



The point of arrival is what the project must achieve to become successful. Again, strategic project managers pick the point of arrival based on rigorous analysis. They examine trends in new technology, new sources of customer value, or any other issue that will affect the future of their projects.

For Saud Al-Gosaibi, the general manager of Assets Security Systems in Saudi Arabia, the point of arrival is to be a “universal” supplier, both in geographic reach and in the breadth of its offerings.

When strategic project managers pick a point of arrival, they do more than just designate a goal. They also design the culture, values, and corporate structure that will lead to that goal.

Strategic project managers also determine a fixed time-frame for reaching that point of arrival. The point of arrival can be as far away as the next century or as near as six months.

CMCS project managers in the Gulf, for example, are already anticipating a not far-off future when project management control services and even PMOs will all be outsourced. Dell Computer, on the other hand, believes that the distant future is no farther than six months away.

Frequently, project analysts ask you, 'what do you do when you hit a trap on the way?' And the right answer to that is, 'my job is to do enough surveying work and be far enough ahead of the party so that we have time enough to recover when we hit the trap.'

Strategic project managers believe that anticipating and creating the future is their most important job. They delegate day-to-day operations to business units or senior staff so they can concentrate on the big picture.



**“People who enjoy working with their colleagues will be more motivated and committed to perform**

As Abdullah Al-Ghanim, former senior vice president of Saudi Aramco projects management lead no less than 600 projects at all times, with annual budgets around 5 billion dollars a year, with a work force of more than 16,000 professionals representing all engineering disciplines and hundreds of contractors and subcontractor from all nationalities and trades, puts it: "I couldn't get involved in the day-to-day operations of such a monster operation even if I wanted to." And he did not want to.

Al-Ghanim gave extraordinary autonomy to area general managers and project managers so that he can concentrate on his job: making decisions that impacted the entire company. For example, Al-Ghanim was the one that made the final decisions on new technological advances, disciplined project management and standard project life cycles to make everyone in the company understand their mission. He also started a successful program to provide Saudi Aramco with local professionals capable of taking over from expats when it was needed.

His long time service at Saudi Aramco gave him the experience on which to base these strategic decisions. He also used careful demographic and economic analyses. But the main reason for Al-Ghanim's success as a

Most project managers are people persons. They are extroverted, like conversation, and have the kind of magnetism or presence that attracts others.

But being a human assets project manager is more specific than just being a people's person. It means managing policies, procedures, programs, and systems related to the hiring, retention, and development of people at every level of the organization.

Human assets project managers do more than just know the names of many of their employees.

They are actively involved in career planning and mentoring, meeting face-to-face with employees to discuss values, decision making and performance.

In large companies, employees come from a broad range of backgrounds and are involved in a broad range of activities. Yet, human assets project managers believe that as employees, this disparate group of people must all adhere to the same distinct company values. Those values are the unifying thread of project management teams.

Worley-Parsons' project manager Martin Hogan, for example, emphasizes personal integrity, which means his employees have to be honest and willing to put themselves on the line by telling the truth rather than keeping hidden personal agendas.

Managing people is more than managing individual performance and values. It is also managing the relationships among people.

People who enjoy working with their colleagues will be more motivated and committed to perform.

For Michel Dalle, General Manager of Contromet in Sharjah, Dubai and Qatar, the relationship between people is fundamental to the success of the firm. “After walking

>>>>>>>>>>Continued on Page 9

Continued from Page 8 >>>>>>>>>>>

around a project for half an hour and watching how management and workers interact” Michel says, “I can walk out without looking at the project figures, and I can tell you if that project will make it properly.”

## How they do it

Human assets project managers delegate day-to-day operations. This gives them the time to closely monitor and be involved in the performance and careers of their employees.

It's very important all the time to tell people to do it themselves. You don't have to stimulate an athlete who is running 800 meters. You don't have to tell them that they have to win. They know that. But you can ask them, 'How is your family doing? How do you find your colleagues in this project?' That you can do.

Human assets leaders travel continuously to meet personally with their workers. But these leaders do more than just talk. They are often deeply involved in hiring and firing decisions, in performance reviews, and in career planning.

Michel, for example, often maps an individual manager's career forward through two

or three jobs. At other companies, this task is left to the employee's manager or the human resources department or sometimes to no one at all.

The human assets approach is also used at companies where strategy is more self-evident. “It’s fairly simple, the business we are in,” says senior project manager Khaled Bubshait, “It’s not rocket science to get your mind around most of the personnel issues and make the difference.”

## Hire great attitudes

With a solid annual turnover in million dollars and a substantial figure in net income, MZ & PARTNERS is the only consistent architectural company in the Middle East and Africa. And they regularly win international awards for customer service, time compliance and design excellence.

How did Marwan Zgheib make his fifteen-year-old company so successful in an industry as unforgiving as the architectural design business? "We hire great attitudes," says Marwan.

Great attitudes, he says, are people who want to improve and be independent, who treat others with respect, and who like to

laugh, especially at themselves.

“We’re trying to find out what people are really like, their flaws, weaknesses, prejudices, and biases,” Marwan explains. “That is more important to us than ... all those boring resumes people send in now”

“Amazing things happen,” says Marwan, “when you make people feel that they are valued as individuals, when you dignify their suggestions and their ideas, when you show respect for them by allowing them to exercise their own wisdom, judgment and discretion.” ■

*Ignacio Manzanera is a Mechanical Engineer with a strong background in petrochemical plants construction and maintenance. He has had 5 books published on Cost Management, Cost Control, Planning & Scheduling and Project Management topics. He has written and on Project Management at international forums in Buenos Aires, London, England, Muscat, Riyadh and Caracas. He is a recognized hands-on expert in Primavera P3, Primavera E&C and Master Scheduling & their application to project engineering.*

