

# Top-down Planning Approach in Establishing Young Crew: A case Study of Young Crew Iran

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*Abstract*— This is a report about establishing young crew in the IPPMA, the Iranian branch of IPMA. It shows the benefits of using a top-down planning approach while organizing the establishment as a project based on IPMA standards (i.e. ICB ver 3.0). Case study research was applied as key methodology to this study. This paper explains the rational hierarchy of thought which led to the current YC-Iran road map. This paper is a practical report and aims to share the benefits of this method as a venue for core Young Crew members around the world to use others' experiences and as a guideline for emerging ones.

## INTRODUCTION

Iran is a developing country. Currently, with a population of 68 million, 68% of which is under 30 years of age [1]. Iran is the second most populous country in the Middle-East [2]. About 1.1 million students are registered in the universities each year [3]. According to the World Bank [4], Iran has placed emphasis on human development and social protection with good progress to-date.

The wave of post war (Iran-Iraq) baby-boomers is hitting 20 years of age (see Fig. 1 [5]) and has turned higher education into a major challenge for the government. The average age of bachelor's degree recipients is around 23 which is rather young; most of these enter the job market immediately after graduation. Most universities offer programs in engineering majors, and some offer MBA degrees, Project management programs are way behind these numbers [3] (see table I). The war and the 1979 revolution have left a land empty but fertile for infrastructure/construction programs.

Iran young crew establishment started in September 2006 [6]. The establishment was defined as a project based on IPMA standards. The rather newness of Project management as a

profession and low-average PM maturity [7] made a challenging setting for YC-Iran. Modern approaches to project management were not used in companies in the wide scale. The situation was worse among youngsters. YC-Iran establishment Team thus took a systematic top-down planning approach. Their vision according to their mission statement was set to: "...help achieve higher standards of Project Management in Iran by means of educating young students and professionals and help them gain hands-on experiences." This high vision needed a through target-group and relative-environment analysis. These along with considering young crew objectives lead the team to a number of strategies which was turned into action plans. The following sections explain in detail the subject matter.

## 1. YC-IRAN ESTABLISHMENT

According to IPMA website [8] the Young crew target-group is defined as people interested in Project Management between 20 and 30 years of age. This was further divided into two segments: (1) Full time students and (2) Non-students. As shown in fig. 2, "Students" -Which was defined as B.Sc, M.Sc, and Ph.D. level students who majored in either Industrial Engineering or Management- was the biggest target group. This was 12014 full time students in 2006. Further examination into its structure was undertaken for appropriate service design. The "non-Students" sector was divided into three sub-sectors: (1) civil engineering and construction companies, (2) engineering consulting companies, and (3) oil companies. Group size was estimated in each sub-sector by multiplying the number of companies according to Iran industrial statistics [8] by the average number of under-30 year olds employed in the companies' Project Management division. It is necessary to state that these figures are very careful speculations. This is so because of the unavailability of data and limited time frame. This was only done to get a big-picture-view of the situation and identify any possible challenges.

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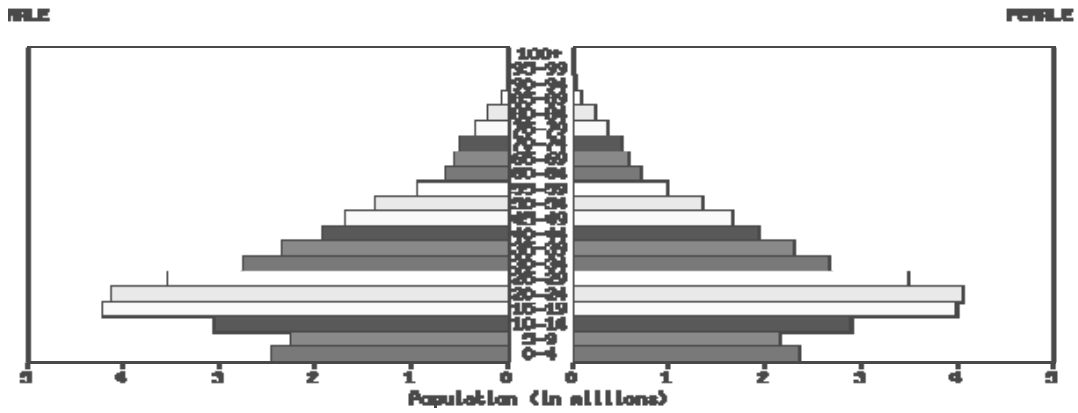


Figure 1: Iran Population Pyramid (year 2007)

TABLE I: Composition of University Admission in Iran (2003-2006)

Year	Mathematics	Electrical Engineering	Business Administration	Project management	Management (Other)
2003	5582	3622	179	6	4249
2004	6556	3928	165	16	6099
2005	6074	4303	190	30	5807
2006	5381	4665	234	31	9845

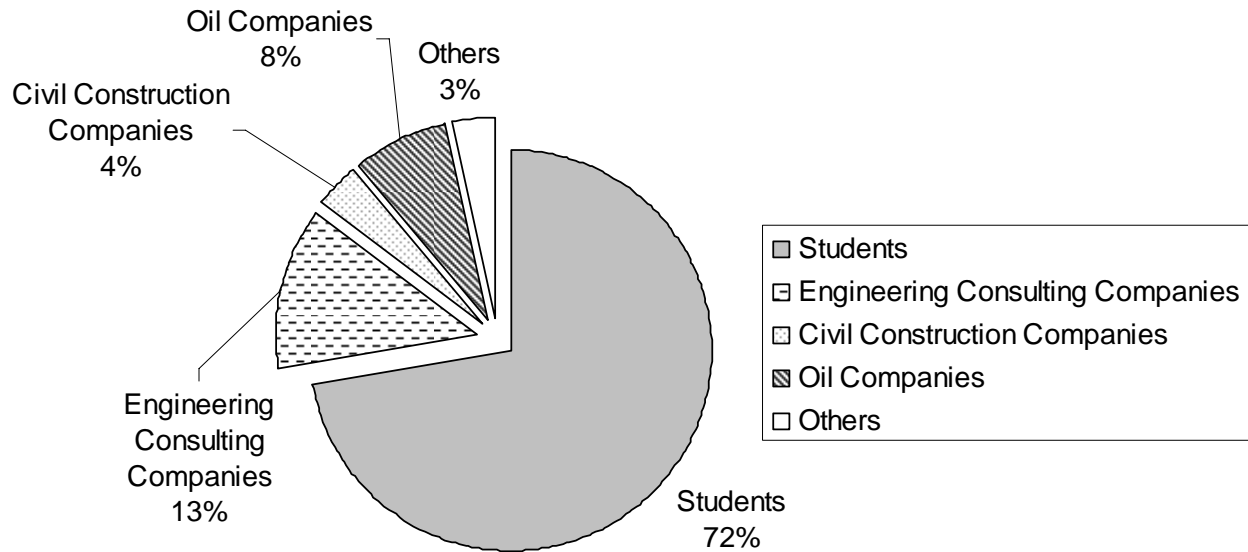


Figure 2: YC-Iran target-group segmentation

Table II: YC-Iran Points of Strength, Weakness and Opportunities and threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
First Mover in Market.	No Full time staff (all YC members are full time students).
IPPMA managerial support.	Team members concentration in one university
Framing of an international organization.	
Opportunities	Threats
PM awareness level on the rise.	PM is not seen as an own profession, but rather an extension of technical skills [7].
Large, still untouched potential target group.	
Major construction plans undertaken as a consequence of government development programs.	An international Conference setup-cost is higher than what average Iranian students can afford (average annual income of an urban family equals 4000 US\$ in 2004.) [1].
	Potential competition.

Besides the unique target-group composition which was due to specific population demography in Iran YC-Iran had other environmental challenges. These were identified in a workshop and the results were grouped in terms of opportunities, threats, weaknesses and points of strength. A summary of this is exhibited in Table II.

These Items were then cross-checked in a separate workshop and three main strategies emerged which successively lead the team to a series of tactics (table III).

Table III: YC-Iran environment analysis

	Strength	Weakness
<b>Opportunity</b>	Increase PM awareness	Communication
<b>Threat</b>	Increase PM awareness Community	Community

For example in section W-O more communication is the strategy. Using a website as a means of better communication and starting an ambassador program are what the team has come up for actualizing this strategy. Another example is in section S-T where the strategy is building a community and defining clear team roles, briefing workshops and annual award program are tactics. A list of relevant tactics along with each strategy is provided in appendix A.

Finally, using YC-Iran tactics and IPMA young crew objectives [9] the team prepared a list of services which is as follows:

- Hold Young Crew dinners and facilitate networking
- Define discount in IPPMA workshops and seminars for student members.
- Holding young seminars, lectures.

- Holding Project Management study groups and action learning.

- Holding hands-on Project Management workshops

In the end cost estimations was prepared for each of these services. A road map was build up based on these objectives and a 1-year cost plan was developed for programs. YC-Iran was now ready to start.

## 2. Discussion and Conclusion

It is not easy to discuss the effectiveness of this approach since the results exist still merely on paper. The effectiveness can not be easily recognized even then like many other managerial problems where no one factor can be identified as the main reason for a phenomenon. YC-Iran has anyhow used this method and the results were satisfying for various reasons, first of all a clear rooted plan had emerged using this approach this assist the team in terms of insight of their environment. Second, this rooted approach raised the motivation among team members because it brought about a calm atmosphere in the beginning phases of group formation. The documentation of these efforts caused recognition of YC-Iran and it is now the first young crew core team to have a share in student membership fees. This although has no structural relevance to their planning approach can be an evidence of the level of sophistication they have shown in their planning approach. This approach can be used both as a model or an empty template for emerging young crews.

### APPENDIX A.

List of YC-Iran tactics associated with each strategy is as follows:

#### 1. Rise PM awareness

- Journalist articles about IPMA project management approach.

- Arrange Seminars, Conferences, Briefing workshop using IPMA lecturers.

## 2. Community:

- Define team roles as a way of increasing group cohesiveness.
- Arrange Seminars, Conferences, Briefing workshop

## 3. Communication

- Use website for communication, Start up forum section.
- Launch YC-Iran ambassador Program to spread YC-Iran to other universities.

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