



Responsible Project Management: Heathrow Terminal 3 Integrated Baggage System

Blog Post

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Responsible Project Management at Heathrow Terminal 3: Building the Eiffel Tower in the Middle of Piccadilly Circus

Project Managers must become more responsible for the impact's their projects have on society and the environment.

As a contemporary concept, Responsible Project Management (RPM) emphasises the need for Project Managers to manage projects with conscious awareness of their short and long-term impacts⁵. Acting responsibly to reduce negative impacts while aiming to establish positive outcomes for all stakeholders, the climate and the surrounding environment is critical.

A distinctively advanced baggage handling system, capable of handling more than 110 million bags a year, has been integrated into Heathrow Airport and is classed as the worlds most sophisticated and effective baggage handling system². Terminal 3 Integrated Baggage System (T3IB) was complete on time and within budget, where a vertical facility containing innovative robotics technology manages the entire terminals baggage under one roof. Overcoming the ageing infrastructure spread across four buildings meant key resources and land use were saved.



By replacing the pervious outdated and inefficient system, T3IB has allowed a four minute reduction time in passengers receiving their bags from transfer flights while reducing incidents of mislaid bags by 22%². Significantly benefiting airlines as they can now operate at higher output, delivering safer working conditions for all employees by eliminating 12 million physical bag lifts per year, while providing over 400 jobs and resulting in 120,000 less journeys

each year to transport luggage across the airport, reducing the corresponding emissions².

Alongside beneficial contributions to a number of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals⁶, T3IB has demonstrated successful stakeholder engagement by understanding and meeting the needs and requirements of each stakeholder effectively. The project demonstrates great practices of RPM due to the way it was managed and the value it brings by balancing the needs of stakeholders, society and the surrounding environment.

An operational plan was created to establish how baggage handlers and system operators would be engaged. As employee engagement was the foundation for successful roll out, project managers ensured rigorous planning and training took place to enable assurance around how to operate the new technology correctly³. The demands of the employees were met, and a training suit was built for them to become familiar with the new processes.



Key stakeholders were immediately placed within the project team to ensure T3IB met their needs and provided equally favourable outcomes. Following principle 3 of RPM (engagement), substantial efforts occurred recognising each stakeholder's level of participation and interest in the project. A vigorous communication plan was implemented ensuring successful cooperation and effective decision making between each stakeholder throughout project delivery¹.



As engagement and communication were fundamental, a process integrator team was employed to engage airlines and employees, while facilitating their understanding of the new processes⁴. Tools used to engage stakeholders included mobile roadshows, frequent newsletters, change champions, and animated brochures⁴. While crucial updates were communicated to every stakeholder group throughout project progression and recurring update meetings were continuously held³.

Described as "building the Eiffel Tower in the middle of Piccadilly Circus"⁴, planning for uncertainties, being transparent with stakeholders and raising awareness of the possible impacts was ensured. Enabling the construction of T3IB to be complete without disrupting live airport operations while minimising impacts on passengers and airlines all over the world. T3IB highly benefits baggage handlers, airlines and passengers. As well as being an example of effective RPM that benefits the environment and society.

¹ APM, 2016. IT Project of The Year. [ebook] Association for Project Management, p.2. Available at: <<https://www.apm.org.uk/media/1195/it-project-of-the-year-2015-heathrow-airport-ltd.pdf>> [Accessed 9 December 2020].

² Heathrow, 2013. Heathrow Strategic Capital Business Plan. [online] London: Heathrow, pp.8-9. Available at: <<https://www.heathrow.com/content/dam/heathrow/web/common/documents/company/investor/reports-and-presentations/other-business-reporting/Strategic-Capital-Business-Plan-2013.pdf>> [Accessed 20 December 2020].

³ Mclever, S., 2019. Offering Integrated Project Management For Heathrow Terminal 3. [ebook] London: Royal HaskoningDHV, pp.1-2. Available at: <<https://www.royalhaskoningdhv.com/united-kingdom/-/media/united-kingdom/files/projects/aviation/ferrovial-heathrow-case-study.pdf>> [Accessed 21 December 2020].

⁴ Notton, S., 2016. Project | The Voice of The Project Management Community. Terminal Velocity, [online] (289), pp.52-53. Available at: <https://www.apm.org.uk/media/22515/project_winter16-free.pdf> [Accessed 22 December 2020].

⁵ Thompson, K. and Williams, N., 2019. A Guide to Responsible Project Management. 2nd ed. Bournemouth: Bournemouth University, p.18. [Accessed 30 November 2020].

⁶ United Nations, 2018. THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development. [online] Available at: <<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>> [Accessed 21 December 2020].