Chapter 22

Drivers for Sustainable Project Management Behaviours in Facilities Management: Fluorescent Tube Business Case Example

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ABSTRACT

This chapter moves outside the traditional methodology of project management, looking more broadly at aspects that influence project sustainability initiatives, including regulation, legislation, brand reputation, government and non-government organisations, and client requirements. Using the example of mercury recycling from fluorescent tubes generated from the Facilities Management (FM) sector in Australia, the relationship between environmental management systems, specifically ISO 14001:2004, and project management aspects are highlighted. The importance of management support, both at a strategic and project level is discussed. The opportunity to create competitive advantage from the sales perspective is demonstrated, through a cost justification and review of client sensitivity to influencing factors, enabling reasoned decision making for a successful, environmentally sustainable initiative.

INTRODUCTION

The project initiation and planning phases are the key project focus areas of this chapter. They are crucial to establishing a framework for success in implementing sustainable environmental outcomes within projects, initiated within the bounds of a corporate structure.

This chapter explores the question ‘can corporate sustainability be used to manage compliance and brand reputation within FM projects, while mitigating risk and leverage commercial opportunity?’

The interrelationship between social, environmental and economic sustainability are discussed and a proposal for a corporation is presented,
highlighting actions to be taken to achieve the desired outcome. These actions will influence individual project outcomes, taking into account environmental sustainability. The key contributors of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) support, legislation and regulation, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), ISO 14001:2004 and changing behaviours are considered as the broad corporate drivers (or enablers/mechanisms) for a sustainable project.

The specific business case of fluorescent tube replacement is then presented, building on sustainable aspect identification, and highlighting recommendations for ‘FMCo,’ a representation of a typical large FM project and service supplier. The business case covers recommendations which may potentially be outside of project management practitioners’ sphere of influence, however suggestions to address this, for mature corporations, are included.

In conclusion, project environmental sustainability is highlighted as a vital but complex concept, involving both direct and indirect drivers, with sustainability, as a tool to manage risk and leverage opportunity. Environmental sustainability is highlighted as being reliant on corporate CEO and NGO support through environmental management systems, strong reputation and brand awareness, legislation, business planning, risk mitigation, effective project establishment and the ability to identify and execute micro projects addressing specific aspects of sustainability as the opportunity presents.

BACKGROUND TO SUSTAINABLE PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN THE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SECTOR

Review of Sustainable Project Management

As summarised by Silvius and Schipper,(2012), project management has moved from the early acknowledgment of project management as discipline in the 1950s, to not only the consideration of sustainability as a core area of development, but further the stretching of the project boundaries as the full life cycle of the outcome of the project is considered, Labuschagne and Brent (2006). Although the full lifecycle model was developed for the manufacturing industry it is equally applicable to the FM industry and often FM contracts run from 5 to 20 years, with some project aspects requiring consideration over long time periods.

This chapter builds on the ‘checklist for integrating sustainability in projects and project management’ Silvius (2010) providing a business case (or project justification) as the next step where aspects for environmental sustainability are identified. While the business case is mentioned briefly by Silvius, Schipper and Van Den Brink (2012), indicating that the principles of sustainability need to be reflected in the project justification, the use of the business case to integrate sustainability across multiple ‘sub’ projects is not addressed. The business case example in this chapter demonstrates this link. Importantly as asserted by Maltzman and Shirley (2011) ‘project management is a microcosm of business’ (p23).

Two distinct but related areas are addressed:

1. The drivers for sustainability in the fluorescent tube example.
2. The business case required to achieve the sustainable outcome.

The drivers for sustainability establish the business conditions which contribute to the overall potential for success of a particular initiative. The drivers described in this chapter are derived from the specific example being examined, and as surmised by Maltzman and Shirley (2011) when considering project drivers, ‘No matter what the impetus, organisations must respond to them with projects if they are to survive’ (p. 73).

The description ‘drivers’ is used as a broader term than stakeholders, however it should be noted that for this example they are narrowly derived from the information available through audit,
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