



Applying Green PM to Risk Management

Using Green Project Management (GreenPM) is a way to integrate environmental thinking into all of the project management decisions. It is a way to ingrain “greenthink” into every project management process.

The point about green project management is not that we make every decision in favor of the one that is most environmentally friendly. The point is that we start to take the environment into account during the decision making process. You might make most decisions the same as you do today. But there might be some decisions you would make differently.

Risk management is an obvious area to apply GreenThink since there is an element that already looks at project impact. Today we define risks as “*future events or conditions that have a probability of occurring and have some impact to the project*”. Risk management is the process of evaluating each risk for probability and impact, and then responding to the risks that are most important to the project.

Green risk management fits into this model very cleanly. We just have to extend the “impact” side of the equation and look for any project risks that have an impact on the environment. It is likely that there will be no environmental risks on most projects. However, if you ask the right questions perhaps we will identify some risks that you had not thought of before. You might see things like the following:

- Replacing desktop computers could result in dumping of toxic chemicals into landfills. Perhaps you can make sure that the company you use to dispose of the old computers has a policy to extract the toxic components, recycle as much as possible and dispose of the remainder in an environmentally friendly manner.
- A manufacturing process might have a risk of releasing pollution to a local stream. Understanding the nature of this risk might result in more safeguards.
- A construction project may currently be most interested in the cost of materials. Using GreenThink you might start to think more about the waste generated on the job, the disposal of excess materials, the runoff of paint and a host of other environmental concerns.

It is important to state again that the purpose of GreenPM is not that all of these decisions are made in a way that is environmentally friendly. The point is that we recognize these impacts and ask the questions. The sponsor and senior stakeholders will still make the best decisions as they do today. But maybe, just maybe, they will make different decisions in some cases based on the environmental impact.

Save the World – Use Green Project Management™

green project management



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