

**“Future – proof Construction SMEs.
For a new generation of Safety,
Sustainability and Human Resources – oriented
Project Managers”**

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**10 COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF MANAGING PROJECTS IN A
SAFE, SUSTAINABILITY & HRM ORIENTED WAY**

By

ERBIL PROJECT CONSULTING ENGINEERING

Civil Engineer Altan Dizdar

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS....	4
3. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF MANAGING PROJECTS IN A SAFE, SUSTAINABILITY & HRM ORIENTED WAY	5
3.1 Advantage 1: Staffing Organization and Integrated Team Approach.....	6
3.2 Advantage 2 : Health & Safety	7
3.3 Advantage 3 : Organizational Learning & Training.....	8
3.4 Advantage 4 : Knowledge-Based Competition	9
3.5 Advantage 5 : Work and Organizational Designs	10
3.6 Advantage 6: Sustainability	11
3.7 Advantage 7: Developing and Motivating Employees for Knowledge-Based Competition.....	12
3.8 Advantage 8 : Measuring Knowledge-Based Resources	12
3.9 Advantage 9 : Project Safety as a Sustainable Competitive Advantage	13
3.10 Advantage 10 : Research and Development Activities (R&D)	13
4. CONCLUSIONS	14
REFERENCES:.....	15

1. INTRODUCTION

Here, the advantages of managing projects in a Safe, Sustainable and HRM oriented way are shown where explored and extracted through the experiences of successful companies all around the World. The best practices are derived from the internet considering the experiences & problems that are faced in the daily life and out of these experiences, advantages of working conditions considering the rules of safe, sustainable & HRM way are listed in order to show the companies that they would have a lot of benefits when they apply these rules in their companies.

While making the search, it is tried to have the best suitable examples and organisations who were easily solving the main problems at the construction sites and it is tried to identify the solutions to basic and main problems that are being faced during the constructions and it is believed that these listed advantages will bring a good documentation for the companies who wants to have a management with respect to Safe, Sustainable and HRM way in their organizations' structures.

In order to be successful in the management of human resources, people need personal credibility, business knowledge, understanding of the business strategy, technology knowledge, and the ability to deliver Human Resources services. In a company's business strategy, human resource practices are important for helping companies deal with sustainability, globalization, and technology challenges. The sustainability challenges are the economy, the labour force, how and where work is done, human capital, and meeting the needs (ethical practices, high-quality products and services, return to shareholders and social responsibility). Global challenges include entering international markets, immigration, and offshoring. Technology challenges include using new technologies to support flexible and virtual work arrangements, high-performance work systems, and developing effective HRM practices and human resource information systems.

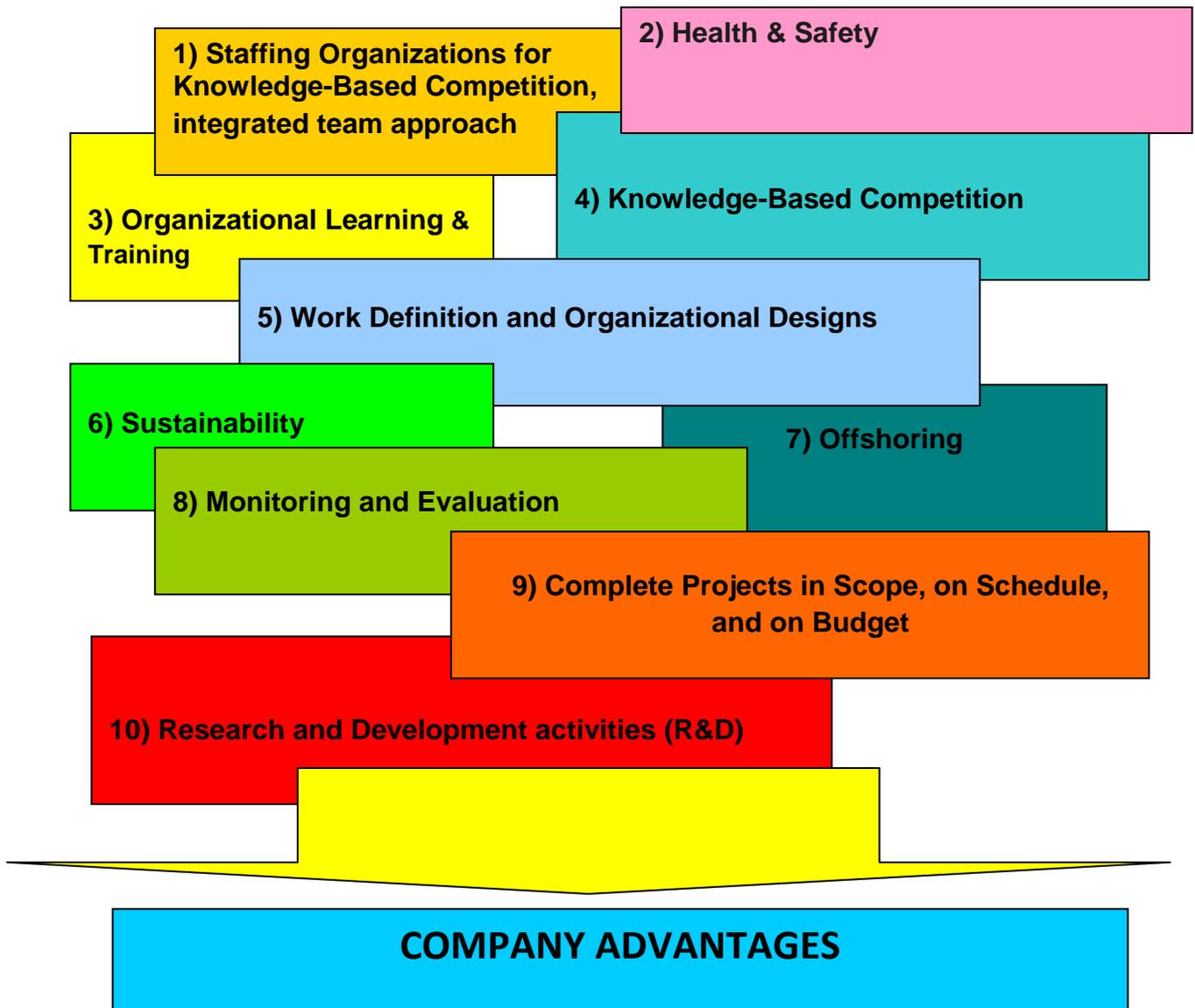
All of the listed advantages are important for companies to deal with the competitive challenges and contribute to business strategy. Safe, sustainability and human resource way of management play an important role in determining the survival, effectiveness, and competitiveness of the businesses. Competitiveness is related to company effectiveness, which is determined by whether the company satisfies the needs of stakeholders: stakeholders who want a return on their investment; customers, who want a high-quality product or service; and employees, who desire interesting work and reasonable compensation for their services. The community, which wants the company to contribute to activities and projects and minimize pollution of the environment, is also an important fact. Companies that do not meet stakeholders' needs are unlikely will not have a competitive advantage over other firms in their industry.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENTS



SOURCE: Based on SHRM-BNA Survey No. 66, "Policy and Practice Forum: Human Resource Activities, Budgets, and Staffs, 2000–2001," Bulletin to Management, Bureau of National Affairs Policy and Practice Series, June 28, 2001. Washington, DC: Bureau of National Affairs.

3. COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF MANAGING PROJECTS IN A SAFE, SUSTAINABILITY & HRM ORIENTED WAY



Advantage 1: Staffing Organization and Integrated Team Approach

The management of human resource to facilitate and enhance knowledge-based competition, firms must understand the knowledge base of their employees and establish mechanisms whereby these employees can apply and share that knowledge. In addition, it is seen that the integrated team approach is also very important in the working atmosphere of the organisation.

In order to have a successful work, the organisations must make a careful examination of competitors' workforces to approach high-quality employees. In this process it is important to select the workers who will be the best performers and therefore contribute to a competitive advantage and success for the organization. Obviously, a first step is to determine what is required to perform effectively in the organization and a good definition of the work must be defined to the competitor. Then, candidates who have been accepted can be determined for their skills and capabilities to meet the appropriate challenges and requirements. An important element is to share the knowledge, spreading it throughout the organization; therefore, employees who have strong social skills and ability to network will be important to support the sharing of knowledge. In order to keep the staff in the organisation, the employers recommend interesting strategies that emphasize the person-organization fit because of the continuous movement of key organization members from team to team and project to project. They recommend offering creative compensation packages (for example, luxury cars, club memberships, and so on). Firms can improve their competitive advantages by effective hiring practices.

Selecting the appropriate staff for the so-called position will increase the success of the company and will carry it to a higher position in the sector. Especially the selected staff must be a good coordinator in his work and must know his duties and tasks very well to be successful and to complete the work.

The integrated team approach helps to bind the team even more closely together and shows that they are working towards one collective objective. Team selection is very important and if the employees feel that they are in a comfortable and compromising attitude, their efficiency will be much more than when they work in an uncomfortable and stressed attitude. Principle is "to provide a great work environment and treat each other with respect and dignity." Create a positive climate for human resources and this will lead to a successful work in the company.

Advantage 2: Health & Safety

The organisation must have knowledge about health and safety legislation and must organise the instruction and training of the staff as regards working practices that comply with health and safety regulations. They must also promote a conscious approach to risk management among site workers.

An effective management structure and arrangements must be considered at the sites and policies must be applied very carefully. All staff is motivated and empowered to work safely and to protect their long-term health, and this will be done not only simply to avoid any accidents but this will also protect their lives and health. A positive health and safety culture is supplied firstly by the organisations and they must define the responsibilities and relationships, which lead to a positive health and safety culture, and secure the implementation and continued development of the health and safety policy. After that, the organisation must apply these rules at the construction site in order to have safe and healthy working conditions. So, for the application of this system, either an experienced site manager must be taken to the organisation that is he will be experienced in health and safety legislation or he must be trained about these legislations before the work starts. He also must be able to train the other workers with this knowledge in order to apply the rules of the legislations and the common view is to tell the workers how important to apply these rules at the construction sites in order to avoid any kind of accidents.

Effective health and safety policies strengthen the business performance and also minimise the financial losses. Accidents may occur, so health and safety and risk management is necessary to be applied at the construction sites to have control on the risks; a systematic approach must be supplied to the identification of risks and they must be controlled very carefully.

There must be a planned and systematic approach to implementing the health and safety policy through an effective health and safety management system. The aim is to minimise risks. Wherever possible, risks can be overcome by the design of facilities, equipment and processes. If risks cannot be eliminated, they are minimised by the use of physical controls or, through systems of work and personal protective equipment. If the workers have to wear something special on them in order to protect themselves against accidents, they have to exactly wear them. Specific actions to promote a positive health and safety culture must be identified. Planning is essential for the implementation of health and safety policies. Adequate control of risks can only be achieved through co-ordinated action by all members of the organisation. An effective planning system for health and safety requires organisations to establish and operate a health and safety management system which: control risks; reacts to changing demands; sustains a positive health and safety culture.

If controls fail, the workers will be in danger and there will be accidents which will cause to harm or loss. So, the common view of the contractors will be to exactly apply the rules of safe and healthy working conditions and have a plan for the risk management in order to avoid any kind of accidents at the sites.

Advantage 3: Organizational Learning & Training

Organizational learning is the acquisition of knowledge by individuals and groups who are willing to apply it in their jobs in making decisions and influencing others to accomplish tasks which are important for the organization. Continuous learning & training is an important capability that can serve as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Many highly competitive organizations now invest in developing the capability for continuous organizational learning. Training and development programs are commonly used to promote organizational learning. Most training and development programs focus on ensuring that employees have the most up-to-date, explicit knowledge in their respective areas of specialization.

Another approach to transferring knowledge is to assign more experienced professionals to lead a team of less experienced professionals. Over time, the less experienced professionals learn the more experienced professionals' skills. Within the organisation, training courses must be supplied to the workers in order to teach them their business professionally. This will bring the success of the work and ability to finish the work in time. Companies can also be involved in the training of the current employees establishing partnerships with schools to help improve the skills of the current and future workforce.

Opportunities for career growth, learning, and development and performing exciting and challenging work are some of the most important factors in determining employees' engagement and commitment to their current employer. It is important to identify employees who want to develop their skills and seek promotions and keep them growing through new job experiences and training.

Employees need to have the financial, time, and content resources (courses, experiences, development opportunities) available to increase their knowledge. Managers take an active role in identifying training needs and helping to ensure that employees use training in their work. Also, employees should be actively encouraged to share knowledge with colleagues and other work groups across the company using e-mail and the Internet. For a learning organization to be successful requires that teams of employees collaborate to meet customer needs. Managers need to empower employees to share knowledge, identify problems, and make decisions. This allows the company to continuously experiment and improve. Training and development gives employees the opportunity for personal growth within the company. Work that is designed to be meaningful and allows employees to use a variety of their skills relates to several different aspects of engagement including satisfaction, intention to stay, pride, and opportunity to perform challenging work. Trained staff will give much more efficiency to the work whereas untrained ones will be inexperienced and inefficient.

Advantage 4: Knowledge-Based Competition

It is believed that competing on the basis of knowledge will be critical for organizational success in the coming years. Firms can perform a knowledge-based competitive advantage in several ways. First, many programs can be designed to affect individuals. Then, models and theories can be provided like how these programs are likely to influence the behaviour of individuals and groups. Second, it can be examined how to increase the knowledge resources of the organization. Third, organizational programs and systems can be designed to help firms to go up and use the knowledge they have.

If key employees in the acquired firm leave before the firms are successfully combined, important human capital and knowledge is lost. Therefore, controlling turnover can be critical for a successful knowledge requirement and future learning. For example, different compensation systems for managers in the two original firms can lead to jealousy and avoid the cooperation between managers of the two firms. Therefore, expertise about how to design compensation systems that encourage collaboration can also be useful to firms that need to hold knowledge resources after a merger or acquisition.

Human capital & knowledge base can be very important in firm expansion strategies. For example, firms that desire to expand their operations into new geographic locations can use the social capital of key employees. Professional service firms can open offices in new cities where their current customers have operations. In this way, they can more effectively serve their current customers, and they can also use their current customers to identify and serve new customers. They may use their current employees to manage the new office and social contacts to hire new professional employees to staff the new office. Finally, they expand the use of their top employees' knowledge in serving customers in the new geographic regions. Likewise, firms may learn from the new markets that they enter. For example, a firm may enter a new geographic region where a new technology has been developed and used. The firm entering this market may learn the new technical capabilities by hiring employees with this knowledge to staff the new operation.

It is also becoming very common to use contract workers instead of permanent employees. To employ contract workers provides access to needed skills but because contract workers only provide their knowledge to the firm for a limited time and often do not have any communication with the other staff to teach them their skills, usually very little organizational learning occurs. In reality, it is their disadvantage to help an organization learn the knowledge they hold until they are given special opportunities to do so. If the organization knows their knowledge, it may have little need of their services in the future. For example, management systems can be designed to encourage employees to learn and share their knowledge with others. The organizational culture can be developed to encourage innovation and learning also.

Advantage 5: Work Definition and Organizational Designs

The definition of the work to the employees must be defined correctly and in detail and also the understandability must be easy in the definition with regard to internationalisation and specialisation and instructions must be translated into a workable format. It is recommended to improve organizational structures (configurations of positions, job duties, and lines of authority) in an easy & understandable way by the employees for the success of the organisation & the work.

Through technology and with the help of the employers' definition for the work format, employees can get the information needed to improve customer service and product quality easily. This means that employees are expected to take more responsibility for satisfying the customer needs and determining how they perform their jobs whenever the conditions are satisfied for them, as getting the clear definition of the tasks, having the instructions and recommendations in a workable and understandable format. One of the most popular methods for increasing employee responsibility and control is work teams. Work teams involve employees with various skills who influence each other to assemble a product or provide a service. Work teams perform many of the activities usually done by managers, including selecting new team members, scheduling work, and coordinating activities with customers and other units in the company. To give teams' maximum flexibility, cross training between the team members must be applied also. Cross-training refers to training employees in a wide range of skills so they can fill any of the roles needed to be performed on the team.

Technology has allowed companies to form partnerships with one or more other companies separated by time, geographic distance, culture, and organizational boundaries because of the ease of the technology (e-mail, Internet, videoconferencing) to interact and complete their projects together. A company can use teams in partnerships with suppliers or competitors to get together the necessary talent to complete a project or speed the delivery of a product to the marketplace. The intent is to increase productivity and reduce project completion time by allowing employees to focus continuously on projects through using highly talented engineers who can work in their own time zone and location without having to move to a different country or work inconvenient hours.

Advantage 6: Sustainability

Sustainability is the ability of a company to survive in a dynamic competitive environment based on an approach to organizational decision making that considers company's ability to make a profit without sacrificing the resources of its employees, the community, or the environment.

Sustainability is an aspect of corporation in social responsibility related to the impact of the business on the environment and also refers to the company's ability to make a profit without sacrificing the resources of its employees, the community, or the environment. Company success is based on how well the company meets the needs of its stakeholders. Stakeholders refer to shareholders, the community, customers, employees, and all of the other parties that have an interest in trying that the company succeeds.

Sustainability includes the ability to deal with economic and social changes, practice environmental responsibility, engage in responsible and ethical business practices, provide high-quality products and services, and put in place methods to determine if the company is meeting stakeholders' needs.

While the concept of sustainability strategy is comparatively general, more often it is used when talking of environment issues where the sustainability strategy is the action plan that is taken to reduce the depletion or wastage of resources found on earth.

Organisations must evaluate the types of materials that are getting into and getting out of the business or firm. Further, they have to consider the impact on natural resources of the products and/or services that their business is manufacturing and lastly, they must discuss with their staff about the different alternatives available that will help refine the processes that take place in their firm so that they can have the least impact on the environment.

Since the 1990s, environment issues have had a lot of focus as many organizations and firms have over time been able to set in place a sustainability management team whose main aim is to develop a sustainability strategy that will help save the limited natural resources available and in turn reduce waste. In a typical firm, a sustainability strategy can include such things as minimizing packaging material used in production, putting up many paper recycling stations in the workplace.

Managers must have knowledge about sustainable practices. They must organise the logistics of the construction process to minimise the environmental burdens. They must organise the preparatory activities such as waste management, such as assigning responsibilities for materials and waste handling to the staff. To have sustainability in the organisation, they must deliver the duties and tasks to the employees which would help the organisation to perform in a sustainable way.

Advantage 7: Offshoring

Offshoring refers to the exporting of jobs from developed countries to countries where labour and other costs are lower. The main reason for offshoring the job is labour costs. Workers in other countries earn less than the developed countries performing the same job. Other reasons include the availability of a highly skilled and motivated workforce. In the developing countries, there are high numbers of engineering and science graduates. Finally, cheap global telecommunications costs allow companies with engineers many miles away to complete design work and interact with other engineers as if they were located in the office down the hall.

Offshoring includes high-skilled manufacturing jobs and is also valid in the service and information technology sectors, for example, telephone call centre, accounting bookkeeping and payroll, legal research, software engineers, architecture, and design.

Offshoring will have a positive effect for the economy of the developing countries as they can find jobs from the developed countries and unemployment will be decreased in this way. This will bring a growth in their economy helping them to improve their industry.

Advantage 8: Monitoring and Evaluation

The employees and the work must be monitored and evaluated all during the course of the work to have good & successful results in the end. Monitoring and evaluation answers questions related to how well a project or strategy is working and identifies the conditions under which a conservation action is likely to succeed or fail. It can serve as an early warning system for potential remedial actions.

Monitoring means tracking the key elements of programme performance on a regular basis (inputs, activities, results). Whereas, evaluation is the episodic assessment of the change in targeted results that can be attributed to the programme/project intervention or the analysis of inputs and activities to determine their contribution to results.

Monitoring and evaluation helps people to: determine the extent to which the programme project is on track and to make any needed corrections accordingly; to make informed decisions regarding operations management and service delivery; to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources; to evaluate the extent to which the programme or the project is having the desired impact.

Monitoring and evaluation of the system and the work will bring a definite success to the organisation and when applied, it will be an advantage for the organisation to be successful in his work and job.

Advantage 9: Complete Projects in Scope, on Schedule, and on Budget

To be consistently profitable, a construction company must complete projects in scope, on schedule, and on budget. Having without any mistakes, finishing the work in time and in a proper way will give a great advantage to the organisation to have a good reputation in the sector.

Firstly, the organisation must be perfectly organized and organise every step of his work very carefully. He must take some time to plan out what he should be working on. He must look at the contract, follow the directives & legislations, and make a schedule for the work he must establish. He mustn't change it along the course of the work and obey to the specifications very carefully.

When planned and designed with respect to directions, organisation can finish his work in time, within the budgets and having successful results in the end.

Advantage 10: Research and Development Activities (R&D)

Research and development activities (R&D) represent a knowledge-based capability that serves as a competitive advantage for firms to follow the innovation. The primary intent of R&D is to develop new ideas about products, processes, or services. Both knowledge and social capital contribute to the success of R&D efforts. To convert such knowledge into important innovations usually requires individuals in the organization to combine the knowledge with an understanding of the market, collectively use the results of the research to build a new product, and then work to commercialize it.

Therefore, the ability to combine existing knowledge to generate new applications by making R&D searches and use this knowledge capability will be an advantage for the company. Technology is used to reduce the time for administrative tasks and to improve Human Resources efficiency and effectiveness.

Meantime, this will widen the horizon of the companies and they will have opportunity to be well known by the researches & developments they do in the sector which will also be helpful to the other companies who are working in the same sector.

4. CONCLUSIONS

From the listed advantages above and also from the experiences we had from our supervision of the constructions, it is seen that the most important thing to supply in the construction is the safety of the workers, sustainability and human resources management protecting the environment. In order to have a successful work and construction, when we obey to the directives & legislations, we can be very successful and complete our establishments in the best way. Monitoring, capacity of site managers, having a good team in a construction, following the rules are the most effective ways to have a good result at the end of the construction.

Otherwise, there will be a lot of unsolvable problems during the constructions and these will lead to failures of the establishments. To do the work stable also passes through the protections of the environment and we mustn't forget that this nature must survive for the next generations also. There are also directives to protect the environment so within the construction; everybody must obey to these rules.

We also see from the advantages that whenever everything is arranged and settled very properly within the construction, no problem occurs and nobody faces any obstacles at the construction site. We can have lessons from the listed advantages and we can also apply these management styles in our constructions.

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