

Interview with Nukhet Hayriye Akinci Gokaltay



Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler
Istanbul, Turkey

İpek Sahra Özgüler (Ozguler): *Good morning Nukhet Hayriye Akinci Gokaltay. Could you present yourself for the PMWJ readers?*

Nukhet Hayriye Akinci Gokaltay (Gokaltay): My name is Nukhet Hayriye Akinci Gokaltay. I am currently an entrepreneur, I am founder of GCM 360 global consulting company. At the same time I am the training coordinator of a digital marketing training company (Booacademy). I just finished my project on a food innovation(Chococarob). We incorporated within one year.

I started as an assistant principal accountant at Enka group of companies. A year later I was promoted to Enka Holding financial group (ENKA is the 52nd on the List of “Top 250 International Contractors” in 2014. The annual issue by ENR ranks the 225 largest construction contracting firms from around the world.) For the past nine years, I worked as a CEO for Likya company which is a group company of Enka; at the same time I was chief editor of publications at Enka. I retired because my father was very ill. That year I was chairman of the board at KA.DER, Soroptimist, Red Pepper.

Then I wrote two books (accepted my father died period), then started working as a radio programmer (career, education, poetry, tango lyrics were subjects of the radio programs). I wrote articles on education for annex AKSAM newspaper called pozitive for six months.

Özgüler: *Could you tell us main factors of successful project management as a CEO?*

Gokaltay: According to me, project management's soul includes the main factors given below:

The first main factor is that certainly project managers and all members team to 'be on the same page' in order to aim for the same outcome. We have identified all team members and ensured, through good communication, that project's stakeholders have clarify of the project's objectives and outputs. That is why first step is: stakeholder agreement on the projects outputs. I assigned as an assistant to do detailed planning then commences by breaking down the components into subcomponents to produce a product (deliverables) breakdown stucture as far as breakdown is feasible.

Ozguler: What is your most efficent tactic to achieve of project's outcomes

Gokaltay: Management achieves a level of granularity needed to manage the project on a day-to-day basis. This is typically represented as a schedule.

Ozguler: *Could you tell us about your civil society projects?*

Gokaltay: I am founder of www.Needleworkbazaar.com, www.ipekigneoyasi.com Anatolian Women's handmade scarves and shawls with exclusive Anatolian ornaments and fabrics are one of the most unique gifts. The needlework bazaar is a social responsibility project.

I am board member of "Red Pepper Civil organization", also KA.DER NGO; which aims to increase the number of women in politics and in decision making positions so as to achieve equal representation of women and men. Both have similar aims. KA.DER believes the different experience and capabilities of women should also be reflected in social and political issues.

I am a Women Party Founder. My life-long project is to restore Turkish women's equal rights. That's why I 'm working voluntarily in women's rights-based civil society organizations. UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Also the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. UN Women supports United Nations Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programs and services needed to implement these standards.

I work voluntarily in women's rights-based civil society organizations for 8 years; therefore Lopa Banerjee (who is Chief of Civil Society Section of UN) had sent an invitation letter to me for my participation to CSW60 (United Nations Women Status Commission).

I represented KA.DER Organization at the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women that was held from 14 to 24 March 2016 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In the world, Turkey is one of the few countries which has a WOMEN 'S PARTY. I am proud of being one of the founders of Women's Party in Turkey.

I attended ICLD Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy ITP project: Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective, Local Democracy and Social Sustainability with a Gender Perspective 2013 - 2014.

ITP Activities: Improved skills in change management and strategic planning; Expanded national and International networks in support of local development and decentralized governance at different level. Nature, scope and purpose of local governments in a multi- level democracy.

As a board member of Red Pepper NGO; I moderate a "Child Abuse and Gender Education" program which includes training parents and children in this regard. This project started with the Dutch Consulate; Consulate of Sweden will continue with (February 2011-2014).

I write about women and children rights and also direct many social responsibility projects, to improve the rights of vulnerable groups for civil society organizations.

My art donation movie to Boğazici University for Blind Students to compete in Unicef Sixty Seconds Movie Competition; "Invisible Ball" short movie. During 2006 I was producing a Radio Program, on prime-time about Social Security Issues and career problems for 5 days a week.

My Lovely Projects

I have produced four films which were donations. Their names are "Mission", "Voices in The Void", "Immigrant Girl" and "Invisible Ball". (for GETEM); also I Composed music and directed and wrote their screenplays for those four movies.

My Songs: Music & Lyrics: 1 - Woman Political Initiative Song

2 - Mourning for the law against abortion.

3 - Song of Taksim for Gezi Park.

4 - One Million Rising day's song, against violence towards women that's name is "Betrayel".

5 - "KA.DER's NGO's Song".

Also I wrote lyrics and composed HATAY SPORT (for football, Women Volleyball teams) song.

For the people forming success of the team, it is essential to have good intentions, team spirit and positive approach.

I conducted all my successful social responsibility projects according to project management principles.

Özgüler: *What are some of the biggest risks and challenges facing program managers?*

Gokaltay: I faced **Undefined Goals risk** which was suffering. I asked the right question to establish and communicate clear goals from the outset.

Project Scope Changes risk – When I face it I ask for changes to a project, to evaluate each request and decide how and if to implement it, while communicating the effects on budget and deadlines to all stakeholders, team, management.

Usually I notice a **Communication deficit risk** – If Team members do not provide enough information to enough people, along with the lack of a culture for good communication. When I observe this I determine proper communication flows for project.

Management expectation **challenge about resource competitions**: Usually every Project competes for people resource, money resource, time resource against other projects. My approach for this situation: Usually I ask upper level management to define and set project priority across all projects.

Every Project may have **Uncertain dependencies** – At first my team and I gather for a brainstorming session and we create "what if?" scenarios. Then we update the list of project risk items if necessary based on the results.

Some Project can fail to manage risk - I and my management team can either act to reduce the chance of the risk occurrence, or act or plan towards responding to the risk occurrence after it happens.

If my team has Insufficient skills – It can happen from time to time. My strategy is: Starting with the project manager role, document the core set of skills needed to accomplish the expected workload, and honestly bounce each person's skills against the list. Using this assessment of the team, guide the team towards competency with training, cross-training, additional resources, external advisors, and other methods to close the skills gap.

Lack of accountability problem's solution is: Determine and use accountability for project getting less risk profile result for managing in a more visible manner

Customers, end-users and even upper management are not engaged during the project. Project teams can get wound up in their own world of internal deliverables, deadlines, and process, and the people on the outside do not get to give added input during the critical phases. My Solution: Discussing and providing status updates to all project participants - keeping them informed. Inviting and encouraging stakeholders, customers, end-users, and others to periodic status briefings, and providing an update to those that did not attend.

Maybe vision and goals not well-defined – which is another challenge. Then determine which parts of a project are not understood by the project participants - I ask them or note feedback and questions that come up. I check the project documentation as prepared, and tighten up the stated objectives and goals - an editor has appropriate skills to find uncertain terms and phrasing. Each project is, hopefully, tied into to the direction, strategic goals, and vision for the whole organization, as part of the portfolio of projects for the organization.

Experience and updating yourself is the best solution for Project management challenges.

Özgüler: Thank you for your time.

About the Interviewer



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İpek Sahra Özgüler graduated from the Istanbul University with the Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014. She works as international correspondent at PMWJ. Before joining PMWJ, she worked for global multinational companies and leading local companies such as Coca Cola, Deloitte, Turkcell Superonline, Havelsan and TAV IT. Over the years, she has gained extensive experience in managing various medium and large scale projects, programs and portfolios.

Her article named “When I Decided to Develop Multi Processing Project Manager’s System” was published in the book “*A Day in the Life of a Project Manager*”. She has published several articles in the *PM World Journal* and one in PMI’s *PM Network* magazine. İpek is actively involved in sailing, writing and discovering new cultures. She can be contacted at ipeksahra@gmail.com.