

Global Project Strategy (011) (603) 862-3374

## Asia PM and Western PM not the same

Two months ago in the GPS newswire I promised that I would return to the comparison of Asian and Western Project management practices.

With the rapid rise in the use of PMBOK and the concurrent rise in certifications, we might conjecture that there is a convergence in the way projects are managed throughout the world, and to some extent this is very true.

We all rely on Business Cases, WBS, RBS, Schedules, Risk Management, and the myriad documents and templates that represent the standardization of practices.

In that previous Newswire, I wrote about the difference in prevailing organization cultures where the West is more democratic and Asians

more top-down.

This doesn't affect the use of the standard tools, templates and methodologies as much as it affects process. And one process component or knowledge area it certainly affects is communication which for Asian cultures is top-down, and in western cultures is –in theory- two way.

The question is this, does this process difference, affect outcome.?

To answer that we really need to divide the project management process into at least two phases. First is project concept, initiation and planning while the second is planning, execution, managing and control.

In an increasing number of industries –perhaps with the exclusion of

government - organizational growth both home and abroad relies on innovation. Chasing lower costs for these companies is no longer a competitive strategy.

Yet innovation depends upon open processes that engage a wider range of constituents from customers, suppliers. It relies on open two-way communication where ideas can come from the bottom as well as the top.

Since Western organizations are traditionally more comfortable with an open organizational style, they may have the advantage during the first phases of a project.

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## Project Managers and Project Leaders

Last month we began to look at the difference between project managers and project leaders. This month we look at another dimension of project leadership, team management. Research

has shown that the difference between expected and high performance achievement relies upon the way in which the team is managed. Perhaps the most significant factor is

the “space” allowed for the team to set its own goals. Some worry that these goals will fall short of what is needed. Evidence, however, proves differently. Try it, you might be surprised.