Think Green on Scope Change Requests

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 <u>not</u> 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. Let's look at an example using a familiar process – scope change management.

Let's say you are merrily managing your project when a scope change request is surfaced. Your response today should first be to recognize the change, and then to manage the change proactively. Managing the change does not mean that the project manager makes the "yes" or "no" decision. Managing the change means that the project manager documents the business value of the change (from the requestor) along with the impact to the project in terms of schedule and budget. The project manager takes this information (benefit and impact) to the sponsor for a decision. If the sponsor approves the change, then the project team receives any incremental budget and schedule required to implement the change.

Now let's say that we are practicing Green Project Management. The process is the same except that we now we being the environment into the picture. The project manager still does not make the decisions. The project manager just asks the question – is there any impact to the environment?

Think about scope changes on your project. How many of them have any impact on the environment one way or another? My guess is that the vast majority have no impact. Therefore, it takes a millisecond to ask and answer the question.

However, because we ask the question, we will find some instances where, in fact, there is some impact. In these instances we would like to bring the environmental impact to the sponsor as well. <u>The sponsor still makes the decision</u>. In most cases the sponsor will probably make the same decision that was made before. However, having this new information may result in some different decisions being made.

Let's look at an example to illustrate the point. Let's say we have a small project to plan and operate a booth at a consumer electronics show. Halfway through the project the client decides that they would like to hand out a product CD to all visitors. The client estimates they will need 1,000 CDs available to hand out.

Today, we look at the value of handing out the product CD and the impact on schedule and budget. Using Green Project Management, we would look at these same two factors, plus we would see if there is any environmental impact. In this case there is – 1000 non-recyclable CDs, plus plastic case and plastic shrink-wrap.

When the sponsor sees this impact, he may still decide to proceed. The sponsor still makes the final decision. However, it is possible that the sponsor will make a different decision based on the environmental impact. These options could include:

- Removing the plastic wrap from the CD covers

- Handing out the CD with no plastic case and no plastic shrink wrap.

- Handing out a recyclable round paper replica with instructions for downloading the content from the web.

In fact, the sponsor might see an opportunity in the last option above. Not only will the company save money, but the paper CDs can also highlight the company's environmental policy. This helps build positive branding for the company as well.

Of course, this example was structured in a way to highlight the impact of managing scope the "green way". But the point is still valid. If you bring environmental impact into the decision making process it is possible that alternative decisions may be made. These decisions, multiplied by tens of thousands of similar decisions on every project around the world, could have a meaningful impact to our world.

Save the World – Use Green Project Management™

Tom Mochal, PMP is President of TenStep, Inc., (www.TenStep.com) a company focused on methodology development, training and consulting. Mochal is an expert instructor and consultant on project management, project management offices, development lifecycle, portfolio management, application support, people management and other related areas. He was awarded 2005 Distinguished Contribution Award from the Project Management Institute (PMI). He is author of numerous books and has over 600 columns published on project management, people management, organizational process management and the development life-cycle. Prior work experience includes Geac Computers, The Coca-Cola Company, CapGemini and Eastman Kodak.

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