

Interview with Rich Maltzman

Author, Educator, PMO Leader
Co-founder of EarthPM, LLC



Interviewed by İpek Sahra Özgüler
Istanbul, Turkey

Rich Maltzman, PMP, is a 40-year veteran of the telecom industry, with the last 30 years in a Global PMO role, where he has helped build competency models, career paths, curricula, mentorship, and certification programs for project managers and aspiring project managers. He's also a professor of project management and MBA courses at Boston University and Clark University. He focuses on the converting weaknesses into strengths while teaching students how to apply learned skills to everyday situations, and to help 'accidental' project managers become intentional project managers.

Rich is the co-founder of EarthPM, LLC, a U.S. company devoted to integrating sustainability thinking into project management. In this role, he has offered a view of project management that considers "thinking through the end of the project" to focus on benefits realization and a triple bottom line focus.

With engineering degrees (BSEE from the University of Massachusetts, an MSIE from Purdue University) business certificates (mini-MBA from Wharton and a Masters Certificate in International Business Management granted jointly from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business and INSEAD of France), Rich has blended the technical, strategic, and business elements of project management that must work together.

His published works include many articles and the following books (co-authored): *Green Project Management* (2012); *Project Workflow Management: A Business Process Approach* (2014); *Driving Project, Program, and Portfolio Success: The Sustainability Wheel* (2015); and *Bridging the PM Competency Gap* (2017).

Today, my special guest is Richard Maltzman, 2011 Cleland award-winning co-author of Green Project Management and several other books on PM competency and facilitating great project meetings.

İpek Sahra Özgüler (Özgüler): Dear Richard, please introduce yourself for PM World Journal readers.

Rich Maltzman (Maltzman): Well, as you have said, I have co-written several books, and yes, one of them won the Cleland Award, which is PMI's singular literature award, given annually – we snagged that in 2011 for our book on the intersection of PM and sustainability in 2011. However, I also keep busy with a full-time job at a major telecom in their Global PMO and in creating and teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses at Boston University and Clark University.

Özgüler: So – what's in that book, what do you think helped it win the Cleland Award?

Maltzman: The book is not about managing wind farms or projects to save whales. Although the focus is on "green", it's about how project managers can (and should) expand their thinking beyond their end of the projects. We're not saying they're responsible for operating the project's product – just that they should consider that long-term, steady-state when they plan the project. The book won the award either because it was a relatively new idea and brought meaningful innovation and thought leadership to project management, or because it has a picture on its cover of a tree that grows money. Sometimes I think it was the latter.

Özgüler: How do project managers maximize resources and get most out of limited budgets?

Maltzman: I'd give you an answer from a composite of the books I've written and co-written, as well as from my teaching at the University level: it's about connecting benefits realization to the project objectives. This may not only assure that you're focused on the right things, it may also get your budget expanded, because you've better illustrated your value.

Özgüler: What are proven techniques and best practices in green project management?

Maltzman: I actually think we should stop using the term green project management. It was a reasonable title for our book but now the term is overused and frankly almost meaningless. The focus should be on the overall intersection between sustainability and Project Management. That said, the best overarching practice is to assure that your view goes beyond the conclusion of the project when, for example, you are identifying risks. One technique, therefore, is to be sure that your risk identification templates include risks that may only show up 5 years after the project is turned up.

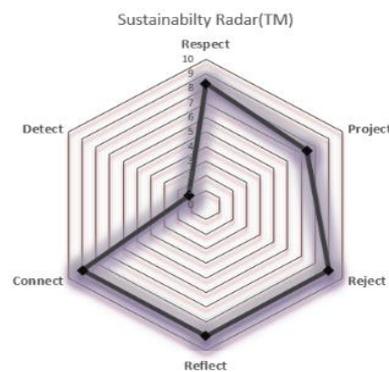
Özgüler: You are the co- author of the book, "Driving Project, Program, and Portfolio Success: The Sustainability Wheel", published by CRC Press in 2015 in which you shared your

advice on how enterprises can attain higher levels of sustainability and sustained project success and introduced a new tool “Sustainability Wheel™”. What is Sustainability Wheel™ and how could project managers use this tool for project success?

Maltzman: My answer here – and it is not a coincidence – connects with the answer above. The Sustainability Wheel™ is a tool to assess the maturity of an organization (for-profit or not) in how projects are run with respect to the Triple Bottom Line. It uses six aspects of assessment which I’ll discuss below.

Özgüler: You mentioned six interrelated dimensions of sustainability integration. What are these dimensions?

Maltzman: They are, in no particular order (but they do rhyme): Respect, Project, Reject, Reflect, Connect, and Detect. The details are in the book, but they have to do with how the organization as a whole truly buys into sustainability and TBL thinking, and how well this is conveyed to the project manager level. There are assessment questions for each dimension, yielding a six-sided radar chart that describes the signature of your organization, and we provide tips for the most common signatures. For example, below is the signature of what we call a Fearless Leader, which is strong in all dimensions except in the “Detect” dimension. Detect means the ability to deal with treats to sustainability outcomes – for example the idea of secondary risks or risks that only show up well after the project is turned over. In the book, each of 12 major signatures are interpreted, analyzed, and remedies are suggested for each.



Fearless Leader

Özgüler: Last year, your last book, Bridging the PM Competency Gap, published by J.Ross Publishing. Please give detail information about this book.

Maltzman: This book is the result of a collaboration with Loredana Abramo, PMP. Between the two of us we have about 7 decades of experience in working with project managers and PMOs. We went to hundreds of PMs and to 36 PM thought leaders and got their opinions about if – and where – PM competency is lacking.

Özgüler: Is there a gap in PM competency, and how can we fill it?

Maltzman: Oh yes, that's why there's a book! The gap is varied but it centers on leadership and communications skills – and it's exacerbated by the generational differences we now have in the workforce amongst not only our PMs but our project team members. You'll enjoy this book if you like history and architecture – we start off with the way in which competencies and skills used to be passed on from generation to generation using examples like the Terracotta Army at Xi'an, and the Hagia Sofia.

Özgüler: Thank you, Richard.

Maltzman: My pleasure. I wish your readers a sustainably successful 2018!

About the Interviewer



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İpek Sahra Özgüler graduated from the Istanbul University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. As a project manager, she has more than 10 years' experience in various areas such as portfolio management, program management, project management, software management, business analysis. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014.

She has managed a variety of projects across manufacturing, defence, FMCG (Cola Cola), insurance (Euler Hermes), audit (Deloitte), telecommunication, ICT and aviation sectors and gained broader insights. In addition, she has worked as international correspondent for the *PM World Journal* since 2014.

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