

## PM WORLD TODAY – FEATURED INTERVIEW – MARCH 2008

## Interview with Felix Valdez

By José Machicao, PMP

*Félix Valdez, PMP, was a charter member of the PMI Lima Perú Chapter and was its first President. He is currently a consultant and trainer in project management. He teaches post graduate courses in project management at the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, and at the Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas. This interview was conducted in October 2007 by PMForum International Correspondent José Machicao in Lima.*

**PMForum:** Hi Felix, welcome to PMForum. You founded PMI Lima Chapter, how it was the experience? How it begun?

**Félix Valdez:** It all started back in 1994 when I was working for Cosapi S.A., a Peruvian EPC company. A colleague was receiving the PMI Network monthly, and I got interested by the strong growth of PMI, which at that time was about 30% yearly. I discovered that the PMI had a Project Management Body of Knowledge that could be used to help in all kind of projects. So I started to look for a local representative or local courses here in Lima, but we had none. So, we started sending faxes, and I remember talking to some friends from EPC and IT companies about the need to start a local chapter.



I combined my business trips with conferences about PMI and the importance of project management, so little by little we got to have about 30 members to have the "Potential Chapter" designation. We chartered in October 1999, and I flew to the PMI Global Conference in Philadelphia to receive the charter documents. We spent lots of hours, but it was really fun! I must have made more than 50 presentations at different companies, universities, and other institutions.

**PMForum:** How was your personal experience with project management?

**Félix Valdez:** My personal experience was in construction projects. I started as a project controls engineer for the construction of an oil terminal in northern Peru. We were using mostly time and cost management tools, with some formal change control processes. I later moved lead the engineering department, and the problems there were totally different: executing many projects at the same time, with both internal and external clients. At that time, we decided to apply for the ISO9000 certification, so it was a good opportunity to put in writing many project management processes for both the engineering and the construction projects.

**PMForum:** How do you think project management developed during the last 10 years in Peru?

**Félix Valdez:** The biggest change has been that now almost everybody recognizes that project management processes are very important for the success of institutions (private or public). Secondly, there is a broad supply of project management courses: In 1997 there was no project management courses open to the public. Now there are four Universities, offering 6 month courses, with about 700 students enrolling each year in those programs. There are many undergraduate courses in project management. In 1997 there was only one PMP in Peru. Now there are more than 100 PMPs.

**PMForum:** What would you think are the most relevant issues and achievements in Peruvian project management?



**Félix Valdez:** Peruvian professionals related to project management are shifting from understanding PM standards to a higher level of needs: to implement their organization's methodologies and supporting project management systems. Few are also implementing portfolio management methodologies. There is also a great need to work side by side with government institutions in order to promote project management practices.

**PMForum:** What are your personal challenges and the challenges of your country regarding project management?

**Félix Valdez:** My personal challenges are related to reaching decision makers both at private and public sectors, and to convince them about the benefits of project management.

Right now, because of the economic conditions created by the mining and agro-industry exports, there has been a large amount of money dedicated to social projects. The challenge here is to train and coach the new generation of project managers that will lead those projects.

The government has a national system for public investment, called SNIP (Sistema Nacional de Inversión Pública), which has been focused on deciding which projects should be executed, but there is a lack of project management skills for planning and controlling those public projects. At the same time there are a large number of project managers working in the private sector, so there is an opportunity for sharing lessons learned and collaborating for the development of Peru.

**About the Interviewer:****José Machicao***Internacional Correspondent - Peru*

**José Machicao**, PMP, is an International Correspondent for PMForum and *PM World Today* in Lima, Peru. Mr. Machicao is also an Organizational Project Management consultant, working in the public and private sectors in Peru. Mr. Machicao has a Masters Degree in Energy from the University of Cardiff, Wales, UK, and a Mechanical Engineering degree from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. He is a member of the Colegio de Ingenieros (Peruvian Association of Professional Engineers), the World Energy Council, the Association of Energy Engineers, and the Project Management Institute (PMI®). He is currently Education Director for the PMI GovSIG®. Additional information about José Machicao can be seen at <http://www.pmforum.org/pm%20forum%20team/index.htm#5>. José Machicao can be contacted at [jcmachicao@gmail.com](mailto:jcmachicao@gmail.com), and <http://blog.pucp.edu.pe/jcmachicao>.