

Project Management update from Argentina



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Buenos Aires City in January doesn't seem to be to that city of crazy traffic and people in a hurry like it is the rest of the year. During the summer, especially in January, almost all life of Argentina moves towards the summer centers and this is the time that the big cities take a break.

However, during the early days of this year 2015, in midsummer, the city was revolutionized. Visitors came from all over the world with their flashy cars, trucks and other weird vehicles. That's because since some years ago an important competition, that generates great interest in the region, is carried out in our country.



(Photo: Symbolic start of the Dakar Rally 2015 in Buenos Aires City)

I'm talking about the Dakar Rally, an annual competition which originally was from Europe to the city of Dakar, in Senegal, and since 2009 it was moved to the Southern Cone bringing cars, trucks, motorcycles and squads from around the world to tour the grounds sand, rock, mud and different kinds of vegetation of the beautiful and varied landscapes of Argentina, Chile and Bolivia.

While for many people the Dakar Rally is a sport or a show, for those who organize and carry forward, it is an important project. And such is the case for Marcelo Ginestar, Project Manager of the Logistics Assistance of the Dakar, who tells us about this exciting challenge of which he is part since the first year than the Dakar took place in South America.



(Photo: Dakar Rally 2015 route)

As Marcelo told us, when the company Amaury Sport Organisation (ASO), organizer of the Dakar Rally decided to bring it to our region, he himself was the one who promoted in Andesmar the presentation of the proposal of the Logistics Assistance Project which eventually resulted selected. *"At that time we had no idea of the scale of the project in which we were involved. We had a great uncertainty regarding this project with high worldwide exposure. We worked very hard for everything to go well- Marcelo Ginestar says. "And we can say that this occurred - added - since that year Andesmar was chosen as best supplier of the Dakar Rally".*

Marcelo Ginestar has been in charge of Project Management of the Logistics Operations and Passenger Transportation of the Dakar Rally through Andesmar Company, since 2009 to 2014. After retiring from the Andesmar company and creating his own non conventional logistics company MGProShow, he was again part of the Dakar in this 2015 edition as Responsible of Planning and Directing Coordination of Logistics Plan, directly hired by the organizers with whom he has developed a strong relationship of trust as a result of the successes achieved.



(Photo: Mr. Marcelo Ginestar, Project Manager of Logistics Assistance of Dakar Rally)

The Logistics Assistance Project involves freight and moving people. On average, it transported 500 people and 700 tons of cargo per day of competition. To transport the load on the 2015 edition of the Dakar Rally, 22 trucks were permanently used through all the stages of the rally plus 37 trucks that supported it indirectly. For passengers they had 5 permanent buses and 240 buses for assistance.



(Photo: Tire and Fiber Repair workshops for assistance to competitors of Dakar Rally)

Among the load included, for example, were all the elements to build field hospitals, including the tents, equipment, drugs and other supplies.

"One of the critical aspects of this project - adds Marcelo Ginestar - has been to ensure continuity of operations all the way, with the additional difficulty of be in areas where there was not minimum infrastructure: no electricity, no water, no communications. The project team has so focused on risk management that year to year has been increasing the historical basis to a level that it would seem that none can present anything unforeseen anymore".

"All materials transported by the trucks had to be downloaded quickly at each stage of the rally. In preparation for this, the team Andesmar defined the exact storage locations for each element within the trucks and made many exercises of loading and unloading to ensure that all team members were trained for the real project."

"We decided to double the fleet of trucks, having "twin trucks" to support the successive stages of the rally in order to mitigate the risk of failing in disarm, transport and assemble again all the stuff among stages of the competition at the speed required. Thus, one of the trucks was assigned to even stages and the other one to odd stages. While a truck was devoted to its stage, the other twin truck was already available in the next step, ensuring continuity".



(Photo: Ribs on the grill with cooking trucks as a background at Dakar Rally)

Asking Ginestar on the main lesson learned that these successive projects has left to him, he stated that, without doubt, the most important learning is the impact of people on the team for project success.



(Photo: Dakar Rally 2015 Organization Project Team)

"As a leader you have to work a lot about psychology. Having a well motivated team ensures project success because the same team will be aware of the risks, identifies and mitigates them to meet project objectives. Otherwise, the project doesn't prosper. The human factor is decisive!" concludes Marcelo Ginestar.

The successful project concluded with the consecration of Qatari driver Nasser Al-Attiyah, as champion of the Dakar Rally 2015, repeating the title he won four years ago.



(Photo: Nasser Al-Attiyah, champion of Dakar Rally 2015)

Now, we have to wait the definition of the next Dakar Rally route and to prepare for a new challenge in 2016!

Photos and information: courtesy of Marcelo Ginestar, MG PROSHOW:
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For more information about the Dakar Rally visit: <http://www.dakar.com/dakar/2015/us/>

To find information about local events Project Management, visit sites **PMI Buenos Aires Argentina Chapter** [website](#) and **PMI Nuevo Cuyo Argentina Chapter** [website](#).

About the Author



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Cecilia Boggi, PMP is founder and Executive Director of activePMO, giving consulting services and training in Project Management and Leadership skills in Argentina and Latin America.

After graduating with a degree in Computer Science Engineering from Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, she has managed software development projects and PMO implementation projects for more than 20 years both in the government and private sector. Cecilia also has graduated from an Executive Program in Business Management at Universidad del CEMA. She holds the Project Management Professional (PMP®) credential since 2003, is certified as SDI Facilitator from Personal Strengths© and is alumni of the PMI Leadership Institute Master Class 2012. Ms. Boggi is Past President of the PMI Buenos Aires Argentina Chapter, and is a founding member of the PMI Nuevo Cuyo Chapter and PMI Santa Cruz Bolivia Chapter. She has been designated by PMI in the role of Mentor of Region 13, Latin America South, for the years 2014-2016. Cecilia has participated in the development of PMBOK® Guide 5th Edition, leading the Chapter 9, Human Resource Management, content team and she is professor of Project Management in some Universities and Institutes in Argentina, Chile, Peru and Bolivia.

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