

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Learning and Knowledge Development for a Globally Sophisticated Workforce (5)

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USING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN MULTI-CULTURAL
PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Abstract

Project management has endured the test of time: the arc of its application extends from constructing the wonders of the ancient world to its vital role in sending Rover to Mars. Across that arc of time, buttressed by advances in knowledge and technology, the tools and techniques of project management have evolved to meet ever-escalating challenges. However, in an increasingly global, inter-connected world, the multi-cultural complexities we encounter, frequently dilutes performance and thwarts progress. Awareness of the diversity and complexity of multi-cultural issues in large-scale, global projects is a small, albeit necessary, step. However, to be recognized as truly excellent in this important endeavor requires a commitment to developing and applying transformational leadership skills. A transformational leader is an inspired and inspiring individual who transcends self-interest and uses his or her intellectual and inter-personal talents to excite, develop and motivate every stakeholder in the project to outperform their aspirations and deliver distinctive excellence. Drawing on globally recognized expertise in project management and academic research on leadership, this paper illuminates a path forward for leaders in this field to elevate their skills and performance to new levels of excellence. In a discipline that prides its advancements in technical tools and techniques and includes hardcore engineers, technologists and scientists, transformational leadership concepts may appear to be secondary, soft-skills. We contend that it is the secret sauce that will separate winners from losers.