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Let's take a brief look at this module and the five phases.

MY STORY IN BRIEF

On 22nd of April, 2014, I was appointed as the Chairman of Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority (SEWA), by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, a member of the Supreme Council of United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Sharjah. His mission was to transform the authority from a government owned to a corporate body.

During my initial days in SEWA, I delineated a roadmap called “The 15 Winning Principles of SEWA-Way to a winning future”. Here I would draw the readers’ attention to “Principle # 9 - *Facing the reality of where we and the organization are now.*” At that time, this was my top priority. I wanted to get a crystal clear idea of how the organization was functioning prior to my appointment. Things were blurred and shadowy. As a matter of fact, at the time we were handling projects worth more than half a billion U.S dollars and surprisingly, there was neither a Project Management Department nor a Project Management Office (PMO). It was a complete mayhem!

The SEWA Way

Principle #1 : Smile

Principle #2 : Teaching and Learning

Principle #3 : Learn from Experience

Principle #4 : Generate Sound Ideas

Principle #5 : Instill Positive Values

Principle #6 : Create Positive Emotional Energy

Principle #7 : Make Tough Decisions

Principle #8 : Use vibrant stories that motivate others to reach for a better future

Principle #9 : Facing the reality of where we and the organization are now

Principle #10 : Developing, implementing, and using winning KPIs

Principle #11 : Pour our creative energy and dedication into everything we do

Principle #12 : Continuous Generation of Leaders

Principle #13 : Foster a culture of continuous improvement

Principle #14 : Grow together with our suppliers and partners for mutual benefits

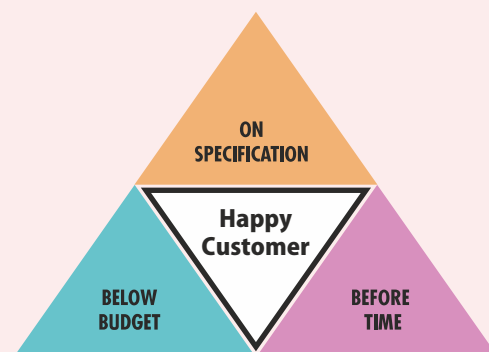
Principle #15 : Achieve our common objectives through Teamwork

If you ask : How many projects in SEWA have come in on time and on budget? The answer is likely none; and that despite using project management software tools, management processes and team-training programs.

READY FOR THE CHALLENGE

Right away, I created a Project Progress Department and a PMO to ensure the success of the projects at hand. My intended objective was that every project should be completed before time, below budget, on specification and exceeding customers/stakeholders expectations.

SEWA PROJECT SUCCESS TRIANGLE



What does it mean to be a project manager in SEWA?

In my early days in SEWA my definition for a project manager was : “A person doing something that has never been done before, for people who don’t know what they want, who has few resources and control and who is responsible for successful results, even if a miracle is required”.
..... Sounds familiar?

PASSION TO WIN



I introduced the following qualities as basic requirements for anyone selected to be a project manager.

7 Ways To Stand Out As Good Project Manager

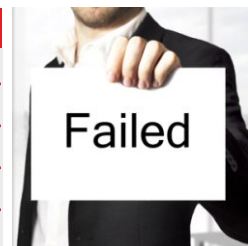


Bringing Discipline to SEWA Project Management

But it was easier said than done! I knew I will face mighty challenges. It was inevitable! Following are the challenges that I faced at the onset:

CHALLENGES I FACED WHEN STARTED AT SEWA

- Challenge # 1. Lack of Visibility for all Projects
- Challenge # 2. Insufficient resources (funding and personnel)
- Challenge # 3. Gaps in Communication
- Challenge # 4. Unclear Project Objectives
- Challenge # 5. Overruns of schedule and cost



Mapping Out The Journey

Step 1 MY OBJECTIVE

To move the Project Team from “business as usual” practice to “business excellence” mindset and transfer the result from ‘good enough’ to ‘beyond stakeholders’ expectations’.

“The challenges were mighty, I knew that I was the lone warrior and saviour. Hence, I precisely sketched-out a fool-proof plan to put projects back on track and mitigate the challenges involved”.

Step 2

SEWA PROJECT MANAGEMENT MODULE

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It is a framework that when applied within an organization can help to focus thought and action in a more systematic and structured way that should lead eventually to increased performance. It focuses on factors that drive performance and leads to continuous performance improvement.

SEWA PROJECT MANAGEMENT MODULE

1. Imagineering
2. Ecomagination
3. CRITICAL Thinking
4. Execution
5. Knowledge Management



PHASE 1: Imagineering

Combining the words “imagination” and “engineering”. Imagineering is the implementation of creative ideas into practical form. It is about letting your imagination soar, and then engineering it down to earth.

PHASE 2: Ecomagination

The ability of the mind to be creative or resourceful to find environmental friendly solutions.

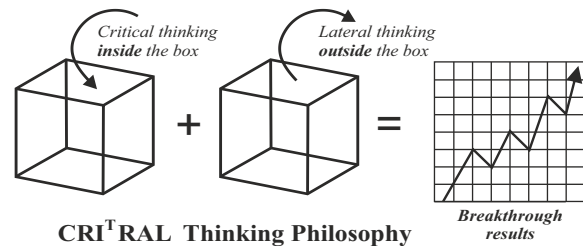
SEWA Ecomagination Statement

Ecomagination is SEWA’s top strategic plan to reduce environmental impact at a local scale by providing clean and green solutions for our community and through our own operations. As a part of this strategy, we are investing in cleaner technology and business innovation developing solutions with our partners to create a cleaner, greener, and smarter tomorrow.

PHASE 3: CRITICAL Thinking

It’s a self coined term created by me to enhance the creativity and to bring out the best of the best

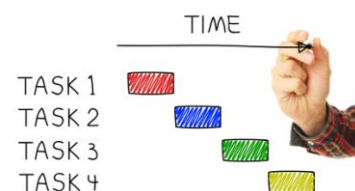
from people. It’s a unique blend of ‘critical and lateral’ thinking. Critical thinker analyses the nitty-gritty of any issue on the basis of facts and figures. The lateral thinkers or better called creative thinkers look beyond the face-value and come out with solutions which are not mundane.



PHASE 4: Execution Plan

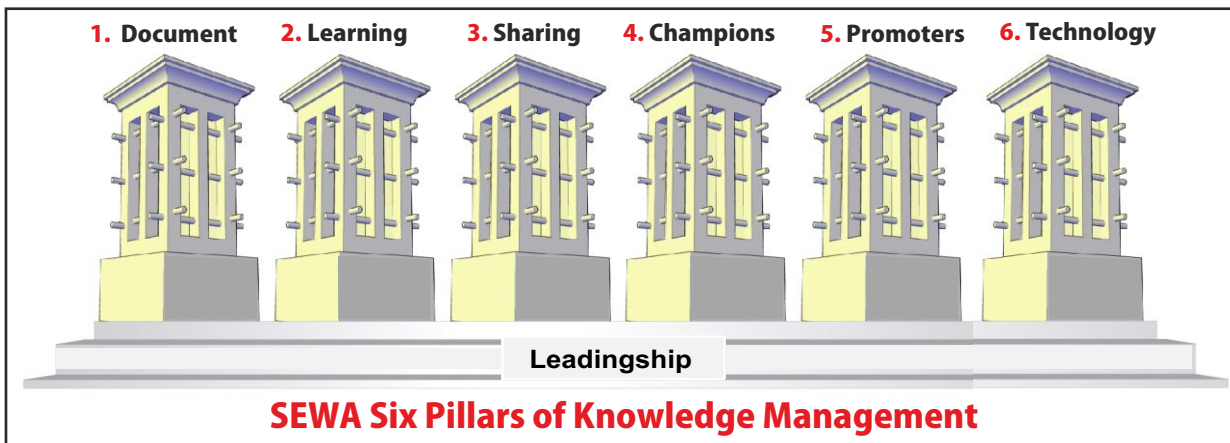
**Planning the work is one thing;
Working the plan is another.**

This governing document establishes the means to execute, monitor, and control projects. The plan serves as the main communication vehicle to ensure that everyone is aware of and acquainted with project objectives and how they will be accomplished.



PHASE 5: Knowledge Management

Ideally SEWA KM comprises of six pillars. However, the first key element related to Project Management is Document - This means to conduct lessons - learned studies to examine what went well and what didn’t. Through this type of analysis the wisdom of experience is transferred back to the project organization, which will help future project teams.



Step 3
PERFORMANCE MONITORING 3

It's imperative to regularly *review* your performance in all the five steps lest your actions can become disconnected from your vision and pull you off course. Performance review helps prevent *scope creep* and makes sure that the project accomplishes what it is set out to do. It ensures that the project is completed on time and within the allotted budget. It allows you to make the necessary adjustments regarding resources or your budget. Besides, Performance Monitoring enables you to make comparisons between your original plan and your progress so far.

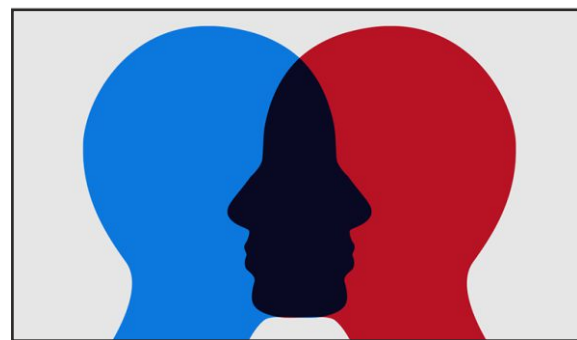


Step 4
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IS NEEDED 4

Effective people-management skills are crucial for the success of any project. Even the most meticulously planned project can bite dust

in a jiffy, if it lacks *Emotional Intelligence*. Managing people is not as easy as a pie. This requires using finely tuned interpersonal skills and astutely reading emotional cues to get the job done right and on time.

According to a latest research, an astounding 70 to 80 percent of management success rests on this kind of “emotional intelligence” (EI). It means the capacity of individuals to recognize their own, and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately, and use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior.



I knew that EI is about *Self-management* (The ability to control our emotions so that they don't control us) and *Social awareness* (The ability to accurately read situations and people and to understand and empathize with the emotions of others).

My big shift came when I began to recognize the

value of EI in Project Management. It was a learning experience for me. I taught myself Project Team Leadership. Here's what I learnt: Putting EI in Project Management is about getting the right people on your team, successfully communicating with and motivating them, and then clearing conflicts and other roadblocks so that they perform and achieve the project objectives. This domain includes the project management competencies of communications, conflicts management and inspirational leadership.

Step 5 SERVANT LEADERSHIP

To a servant leadership is both a leadership philosophy as well as set of leadership practices. We don't exercise power at the 'top of the pyramid'. We share power, put their need in the first place and help team members develop and perform as highly as possible.

Step 6 INSTILL CORE VALUES

Our research shows that leaders who demonstrate deep-rooted/deep-seated core values coupled with brilliant Emotional Intelligence, deliver extraordinary performances.



From the perspective of an organization, core values are imperative and essentially important in the long-run simply because of the clear benefit it accrues. Authentic organizations make deliberate attempt to blend core values and EI in day to day activities.

SEWA CORE VALUES IN ACTION

Our core values are simple, yet powerful. They have been continually guiding our decision making process, as well as our interactions with our clients and each other, in pursuit of our global vision: *To be among the best authentic organizations in the world.*

Let's have a close look at SEWA's core values:

SEWA'S CORE VALUES

1. Authentic & Effective Leadership
2. People & Safety
3. Passion for Customers
4. Embracing Excellence
5. Ownership
6. Ethics
7. Integrity
8. Teamwork
9. Passion for Winning
10. Trust
11. Every Idea Counts

1. Authentic and Effective Leadership

People will not follow a leader they feel is inauthentic. Authentic leadership at SEWA is built on an ethical foundation and promotes openness. It is defined by courage to seize the right opportunity /initiative and welcome responsibility; and be accountable for the same. It is about 'seeing the bigger picture' having a clear vision of SEWA's aims and objectives and of course to build a strong business and diverse talent.

2. People & Safety

Our employees are our most valuable asset. We invest in the development and support of our staff and leaders. Safety is never compromised at SEWA. It's a conscious effort and an absolute

commitment that no job is so urgent that it cannot be done in a safe and an environmentally responsible manner.

3. Passion for Customers

We strive to develop a long-term customer relationship by consistently delivering quality, innovation, and business value that meet or exceed our customers' expectation. SEWA is obsessed with customer service excellence and practices quick responsiveness to complaints with 100% adherence to ISO 10002 standards and valuing customer's feedback.

4. Embracing Excellence

Excellence is a continual quest at SEWA. We join hands to achieve world-class standards in all aspects of operation. We have a dedicated team of "Quality & Excellence" which encourages convivial and passionate pursuit of excellence and improvement through formal system of benchmarking and assessment. Simply put, Mediocrity out, Excellence in.

5. Ownership

Sense of engagement, responsibility and accountability is another step towards employee motivation and the key to think like an owner. We purposefully focus on employee involvement in the decision making process (big or small) - whether it's owning the problem or owning the project. Mutual interdependency is the way of life at SEWA. The employees treat company's assets as their own and SEWA in turn makes explicit efforts to seek out and address the fairness concerns of the entire workforce thereby establishing a sense of trust and security and ingraining in them that : We are a family. I ensure that the employees realize that they are wanted and precious to me.

6. Ethics

Acting in an ethical way is the bedrock for our business. We are honest and straightforward. We

treat each other with respect and do not tolerate harassment or intimidation. And we uphold the values and principles of SEWA in order to demonstrate the unwavering commitment to do business the right way- The SEWA Way.

7. Integrity

We refuse to offer bribes or make questionable payments. We do not give or receive inappropriate gifts or hospitality. We communicate accurate financial, timely and relevant information and other reports to our stakeholders. Transparency leads to trustworthiness.



8. Teamwork

It leverages our individual strength. It binds us to a common goal which is to be among the best organizations in the world. Everyone is expected and encouraged to actively participate and communicate up, down and across the organization. The diversity of workforce makes SEWA an arena of burgeoning ideas where everyone willingly shares their ideas and resources. Be it a veteran or a novice, we "teach and learn" from each other. TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) is what we believe in too.

9. Passion for Winning

We have a healthy dissatisfaction with status quo. Driven by our compelling desire to improve and win we are determined to be the best in everything that we do. We love success and celebrate achievements. Each employee gets a chance to be coached and mentored which in turn enables them to accomplish positive results. And the best way to celebrate success, is as a group. All in all, we are a Winning team.

10. Trust

We have confidence in each other's capabilities and intentions. SEWA believes that all individuals can and want to contribute to their fullest potential. We take tough calls only with the trust in ourselves to push our boundaries and explore new opportunities.

The company trusts in employees and invests in them to grow and prosper by ushering them with global standard training programs and development plans. We believe that if we don't have trust inside our company then we can't transfer it to the customers.

11. Every Idea Counts

Here, everyone has a voice and each individual's contribution is respected and valued. Our success depends on encouraging the knowledge, skills and creativity of the employees and instilling in them the sense of being admired and appreciated. There is no such thing like a “silly” idea, rethinking the familiar is “innovation and being creative” forms the basis of inspirational leadership.



Step 7

BUILD AGILE PROJECT TEAM

I always advice not to have more than nine knowledgeable, skillful and smart members in a team. Throughout my business life the maximum team members I used is nine and I love calling them the 9 champions. Each with a unique role, accountability and responsibility.



Three conditions are essential to the nine champions to be effective: *Trust among members, a sense of identity and a sense of efficacy.*

The 9 Champions

Following are the champions :

1. The 'sponsor'

Who provides resources, removes roadblocks and determines when to disband the team.

2. The 'leader'

Who ensures the team has clear objectives and makes sure everyone is involved and committed. The 'challenger', who questions effectiveness and presses for continuous improvement and results.

3. The 'doer'

Who urges the team to get on with the job in hand and does practical tasks.

4. The 'thinker'

Who produces carefully considered ideas and weights up and improves upon ideas from others.

5. The 'supporter'

Who eases tension, helps them cover personal agendas or conflicts, makes thing easier, and maintains harmony.

6. The 'organizer'

Maintains schedule and makes sure all members stay on the same page.

7. The 'advisor'

Advises the team about the potential risks that may come along in the way.

8. The 'challenger'

The 'challenger', who questions effectiveness and presses for continuous improvement and results.

9. The 'energizer'

The 'energizer', provides inspiration. He can view situations and opportunities with innate simplicity.



No Energy Vampires

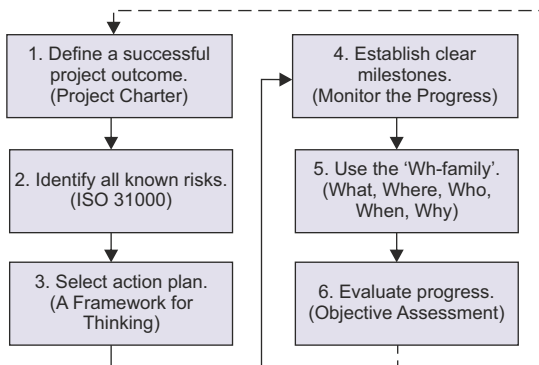
Energy vampires are people who suck all the positive energy out of us to fuel their relentless hunger for negativity, leaving us drained, exhausted, and unhappy. Whatever you call them - energy vampires, energy suckers, or negative-toxic people - they can wreak havoc on your project life if you don't have effective strategies to deal with them.

Step 8

MAPPING A PROJECT

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Project managers can organize their team, their thoughts, and visualize every moving part of their project workflow by using mind maps.



Exceptional Outcomes

33 KV Substation: SEWA's Success Story

Following is one of success stories I would like to share with the reader. One of the important projects SEWA is doing on a regular basis to meet the demand and improve the efficiency of the network is building 33kv Substations across Sharjah. The table below shows the difference before implementing and after implementing the new SEWA Project Management module in Rahmania 33KV substation project.



Rahmania Project - Turning Dream into Reality Before & After

One of the old substation	Rahmania 33kv substation
Total Duration: 2 years	Total Duration: 4 months & 14 days
Total Cost: \$ 9.5 Million	Total Cost: \$ 6 Million
Stakeholder: Frustrated	Stakeholder: Overwhelmed



About the author : Dr.

Alleem earned a Ph.D. from the University of Salford, Manchester, UK, and received honorary doctorates from various

International Universities in

recognition of his achievements in the socio-economic fields.

Dr. Alleem is the chairman of Sharjah Electricity & Water Authority - UAE. He served for over a decade as Director General, Department of Seaports and Customs and Sharjah Free Zones Authority. He was the driving force in transforming the zones into a strategic commerce hub empowering thousands of businesses in the region, thereby contributing to the development of the UAE economy. He has been instrumental in bringing on board over 12,000 companies from across 157 nations attracting a whopping \$ 40 billion FDI.

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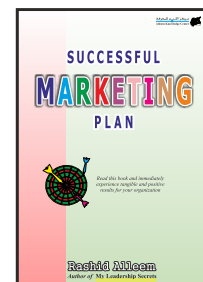
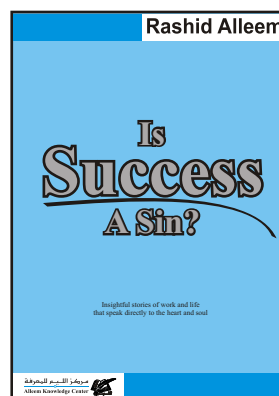
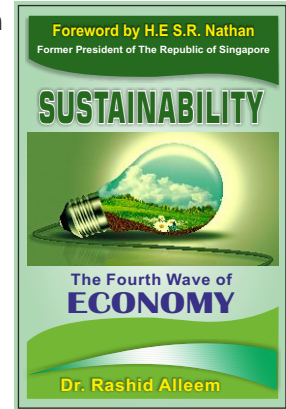
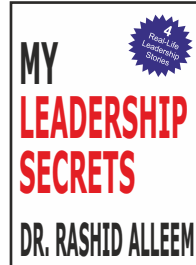
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Water and energy for all and forever

Help us
to achieve our vision
Water and energy for all and forever

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