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Interview with Walter Sedlacek

next level in the APAC region. An on-site report.

Project management & Co are an important topic for companies and organizations all over the world - including the Asia-Pacific region.

Walter Sedlacek, our man on the ground, reports on his post-Corona experiences from the APAC region, which is strongly characterized by economic growth and technological development.

Mag. Walter Sedlacek, MSc, MBA is Managing Director next level consulting APAC and responsible for the expansion of next level consulting in the APAC region (Asia-Pacific). His focus is on training international clients.

next level: Walter, you are responsible for next level APAC. How is the situation and your work there after the pandemic?

Walter Sedlacek: The situation is much better. We have already been able to conduct some trainings. For example, the company SIKA, with headquarters in Switzerland, had some trainings by our cooperation partners in Bangkok. We are very active again and have some customers from multinational companies who are next level's customers in Europe – for example ZF, Osram, Voith, SIKA – to name a few.

next level: What training has been and is being done for next level APAC?

Walter Sedlacek: We have around ten cooperation partners or trainers spread across China, Thailand, Singapore, and other countries. We have been able to conduct comprehensive training in Asia over the last five to seven years: From project management basics, also linked to agility, to creative workshops such as design thinking. But also, classic topics such as conflict management, leadership, intercultural team management as well as risk management and finally individual coaching for project managers.

next level: What has been particularly interesting in Asia in the last six months?

Walter Sedlacek: We got into further talks with some interesting potential customers – e.g. Software One, T-Systems, Dräger, Amazon/AWS or SIKA in Bangkok and Singapore. We think we have a good chance of working together here and there. We have already been able to submit offers to Dräger and SIKA – one for PM professionalization and one for project management coaching to accompany a hospital project.

next level: Is there a focus in the trainings?

Walter Sedlacek: Yes definitely: project management and leadership coaching, these two topics are most in demand.

next level: How do people in Asia view the issue of "presence vs. online" in training?

Walter Sedlacek: Online training does not work in Asia. There is no acceptance for online training, which is why we could not conduct any training in the pandemic.

next level: In January you gave a talk at a conference about the conflict between PMO - Project Management Office - and Agility. What was that about?

Walter Sedlacek: It was an impulse lecture on the topic "Does Agility kill PMOs". As we know, Project Management Offices work very structured. Planning, structure, and reporting are in focus. With agility, on the other hand, there is rather little planning and little reporting. One could assume that a conflict arises here, which also corresponds to reality. I was able to illustrate this with a few examples, which also led to a good discussion. The lecture obviously generated interest, which is why - as already mentioned - we were able to make some offers.

next level: Walter, what is your current view of the future as far as next level in the APAC region is concerned?

Walter Sedlacek: We had no training at all during the pandemic and now it's starting again. Demand is rising noticeably, so we are optimistic that the curve will go up and that orders - i.e., for interim management - will come again.

next level: Thank you for the interview and all the best for the future!

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