

Landing a Company the project way



A personal, crisis management experience
at Atraxis Belgium

Emmanuel TRON

Comme d'habitude le problème est dans les chiffres et la
solution dans les hommes

J. Attali

Biography in short

- IT OLD TIMER
- 15 Y in PROJECTS/ PROGRAMS
 - Programme Director
 - SERVICES Business UNIT Manager
 - CIO
- with Bull, Integris, Banksys, Econocom
- and for SWIFT, Eurocontrol, Honeywell, Champion Spark Plugs, ...
- ATRAXIS Belgium General Manager

The CASE in short

- ATRAXIS = Sabena subsidiary for all ICT
- Member of Atraxis Group owned by Swissair
- After SN bankruptcy : 200 \searrow 135 persons - 60 \searrow 30 MEUR revenue
- ACTIVITIES ESSENTIAL TO BRUSSELS AIRPORT'S OPERATIONS
- Case started on 23 March 2002 when Atraxis Belgium selling process probable failure made urgent a B-PLAN

Purpose of the presentation

Parallelism between

**GENERAL MANAGEMENT IN CRISIS
SITUATION**

and

**GOOD PROJECT MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES**

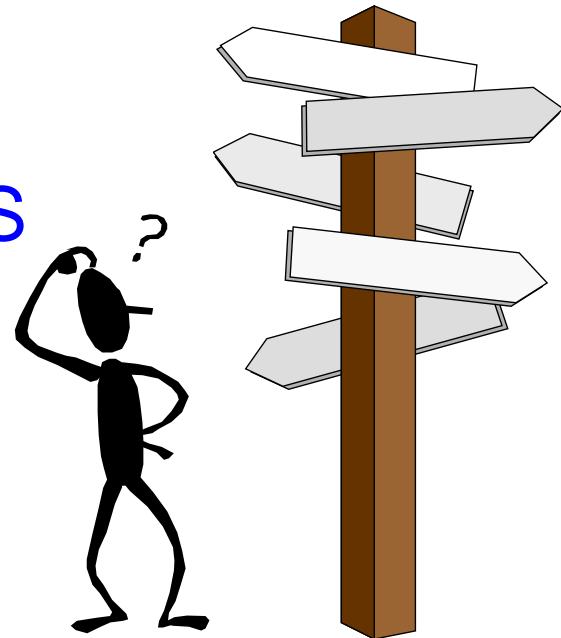
A Purpose of the presentation



ARE PROJECT MANAGERS FUTURE
COMPANIES' CEO?

Atraxis Project at start

- **OBJECTIVES ARE HIGH LEVEL :**
 - continuity of services, financial improvement, staff professional continuity, selling
- **TIME IS SHORT**
 - 1 week to produce the
TURNAROUND PLAN
- **ONLY FEW ELEMENTS
ARE AVAILABLE**



Turnaround Plan and Project Plan

- Clear strategy making evidence that objectives will be met
 - Major deliverables
 - Major milestones
 - Critical resources & Management team
 - Major activities
 - Sound financial bases
 - Communication Top and Team
 - Sell to Stakeholders
- LOOK RATHER THE SAME IS'NT IT?

What to learn?

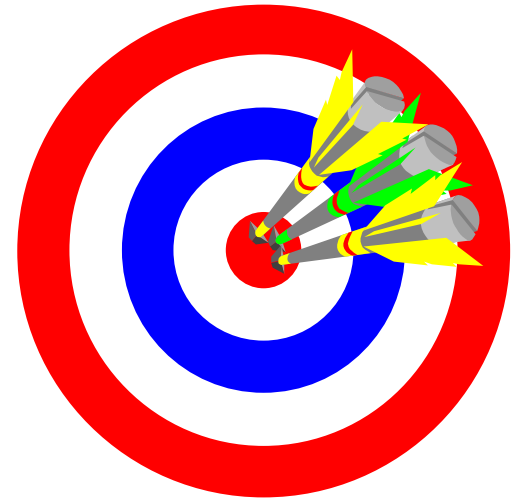
■ PROJECT STRATEGY IS KEY:

- close to requestor's (top management) business objectives (and not on the project goals)
- story-board of the project easy to understand by share and stakeholders
- high level synthetical view (not analytical)
- why it will work and not how it will work
- managing the uncertainties and coping with risks
- communication tool top and team

Then, the CEO (or the PM) is paid for results,
not for efforts

Atraxis Plan Strategy

- Simple principles
- 12 Months plan
- Resources plan
- Selling the company
- Restore financial situation



Atraxis Plan elaboration

■ TURNAROUND CONTEXT

- after bankruptcy
- take-over failure
- critical activities for the airport
- specific Sabena culture

■ SIMPLE PRINCIPLE :

- WIN-WIN challenge
 - For the clients : soft IT take-off
 - For Atraxis : soft landing

Atraxis Plan bases

■ 12 MONTHS PLAN:

- reasonable duration for changes
- acceptable by clients
- 3 phases: restructuring/ selling/transition

■ RESOURCES PLAN

- quick staff reduction and keep continuity capacity
- concentrated organisation and flat hierarchical structure
- personnel motivation
- small management team

Atraxis Plan bases

■ SELLING THE COMPANY:

- professional future for staff
- ensure services to clients
- normally a good opportunity for buyers:
 - high visible central potentialities around Airport
 - by apartment and not too expensive

■ RESTORE FINANCIAL SITUATION

- new contracts with clients - open book approach
- optimise all suppliers contracts and cut costs
- cash collection
- sales of assets

Atraxis Plan bases

- Why it will work : supporting rationales
 - Unfortunately FPS (functional points) not available for management
 - Services ratios (eg: 100PC support = 1,1 engineer)
 - Application Support staffing evaluation as guarantee of continuity
 - Comparable situations in others companies
 - Working by analogy
 - Iterative modeling

Atraxis Plan Implementation



NO PLAN RESISTS
THE ENEMY
GL PATTON

Phase 1 : Run and Reorganise
Phase 2 : Run and Sell
Phase 3 : Run and Transit

Atraxis Plan Implementation :

■ Phase 1: Reorganise and make it work

April 02 to July 02

- staff reduction to 80 persons,
- management team of 4 persons and overhead limited to 7 persons
- technical teams with critical mass
- complete reorganisation of the financial staff and get grip on the numbers
- suppliers contracts renegotiations
- clients contracts renegotiations and Steering Committee

Atraxis plan implementation

■ Phase 2 : Selling

- August 02 to December 02
- Big Bug : IT market collapsed in July 02
 - lot of interests but few positive answers
 - fears of clients about future
- Clients RFPs for new IT providers
- Steering Committee to coordinate RFPs
- Atraxis B-Plan : focus on main objectives
 - stick to strategy
 - adapt tactic

Atraxis Plan implementation

■ Phase 3 : Transition

- January 03- May 03
- Support transition effort and know how transfer:
 - Transition Project Plans
 - Set up Project Office to manage internal resources:
 - Project Plans to identify Atraxis deliverables
 - Steering Committee with all clients to allocate priorities
 - Steering Committee per client to manage issues (managed by new suppliers as ATOSORIGIN and GETRONICS)
 - projects staffing and know how transfer to new suppliers



■ Phase 3 : Transition

- Atraxis continues to deliver normal services in parallel up to 30th April 2003
- Transition was successful without services troubles thanks to the remarkable dedication of Atraxis staff and the good job done by the main new suppliers AtosOrigin and Getronics
- Close activities with an acceptable social plan.

Learning points

- Project overall strategy is key :
 - implement with consistency and flexibility
 - stick to the strategy
 - adapt the tactic
 - anticipate
- The business aim of the project is key, not the way
- Communication is essential
- In crisis situation, once the plan is defined, cross the fingers, there is only one bullet in the gun

Learning points

- Run a project as your own company, even if it is an internal project (intrapreneurship)
- Privilege top down approach, otherwise you are overflowed by irrelevant details
- Understand the business : a project must be a business leverage
- Broaden your horizons by Executive MBA i.e

Some afterthoughts

- Take a distance from the daily battle field : ideal processes are not of this world
- Days are different, with up and downs : but as long the duck is alive, there is hope
- Pessimism in thinking- Optimism in acting
- Win-Loss is more common than Win-Win

As a conclusion

**(Project) Management is not a science,
but an art.**

Professional methods as PMI definitively helps.