Engineering Strategies and Practice

University of Toronto
Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering
APS112 & APS113
Lessons Learned & Strategy (LLS)

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Please check off which components you are submitting for your assignment:

_X_ LLS individual   (In one file with "Final" in the title)
assignment

  _X_ Cover Page   _X_ Reference List (if applicable)
  _X_ Lessons Learned   __ Appendices (optional)
  _X_ Strategy (or
Strategies)
  _X_ Examples

 _X_ Turnitin Submission: Cover Page, Lessons Learned & Strategy

If any of the above required components are missing, your assignment is considered incomplete. It will accrue standard late penalties until completed.

1.0 Lessons Learned

In this section, two problems will be addressed: a challenge we faced as a team, and a challenge I personally faced while working on this project.

1.1 The team leader left the team without notice

The team leader, Tiffany Zhang, left the team without any prior notice on February 4th 2014[E1]; 3 days before the due-date of our first assignment. The reason for such change was not addressed to the team even afterwards. Due to this unexpected event, our team members felt unmotivated to be productive for some time[E2], and this definitely affected the first part of our grade. In fact, the work our team leader did before leaving was lacking in both quality[E3] and completion[E4], which augmented to the reasons for the poor grade in the assignment.

There could have been several causes to this problem, the most important one being that there wasn't enough overall communication between the team leader and teammates and amongst the teammates. Communication within a group is crucial in establishing a positive work environment, which generally results in high efficiency of the work[1]. After the team leader left, the big disappointment in the team was hard to overcome, since the rest felt a sense of abandonment[E5] without a reason. There were two possible solutions to this situation:

- Demand an explanation from the Engineering Strategies and Practice(ESP) office as to why the team leader left.
- Petition to the ESP office for a fairer grade.

1.2 Lack of communication in the group and ESP not being the priority of team members

ESP is not generally perceived to be a liked course by many[E6] due to the intensity of the assignments. My teammates and I entered this project with a preconceived notion of it being fairly challenging to complete which led many of us to prioritize it less. This led us to communicate less, and our dilemma was unfortunately doubled by our team leader's resignation. Moreover, because we were unmotivated to hold meetings, we were giving other courses too much priority without realizing[E7].

One reason to explain the general lack of willingness to actively participate in the assignment could be about the technical nature of the course.ESP is generally considered to be more of a professional course, and not related to the field of engineering that the students have chosen. Even if the team members are occupied with other work, proper communication in a group encourages teamwork and motivation among the members[2]. There were three possible solutions to this situation:

- Address the problem with ample communication within the team, and discuss priorities outside of the group work to better understand each teammate.
- Report to the project manager without discussing the problem with the group.
- Demand the ESP office for a transfer to another group.

2.0 Strategies

In this section, the strategies used to solve problems in the Lessons Learned section will be explained. A strategy that our team used to solve the problem mentioned in section 1.1 and 1.2 will be explained.

2.1 The team leader left the team without notice

Out of the two possible solutions mentioned in section 1.1, the second solution is more practical since there could be the issues of confidentiality between the team leader and the ESP office.

My team however, picked the second solution of petitioning for fairer grades, but there were short and long term implications:

- Short term - Talk to the TA about the problem, prove that the performance was poor because Tiffany left the team, send the petition form to the course coordinator.
- Long term - Handle the situation professionally and not have anything personal against Tiffany, work harder in future to compensate for the loss of a team member, try to solve problems by discussions with teammates to avoid such sudden incidents.

2.2 Lack of communication in the group and ESP not being the priority of team members

Because the second and third solutions are unprofessional I picked the first solution, but there are short and long term implications:

- Short term - Talk to the team about expectations, demand for a change in the current working system, take the initiative and try to maintain communication
- Long term - Keep talking to the team about priorities, discuss the problem with the project manager if things do not change, explore other ways of presenting your point to the team.

3.0 Examples

In this section I will be giving examples which can be used as proof of some facts that I have stated in sections 1.1 and 1.2.

[E1] - Tiffany Zhang, the former team leader of our design team, left the team on February 4th 2014, 3 days before the first assignment was due.

Figure 1: A chain of WhatsApp messages where Tiffany is leaving the group

[E2] - The team wasted a lot of time in wondering why Tiffany left the group.
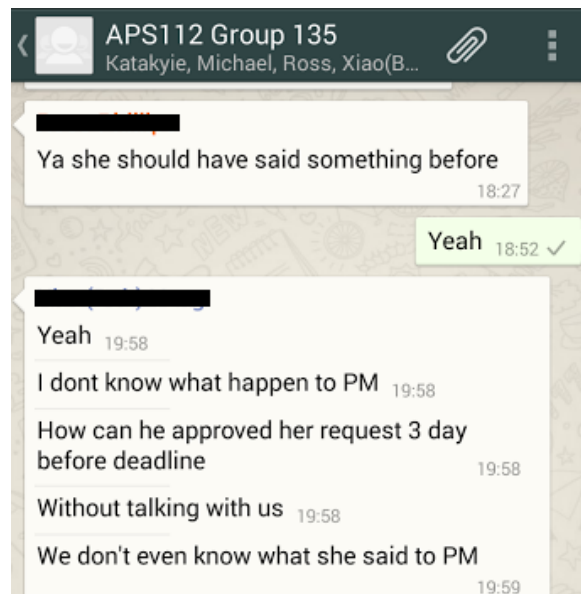
Figure 2: A chain of WhatsApp messages where the team is discussing about Tiffany after she left the team

[E3] - One of the parts assigned to Tiffany was the Problem Statement which got a fail in the rubric.

Fails	Below expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation
☐ Executive Summary is a poor stand-alone version of the document	☑ Executive Summary is a satisfactory stand-alone version of the document	☐ Executive Summary is a good stand-alone version of the document	☐ Executive Summary is an excellent stand-alone version of the document
☐ Identification of "gap" that the solution will address is completely unclear	☑ Problem statement recognizably identifies "gap" solution will address	☐ Problem statement clearly identifies "gap" that the solution will address	☐ Problem statement very clearly identifies "gap" that the solution will address
☐ Problem statement contains a description of current situation that is under-developed	☑ Problem statement contains a description of current situation that is developed to some degree	☐ Problem statement has well developed description of current situation	☐ Problem statement has extensively developed description of current situation

Figure 3:A part of the PRPMP rubric which shows that Tiffany's part(Problem Statement) got a fail.

[E4] - One of the parts assigned to Tiffany, Executive Summary, was not completed by her. This part was later completed by Katakyie, a team member.

Engineering Strategies and Practice
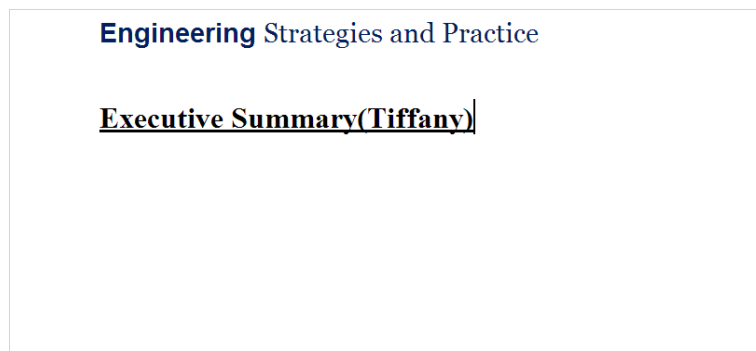
Executive Summary(Tiffany)

Figure 4:Blank Executive Summary(Tiffany's part) from the document before Tiffany left the team.

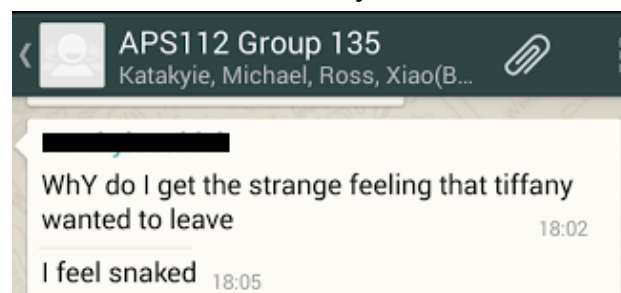[E5] - The team members felt deceived after Tiffany left the team.

APS112 Group 135
Katakyie, Michael, Ross, Xiao(B...

WhY do I get the strange feeling that tiffany wanted to leave   18:02

I feel snaked   18:05

Figure 5:A chain of WhatsApp messages where a team member is expressing the feeling of abandonment

[E6] - Comments for APS112 taken from University of Toronto's website.

Comments for APS112 - Engineering Strategies & Practice II

Posted: 2011-03-06 22:22:00 | Applies to: Fall 2011

Very little people get 90's in this course, let alone the 50/50 the previous poster leads you to believe. You have to do something amazing or have an easy TA to mark to do well. The groups in my section got no more than 77%. This course is not enjoyable by any means expect for when your group just chills and talk. GPA KILLER both years, which is why I don't have a 4.0.

Posted: 2011-04-20 11:47:00 | Applies to: Fall 2011

Crappiest course ever.. needs you to do tons of writing work which sometimes overlap with other midterm tests or even finals..

Posted: 2010-10-12 21:08:00 | Applies to: Fall 2010

This course is a GPA saver for some, and a GPA killer for others. It's really all about luck. You're randomly placed in a group (which sticks with you for the term), and randomly given a problem statement to assess (over 70% of the term mark is all about this). If you're lucky enough to get a good group and a problem statement that makes sense, then you're set for this course.

I was lucky to get a competent group but unlucky enough to get a terrible problem statement which we honestly had no idea how to tackle. The marks weren't too pretty and this course was the only reason I didn't get on dean's list in 2nd semester. However some of my friends were blessed with good groups and fun problem statements to tackle, and they scored 90s without much effort.

Like I said, it's all about luck, so sit back and pray hard.

Posted: 2010-04-08 16:10:00 | Applies to: Winter 2010

THIS COURSE IS TERRIBAD

Figure 6: The screenshot of a University of Toronto's website(http://courses.skule.ca/course/comments/?q=APS112H1) which allows students to give comments for a course

[E7] - The team gave more priority to other courses and avoided meeting.

Figure 7: A chain of WhatsApp messages where a team member is trying to avoid meeting

4.0 Reference List

[1]Chris Joseph. (2014). How Does a Lack of Communication Cause Conflict in the Workplace? [Online]. Available:
http://smallbusiness.chron.com/lack-communication-cause-conflict-workplace-10470.html

[2]Kathleen Snyder. (2014). Common Causes of Lack of Communication [Online]. Available:
http://www.kathleensnydermft.com/articles/common-causes-of-lack-of-communication