and finally towards their success.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

Methodology of the thesis

The project that will be presented is a project that has faced a partial failure. The final deliverable was given to the customer on time and within the required quality limits but the final cost was much higher than the cost that had been budgeted during the planning phase. Therefore, as one of the three major parameters, Time, Costs and Quality didn't meet the original expectation, the project was characterized as a failure (Meredith & Mantel, 2006). The senior management of the company decided to study the "Lessons to be learned" documentation of the project in order to find out what was the cause of the problems and try to eliminate these threats for future projects. However, as this documentation was very poor, no solid conclusion could be extracted. Therefore, the managers decided to form a committee in order to interview the principal characters of the project and review the facts that led to the project's failure. The author was appointed as the head of this committee due to his background in project management's theory.

The methodology that will be followed for the coverage of the thesis' topic will be part of a qualitative research. A combination of a case study analysis and a phenomenological study will be presented in order to cover the topic. After the presentation and justification of the relative problems, the thesis will try to introduce solutions for the company by using methods taken out of the current bibliography.

The reader will be able to get information about the under examination project, understand the external or internal variables, that influenced the execution and the outcome of the project and will be able to figure out what went wrong and what could have been

A detailed description of the project will be presented in order to understand the difficulties and the traits of projects that involve virtual project teams. The description will provide to the reader a presentation of the project's scope, the deliverable, the constraints, the customer's expectations and the company's environment that the specific project took place.

After the detailed description, the interviews of the key stakeholders will be presented. The author will enter the company's internal environment in order to interview the persons that had responsibility, were performing or were the final customers of this project. The author will also present his opinion because he was an active stakeholder of that specific project as a project coordinator.

The Case Study

The project that will be described is the company's activity transfer to the new IKIA airport in Teheran, Iran. This project was extremely complex and had little margin of slippages. Every airline that had to operate from the new airport had to be ready for action in a specific date.

The specific project was a complex project because it contained work packages from different disciplines. It was a combination of constructing work,

network and telecommunications engineering, formal and bureaucratic activities, airline specific activities and staff training. The major stakeholders that were working together and formed the virtual project team were: an Italian Project Manager, a Greek Project Coordinator, an Iranian engineer and an Italian airport manager that was the final Project's customer.

The Project Manager that was chosen by the senior management was an experienced network engineer with fifteen years of service in the company. He was aware of all the internal norms of the company along with all the procedures that are required for this kind of activity transfer. After all these years, he had developed another useful skill. He knew also how to contact the right persons in the company's environment that were capable of solving a specific problem. He was able to bypass "successfully" any obstacles and contact the right people, regardless their hierarchical level, for the solution of the problem.

The author that acted as a project coordinator had eleven years of experience in Alitalia. He had previous experience of airport's activities transfer and had followed the appropriate checklists in the past. He took part in the virtual team of the Ben Gurion Airport Terminal 3 Move and in the successful move of Athens International Airport in March 2001. He had been a member of an international virtual project team numerous times and had a proven record of effective collaboration with the rest of the team.

The local customer in Teheran was a station manager that had been appointed to the position shortly. He had no experience on the job, or on working abroad. This was his first transfer outside Italy and until that point he had been working in another department. The company decided to expatriate him as he was fluent in English and he had a certificate on computers

The last of the stakeholders, the Iranian engineer, was a twenty five years old network engineer. He was a top graduate from the University of Teheran; the oldest and most religious educational institution in Iran. He had earned a Bachelor Degree in Computer Science and Telecommunications but his knowledge of foreign languages was very limited. He had a basic knowledge of the English language.

The characters had never worked with each other before the project's initiation so there was no relationship between them.

The requested deliverable was the successful transfer of the network and IT infrastructure to the new airport facility. The company had been operating from the old airport for nearly two decades, and had to move to the new terminal on a date that was decided by the Iranian government. The official opening date had been postponed three times before it became final for the 15th of February 2008. The major milestones were the creation of the offices and rooms, the transfer of the old telecommunication leased lines, the move of the current equipment and finally the installation and configuration of the equipment. After the equipment's installation

the customer would accept the deliverable and would start working with his daily duties. The project officially started for the company on the 15th of June 2007. At this time, the sponsor met with the project manager, informed him about the project deliverable and authorized him to proceed with all the necessary work for the planning of the project. The Project Manager started immediately to work on the plan following all the appropriate procedures that were established. He came in contact with the rest of the people that were about to form the project team, assigned the roles and the responsibilities, created the communication plan and moved on to the rest of the project's elements that had to be planned and prepared. In the communication plan, was mentioned that the regular weekly reporting would take place every Friday and that every member of the team should contribute to the information flow.

During the project's execution, the Project Manager understood that things were not going as they were expected to go. By studying his Earned Value reports, he noticed that the project was behind schedule. As time was passing by, less communication was arriving from the team members that were performing the various tasks. The weekly and monthly reports were arriving but the information that was included, was not important and significant for the project's progress itself.

The information system that was supposed to be the basic source of information was not updated as no input was entered from abroad. The PMIS that was implemented, was a server based system that was providing all the necessary information and reports to the project's stakeholders. File exchange and E-mail

communication were the primary means of data swap and a schedule for these updates had been established and agreed. However, the information that was arriving from abroad was incorrect and often out of date.

Various attempts to get in touch with the team members were not successful as they faced serious problems with the chosen communication language. At the beginning of the project, English was agreed to be the official language for the communication. Everybody accepted this issue but soon became visible the inexpressibility of the Iranian engineer. The orders and the requests that were arriving from abroad, were not translated well and eventually were misunderstood. Thereinafter the final actions were not exactly the requested ones. This lack of understanding brought some tension to the relationship of the team members.

During the month of November all the requests that were given by the Italian Project Manager or by the Project Coordinator, had a very late response. The Project Manager was waiting for answers and could see that his requests would not be executed. After an investigation that he performed together with the project coordinator, he found out that the local engineer was performing as being a part time employee due to a religion related reason. The month of November, was the Holy month of Ramadan for the Muslims and the Project Manager did not know about it. The engineer and almost every employee in Iran had a different work schedule that was in accordance with the local religious principals and customs. Such customs were obliging that people had to leave their offices early in order to

dine with their families. This matter was not taken into consideration by the Project team and soon realized that this was the cause for the various delays.

The schedule of the project was really on risk and therefore the Project Manager decided to add some late resources in order to bring it back in line with the expected one. However, this corrective action had a significant cost that had to be taken. The senior management accepted to pay the extra cost because there was not a margin for a delay. The deadline had to be kept at all costs. The Project Manager accelerated the team's performance and provided the deliverable to the customer on the specific date. The deliverable that arrived in a cost almost the double than the one that was budgeted at the planning phase of the project.

The Study of the Project's difficulties

After the completion of the project's deliverable on the 15th of February and when the daily routine work of the station manager was normalized in the new facilities, the senior management noticed immediately the need of analyzing the outcome of the project as the amount of money that was spent was much higher than the originally planned one. The project coordinator was asked to look into the matters that influenced the project and its execution and consequently created the above mentioned problems and difficulties.

The author will start the data gathering by interviewing extensively the key stakeholders of the project. More information must be available on how the Project

manager was chosen and then how the project team was formed. The professional and academic background of the team members has to be stated in order to be examined whether this was a key factor of the project's failure. Another aspect that has to be examined is the way of operating and performing during the project's execution.

The examination's committee that the author is taking part is confident that the results of the examination study will make clear the causes of the various problems and is expecting that if the proposed solutions and pieces of advices will be followed these problems will not happen again in future multinational projects.

Chapter 5 - The Results

After the completion of the interviews and the analysis of the answers, the author prepared a detailed analysis that was pointed at the causes of the failure of this international project. Through the answers that were given by the stakeholders, the weak points that grew bigger and created problems in cascade were revealed and discussed. The senior management's committee received the report and started to review the results. The major and important points of the review will be demonstrated henceforth.

On the 15th of February 2008, the official opening of the new IKIA airport was held at the capital of IRAN. The first flights departed on time and only small and insignificant problems had to be solved. Officially, the project had closed because the final customer had accepted the deliverable and adopted it as a part of his routine daily work. As it is stated in the bibliography, a project is considered as a closed one the moment that becomes a routine task (Verzuh, 2005). However, the project was not a successful one. Even if the deliverable was handled on time and within the quality specifications that were set from the company, the final cost was not the budgeted one. There was a significant slippage on the accounts that were financing the project's execution. These slippages was noticed during the execution's period through the Earned value reports but arrived to a peak point at the end of the project.

Soon after the celebration of the airport's opening, the higher management of the company started to question the stakeholders about these negative results. The answer that they got was not as complete as it was necessary. Therefore, the management asked to move to another approach by reading and studying the "Lessons Learned" section of the Documentation that was created for the project. The new findings did not satisfy them also. Their final decision was to form a committee that would study again the facts that took place during the execution of the project in order to arrive to complete conclusion about the causes of the cost overruns.

After two months of study and investigation, the committee published a first set of answers and points that were responsible for the failure. A major part of these points were in correlation with the project team and its effectiveness. Through the results, it was made public that the team was not performing as efficiently as it had to. The committee decided to analyze further this aspect of the results and concentrated to the virtual project team as a factor that didn't operate well and eventually failed. Therefore it was decided to interview the persons that were involved in the project. The final conclusions that were extracted out of their responses to the questions were very interesting and provided an educational feedback to the upper management of the company.

The first point that was presented as a drawback point was the fact that the Project Manager was not selected in a proper way. He got selected by taking into consideration his carrier history until that point and not by checking his managerial

and leadership skills. Until the day that got selected, he had a brilliant progress in the company as a network engineer. His appraisals were satisfactory and positive and the outcome of his work was more than adequate. However, he had never been asked to demonstrate his managerial skills until the day that was selected as a Project Manager. This project was the first time that he was asked to form a team of people and manage them towards the success of the project. Terms like leadership, mentoring and coaching were unknown to him. The project's sponsor, who took the decision for assigning him as the Project Manager, did not take into consideration these points also. The lack of the above mentioned abilities played a major role on the negative management of the project team later on and finally led towards the failure of the project itself.

The organization has to revise its procedures regarding the selection of the Project Managers. From the results of the project that is reviewed, it is more than obvious that having only the technical skills is not enough for the successful management of a project. The person that will be in charge has to be able to manage and lead his team. This person must inspire and motivate the people that work for him. This difficult task becomes more complicated if the team is not collocated in one room and several thousands of kilometers separate them. The person in charge has to manage his team remotely without being actually near them. So the selection's procedures have to take into consideration the special elements that characterize the transnational projects.

Apart from the erroneous selection of the Project manager, a number of negative points that had to do with the project team were reported in the committee's results. The first issue was the fact that the virtual project team had no time to familiarize its members. The team moved very quickly from the "Forming" stage to the "Performing" one bypassing the stages that stand in the middle (Tuckman, 1965). The Project manager was very anxious about the planning of the project so he did not pay the necessary attention on the familiarization stage of his team. The team members just introduced themselves to each other and were asked to start to perform immediately. As the bibliography states, a lot of problem may occur if the team members will not familiarize themselves and feel comfortable within the project's environment. Actually this statement proved true.

Another point that was noted as a weak point on the performance of the virtual team was the cultural difference of the members and the inability of understanding this difference. The project team could not recognize and eventual accept differences in the way of thinking or working of the others and this produced a lot of problems during the project's execution. Differences of culture and religion set up barriers that created a lot of problems during the execution phase. Working during the Muslim's Holy Month of Ramadan was not taken into consideration so the team's underperformance put in danger the progress of the project.

The Project Manager, having a western culture and approach, took for granted that his team has the same way of thinking. However, this is not true. Every individual has its own way of thinking especially if belongs to another culture

and has different customs. The company as a multinational one, has to understand that cultural differences play a major role on the virtual teams' performance and therefore, special attention has to be drawn on this aspect in future project. Culture familiarization trips between the staff could help establishing a culture aware model in the company. The employees could understand and respect each other's differences and finally, an effective collaboration between them could be achieved.

The lack of culture difference's awareness and the non effective collaboration, led to another crucial point that accelerated the appearance of the problems. The team members experienced a lack of trust between them. They lost the faith that they could accomplish the tasks that they were assigned to. They did not believe at each other's professional skills. After a short period of time the management skills of the Project Manager were questioned too as they were not trusting him either. This could have been avoided if physical meetings were scheduled and performed. It is necessary a personal contact to occur once a while as they could be very helpful and could promote the mutual trust of each other within the team.

Another weak aspect of the project that was pointed out in the report was the bad communication that took place during the execution of the project. The language problems created additional problems and misunderstandings that could have been avoided if someone had thought of this issue from the beginning. Nobody noticed the Iranian engineer was not speaking the English language at an

adequate level. This dearth resulted in an erroneous and unnecessary over-communication that was consuming valuable resources from the project. The management team of the project was confident that the team members for which English was not their mother tongue, would not have any communication problems. They were using a formal way of communicating and they could not think that a lot of terms were not clear and understood. The requests that were coming from the Head Office had to be repeated again and again. In many occasions the local engineer was performing based on erroneous assumptions of him because he had the impression of doing correctly what he was asked for by the Project Manager.

This lack of communication led to an extra usage of resources during the project. As tasks had to be repeated again and again, time slippages jeopardized the schedule. Extra money had to be spent for this extra effort and at the end this situation caused the budget overruns and consequently, the failure of the project.

Another point that was stated in the committee's report to the senior management was the lack of clear roles and responsibilities in the virtual team of the project. In the planning documentation of the project, there was no section or report that was covering this aspect. The Project Manager had executed a communication plan but nothing was mentioned on the accountability of the members. The team members were performing without having in mind their responsibilities so their work often was not of the requested quality and even it was not what it had to be.

From the outcomes of the interviews, the committee noticed that the part of the planning folder regarding the roles and the responsibilities assignment to the project team members was not a company's standard in the planning procedures. The company has to revise this approach as the lack of a clear "Roles and Responsibilities" plan can lead to severe problems in the project. Especially for multinational project that the team is not co-located and distance will make things even worse.

Another point that was made clear in the committee's results was the lack of training of the systems to the members of the virtual team. The Project Manager decided to use an application for the planning, the monitoring and the control of the project but nobody else in the team was able to use it. The team members had not participated in a training session organized by the company for the specific application. The correct and efficient use of this application could have helped the work of the team and finally could have facilitated the overall project.

Finally, the last point that the committee stated was the inattention of using the technology for an effective collaboration of the dislocated team members. The use of the Internet can help the team to join forces almost in real time. Applications like teleconference, videoconference or computer sharing are specially designed and built for this purpose. These programs try to eliminate the physical distance inside the virtual project team. Any member can communicate even with video with the other members that can physical be working thousands kilometers away. The results of the committee's study demonstrated that the Project Manager of the

specific project did not know anything about these tools that could have help him towards the accomplishment of his targets and the positive results of his project.

The results overall demonstrated that some procedures had to be reviewed from the company's side, pointed out the weak points of the management of the team and what has to be taken into consideration for the future multinational projects that will be undertaken by the organization. Nobody has to be blamed for the results of the specific project but a new approach from the organization itself has to be adopted for these kinds of projects.

Chapter 6 Conclusion- Discussion

From the experience that was gained through the project that was described in the case study and the review of the current bibliography, it is obvious that special ways of managing people that are working for the same project and are not co-located, must be adopted. The selection of the project manager must be done according to these peculiarities too. The current literature indicates that the selection of a person for the position of the Project Manager is a very difficult and tricky task and that the management of the organization should know that the figure of the "perfect" Project Manager just does not exist (Kerzner, 2006). Having this position in mind and by taking into consideration the special needs of a project that will be carried out by a transnational team, the senior management and the project sponsor must select the person that will lead the project wisely.

Apart from the selection process for the Project Manager, this person has to possess special abilities and skills. Apart from the expertnesses that are necessary for the traditional project management, additional talents must be present. The Project Manager must be a real team builder. The team must go through all the stages in order to familiarize its members and the Project Manager must understand this point even if more time could be requested to be spent during these phases.

He/she must be able to detect the skills and the strong points of his team beyond any educational or cultural barrier. Strong understanding of the other

people diversity and acceptance of their way of thinking and acting is necessary for a fruitful collaboration that will lead towards a multinational project's success. Mutual trust must prevail within the team in order to achieve a high level of cooperation. A real manager can lead the virtual team effectively by communicating efficiently via the use of technology or any other means of communication that are available today.

In summary, before arriving at the points that were described above, the organization itself must be ready to adopt the principles of Project Management. By moving towards the model of a Learning Organization (Senge, 2006), it is almost certain that the project will be successful and the organization will move towards its excellence. The Senior Management has to understand the advantages that derive from the correct application of the Project Management's theory, especially during the rough times that our world is facing today.

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Appendix – The Interviews

The Sponsor's Interview

How the Project manager was chosen?

We selected the specific project manager out of the company's staff because he had executed successfully a variety of smaller projects during his career in the company. He had demonstrated his skills into project's execution and his will to undertake the specific project in a very enthusiastic way.

Does the company provide specific training to the project managers?

Absolutely yes! The company understands the modern needs that a project manager will face; therefore our staff is participating in seminars and trainings that the project management's theory is examined. Terms like Earned Value Analysis or TQM must be well understood by our staff in order to be ready to work in the project's environment.

What about Leadership?

The senior management of the company believes that leadership skills are not a requirement for the project managers because their hierarchical level in the company's organizational structure, does not require this kind of skills. As project managers are positioned in the middle level of the company, they are required to posses some management skills only. They have to manage their project team in

an effective way in order to complete their task on time, within budget and quality limits. Leadership skills are only required for the higher management as they are taking the strategic decisions for the company.

What do you think that went wrong with the specific project?

I think that a series of things went wrong and not just a single one. First of all, the project manager that was assigned to that specific project was inexperienced. He had never worked to a large scale project that was expanding beyond the borders of Italy. He had never worked with a project team that was performing far away from him. Furthermore, the project manager did not understand the difficulties and the challenges that this kind of projects require.

Another difficulty that we faced and probably pushed the project towards its failure is the bureaucracy that we faced from the local authorities. We were not prepared to face this kind of work and we needed a lot of time and resource's utilization for adapting to that situation.

Finally the local staff that was working for the project was not of the required level of efficiency. Several times during the execution phase, we were facing even communication problems.

The Project Manager's Interview

Could you describe briefly the project?

The project was the transfer of the IT and network infrastructure that our company was using from the old airport to the new one. As you may know, the Iranian government had postponed numerous times the move to the new IKIA airport but that time, the deadline was strictly set. The deliverable was the move of the telecommunication equipment, the IT equipment and the leased lined from the existing offices to the new ones.

Could you tell me how the project initiated?

The project was initiated following the global standards of the project management theory. As soon as I was appointed as the PM, the project charter was signed that was authorizing me to make use of the company's resources. After the signature, I moved on with the creation of the project team. As this was a multinational project, I confirmed the English language as the standard language for the communication. Then I review the curriculums of the team members and proceeded to the formation of the team.

What about the planning?

For the project planning, I followed the company's policies and standards. The Communication plan was created and approved by the management. Then, the WBS was created by me and was sent to the team right away. A detailed schedule with the form of a Gantt Chart, was composed in the Microsoft® Project

application and was communicated to the people abroad. They should start work by that time but obviously they didn't.

You didn't mention anything about responsibility or the risks, isn't it?

You are absolutely right. The responsibility matrix is not a report that has to be filled and approved because it is not part of our standards for the project's planning. The same applies also to the Risk management plan. This is the reason for not creating the appropriate reports.

Did you face difficulties during the execution phase?

A lot! From the start of the project I could see that my requests were not fulfilled by the engineer on time. I was expecting for a period of a week or more for feedback regarding the progress of the tasks. During the month of November, the situation became even worse. Every attempt for communication with Iran was unsuccessful and I could not reach the team even via the phone. Another issue that I faced was the quality of the communication. I was clearly asking for some specific answers and something else was arriving from abroad. It is clear that this guy was not able to foresee what I could ask for. In many cases he could not even understand it.

Did you use any technological advanced tools?

Certainly! I am a big fun of technology and I believe that we can make a very good use of it throughout the project's life. Therefore all the planning was based on specific software that can demonstrate the whole planning in a very easy and comprehensive way. Monitoring and control is also simpler. I made this tool available but nobody from the team made use of it. They denied working with these tools and preferred the traditional way.

What do you think that went wrong with the specific project?

This is a really tough question. I believe that the planning was correct and was carried out with the use of the Project Management's standards. Therefore, something went wrong with the team that was performing in Iran. Most probably the quality of their work and collaboration was not the required one. However in the end, I am accountable for this situation because I made the selection of the team members at the beginning of the project.

The Local Engineer's Interview

Could you describe briefly your role in the project?

I was informed that I had been selected to participate in a team that had to move an office structure from the old airport to the new one. My major task was to perform the move of the telecommunication lines, the hardware and the network equipment from the first point to the new one. I had to make the necessary arrangements with the national telecommunication company, with the local suppliers and with the local airport authorities. Another thing that I had to follow was the reporting to the Project Coordinator and to the Project Manager. After a certain point, this became the most difficult task.

Did you face difficulties during the execution phase?

A lot of them! First of all I had a terrible time dealing with the requests that were arriving from the management. The language that was used was too formal for me to understand. I had to read and study these requests for a long period of time in order to understand them. Then, the management was asking to use the famous Project Management application for the monitoring and the controlling of the project. The problem was that I had never worked with a system like that and I could not use it at all. The Manager was keep asking for the proper use of the system and could not realize that without any training, it was impossible to do so. Finally, another point that I had a difficulty with was the period of our religious holiday, the Ramadan. The holy month of Ramadan was held during November

last year. This was the period that we had many milestones and the work load was at this high peak. I did my best for meeting the management's expectations but during that time we were working "half days". The national legislation, states that during this month, the working hours of the day are reduced to their half. Honestly, I was working as much as I could but the requests were arriving from abroad like the days before. Nobody knew or understood the peculiar circumstances of this month.

Have you ever met the Project Manager?

No I did not, not in person. We were talking only over the phone during the project's lifecycle.

What do you think that went wrong with the specific project?

First of all, I think that the planning was not correct. The decision of the Project Manager to schedule the activities of many tasks during the month of Ramadan was erroneous. He should know the local peoples habits and cultural conduct. Then, the company should have provided a well organized training on the tools and the applications that were about to be used in the project for its control. As I mentioned before, I could not use the applications.

However, above all I think that the lack of trust that existed in the team was the major point that led to the delays and the partial failure of the project. I lost the feelings of trust towards my superiors and I was thinking that they are not going to make it to the end. I started to question their abilities in management and in

leadership. At that point, I think that that the Project went out of its tracks with the negative results that we encounter in the end.

The Customer's Interview

Could you describe briefly your role in the project?

My position in the company is with the Airports Division. I was the station manager in Teheran and I was the person that I had to move my operational activities from the old airport, to the new one. My division asked the Information Technology Division, to set up and plan a project for this move. I gave to the Project Managers the specifications for the new setup and I offered my full support to the local engineer for any problem or formality that had to do with the local airport authorities. Finally I gave my approval for the deliverable that was delivered to me.

Do you consider that the project was a success?

Partially yes, it was a success. Everything that my division asked for initially was delivered to me. The quality of the deliverable met the company's standards and our first flight took off on time from the new airport. However, I learned that the final cost was almost the double from the one that was predicted and budgeted for this project. It is difficult to say whether it was a success or a failure. Obviously, things could have gone better.

What do you think that went wrong with the specific project?

I am not a Project Management expert so I can express only my feeling and my personal opinion about the execution of this project. I think that something went wrong with the management of the local team for our Head Office. I could see the

local engineer to work hard and then to cancel everything and to start again because there was a misinterpretation somewhere in the middle. There were times that the engineer was losing his faith and remain passive without doing anything. I believe that something went wrong with the people's management. If this management was more effective and positive, the outcome of the project could have been different; it could have been a total success.