

Project Management Technical Division

## Talk on “Leadership-Its Impact on Project Management ”

By ***Ir.Mustaffa Bin Tek***

A talk entitled “Leadership-Its Impact on Project Management ” was organized by the Project Management Technical Division (PMTD) on 7 January 2011 at the C & S Lecture Room, WismaLEM. The talk was delivered by First Admiral(Retired) Dato’Ir. Hj Ahmad Murad Bin Hj Omar .A total of 29 participants attended the talk.



**Picture1.Ir.AhmadMuradin the midst of his talk**

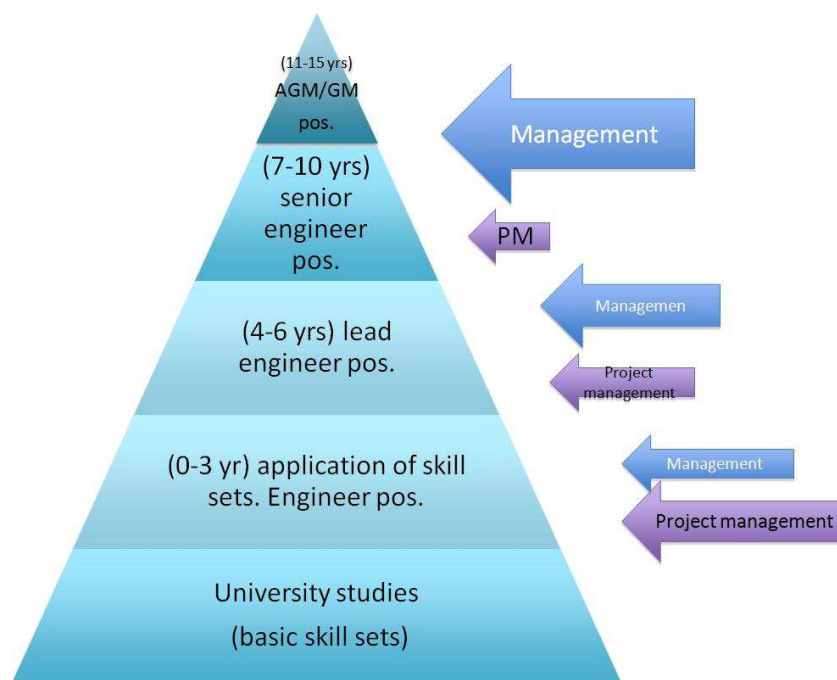
To kick start AhmadMurad posed a question ‘Does leadership really has an impact on how projects are being managed?’.He went on to relate how intertwined leadership is with the nine knowledge areas of Project Management.Leadership is indispensable in each and every knowledge area.The nine knowledge areas are:-

- Project Integration management
- Project Scope management
- Projectv Time management
- Project Cost management
- Project Quality management
- Project Human Resources management
- Project Communication management
- Project Risk management

- Project Procurement management

He reminded all that Project Manager must acquire the skills and experience to execute successfully the projects undertaken. They should have the knowledge of cost analysis, ability to lead teams, experience in running projects, ability to communicate in foreign languages, vendor management skills, 7-10 years working experience, good communication skills, cultural tolerance and knowledge in health and safety.

The career development path of a project manager begins with acquiring of basic skill sets in the university. Project management skills is deeply institutionalized throughout the career path as a fresh graduate moves up the hierarchy towards higher management. Along with it, leadership skills are honed.



**Figure 1. Career Development Hierarchy**

Coming back to the subject matter of the day, a proper definition of 'leadership' was forthcoming.

To define leadership, Ir. Ahmad quoted Kenneth Boulding "Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent"

He went on to quote Northouse "Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal".

The speaker mentioned that some personality traits may lead people naturally into leadership roles, This is known as Trait Theory.

A crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person. The great Martin Luther King was one fine example of such a leader.

Regardless, people can choose to become a leader and learn leadership skills. This is known as Transformational or process leadership. The approach to leadership can be categorized into Human resource, Political, Symbolic and Spiritual frameworks.

There are a variety of leadership styles. The common ones are:

- Autocratic Leadership
- LaissezFaire Leadership
- Shared Leadership

The speaker pointed out that all of the above leadership styles are good but the application must be within the correct time and situation. Shared leadership has the upper advantage over the rest and is the best.

The speaker also touched on the Seven Habits of highly effective people made popular by Dr. Steven Covey. The seven habits are:-

- Be proactive,
- Begin with the end in mind,
- Put first thing first
- Think. win/win,
- Seek first to understand then be understood,
- Synergies
- Sharpen the saw.

He then moved on the principles of the 360 Degree Leader. The Principles are:-

- Put competing fellow leaders ahead of competing with them,
- Be a friend,
- Avoid office politics,
- Expand your circle of acquaintances,
- Let the best ideas win,

Ir Ahmad Murad also elaborated on the legendary Jack Welch 's proposition of the 4E's of Leadership. These are Energy, Energise, Edge and Execution.

He also made comparison between Alan Mullally President & CEO –Ford Motor Company with Marchionne CEO Fiat Chrysler with regards to leadership quality and management style.

The speaker emphasized that leadership is a learning process. As General Norman Schwarzkopf once said "I say, how many of you people learned something about how to do your present job by screwing it up the first time? I say, my goodness. How can you then possibly say, no mistakes in this outfit? You're not giving yourself a freedom to fail because I don't believe in the word failure. You're giving yourself the latitude to learn. I've learned most things I know to do well, probably, by screwing it up the first time.

Project Managers are leaders who possess the leadership quality to execute his duties with utmost charisma and vision. A project manager with a distinct leadership quality will perform better than his peers. Therefore, to answer Ir. Ahmad Murad's first question for the day- leadership does have an impact on how project is managed.

The session followed by a lively discussions between the participants and the speaker during Q & A session.



**Picture 2. The participants during the talk**