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Impressions of the 22nd IPMA World Congress - Project Management to Run!

By Renate Prantner

From the 9th - 11th November 2008 the 22nd IPMA World Congress “Project Management to Run“ attracted more than 700 project management interested people to spend at least 2,5 days in a magnificent surrounding in order to share project management excellence and international expertise. Rome, Italy has done its best in order to offer a beautiful scenery for this yearly congress (besides lovely 20 degrees and sunshine almost the whole week) and invited project management experts, practitioners and upcoming young professionals to this annual IPMA highlight.

In 7 days the events ranged from the official Young Crew Workshop (6th – 8th November 2008), to a nation to nation forum, assessor workshops, the official opening of the congress to two days (10th – 11th November 2008) densely packed keynotes, poster and oral presentations, panels etc.

Unfortunately I wasn't able this year to participate in the Young Crew Workshop. What I heard from the participants on a nightly paper chase through Rome, it must have been such a great experience, top class presentations not only from high-ranking PM experts such as Tom Taylor but also workshops designed by and for international young project management professionals. I don't need to stress that the Young Crews definitely know how to network and I will certainly try to attend next year's workshop in Helsinki. Any young PM professional interested shouldn't miss this opportunity to meet people with the same enthusiasm about the subject and open for any new ideas and adventures.

The congress itself, taking place at the Palazzo di Congressi, offered top experts and old pm “suspects“ such as Ms. Mary McKinlay, Lynn Crawford, and Roland Gareis with keynote presentations on a variety of subjects related to project management, but also holding a few surprises. When Toni Ruttiman, a Swiss bridge builder for the past 20 years, introduced his concept of how to build 400 bridges without money, not only the PM youngsters were giving standing ovations. This congress saw numerous keynotes about the financial crisis, mega EPC projects, the American GTRI program to defend the world from nuclear terrorism etc. but only a few really new ideas have been presented. One definite highlight about new conceptions was Roland Gareis' presentation on relationships between project management and change management .

The paper presentations were organised around several topics and sometimes hidden behind strange titles; it was also sometimes hard to find the rooms on the first floor. Still it was sometimes really difficult for me to decide which paper presentation to attend, as 12 different presentations in parallel were being offered, besides outstanding paper presentations, where e.g. Russ Archibald presented his view about project portfolio and strategic management.

Generally the 22nd IPMA Congress was a lovely place in order to meet old friends, to get to know new ones, to network between the paper presentations, and to get some practical ideas about project management around the world.

About the Author:

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Renate Prantner is a consultant and responsible for marketing issues at PARDIS, an Austrian project management consultancy specializing in project, process and diversity management. Before that she was a research fellow for project management in the competence team for project management at the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna and the PROJEKTMANAGEMENT GROUP at the University of Economics and Business Administration, Vienna. She has participated in various research projects and programmes such as research *programme project orientation [international]*, *project orientation [austria II]* and "PM CAT". From 2007 until the middle of 2008 she also coordinated the international network *PMUni*, an international network of universities to promote professional education and research in project and process management. Ms. Prantner has a Masters Degree in International Business Administration from the University of Economics and Business Administration, Vienna, where she is currently writing her doctoral thesis on the subject of "Change Management – Project and Process Orientation". Renate is also an International Correspondent for PMForum and *PM World Today* in Vienna. Renate can be contacted at Renate.Prantner@pardis.eu .