

Assignment Scenario

This scenario needs to be read in conjunction with the Pilot Angels scenario (*CaseStudy.pdf*) on which workshop sessions are based.

The Pilot Angels project, as described in the case study document, has been going for 13 months. When SoftSupport won the tender to develop the Husky Air Pilot Angels project, the CEO knew his current IT staff of six did not have sufficient time and experience to develop the project without assistance. Consequently he hired a dedicated and experienced project manager and two experienced developers. The Pilot Angels development team is comprised of the new project manager and two developers, plus three of the existing SoftSupport IT staff all of whom had some software development experience.

Imagine you are an experienced project manager and have been employed by the CEO of Husky Air to audit the project. The CEO is concerned about progress and overall success of the project. The CEO of SoftSupport agrees that an external review of the project would be a good idea as he understands and agrees with some of the Husky Air CEO's concerns.

You are asked to provide an objective appraisal of the Pilot Angels project, based on observable, objective evidence. You need to review the project and to provide a **briefing paper that includes an objective description of the situation as well as including recommendations for the CEO.**

Husky Air CEO concerns

Prior to you spending time with the team, the Husky Air CEO briefs you on his concerns about the project as follows.

- a) The CEO tells you he is concerned about the project and its management. Apparently the project manager told him she has adopted an agile approach. He is unsure what the means. To him it feels completely chaotic, and unlike anything he has been involved with before.
The Husky Air CEO tells you that the project manager has not provided him with a detailed project plan, a requirements specification and design document despite the fact the project has been running for 13 months. He says she has only given him two pieces of documentation: (1) something she calls a roadmap, setting out four releases with associated dates and a brief indication of software functionality to be included in each release; and (2) each month she has emailed him something she calls a burn-up chart which shows how many story points the team has already completed and how many are left to complete. He says he doesn't understand the burn-up chart as he has no idea what a story point is, and feels the roadmap doesn't contain enough information to be useful. When he asked her about requirements specification, she told him the team has captured them in user stories and a user story map but that she could not provide these to

him. She invited him to visit their offices at Soft Support where she would show him the user stories and the story map. He hasn't had time to visit.

- b) In the CEO's opinion, not only is the project being poorly planned, but it is poorly managed. He says, for example, team members don't have roles such as analyst, programmer or tester. He believes this has led to unruly team behaviour where team members they do very much as they please.
- c) The CEO is becoming concerned that the team is incapable of delivering a quality product. For example, he is most concerned that the roadmap provided by the project manager does not include a testing phase at the end of the project. In the CEO's experience projects that don't include a clear and adequate testing phase encounter problems. Supporting his concern are comments he has heard from the pilots and his own support staff about inadequacies in software functionality. For example, some of the pilots recently complained to him that the new system doesn't do what he promised. Consequently he is becoming increasingly concerned that the new software will be an expensive failure.

What you discover at SoftSupport

The following is a summary of the situation you discover at SoftSupport and the Husky Air project development team.

According to the roadmap provided at the start of the project by the project manager to the CEOs of both companies, the development team should have completed three releases by the end of the tenth month. So far only two releases have been completed and the third is due. The first two releases were on time but the third has been delayed by three months because of issues surrounding the supply of new hardware and the Christmas holiday slow down.

The Husky Air Pilot Angels support staff are using the software that has been released. The scheduler is delighted with the new software because scheduling is so much easier than before and it has improved the efficiency of scheduling flights, though it still takes about three phone calls to schedule a flight. You discover, however, that not all users are happy with the new software.

Some pilots are complaining that they can't update their details on-line, nor can they query their schedule, both of which were features the Husky Air CEO promised them would be possible with the new software. When you look at the roadmap you can see that both these features are included in the final release.

When you speak with the second Husky Air support officer, he says he doesn't understand why the new system won't let him do things the way he has always done them and he complains about being forced to use it, saying he wants to continue to use the old paper system. This is causing increasing levels of stress between the two Husky Air Pilot Angels support staff.

Next, you meet with the SoftSupport development team to see if you can get to the bottom of the slipped schedule, and sort out the CEO's concerns about lack of testing

and possible project failure. You speak with each team member individually. They confirm the CEO's comments about the lack of a specific testing phase. Two members tell you that testing is incorporated into each iteration and is an integral part of each release, and that is why there is no specific testing phase at the end of the whole project. The others say they're not sure why there is no testing planned, confirming the CEO's concerns.

Additionally, some team members complain about others and their work ethics, saying there is little leadership evident and regularly other members of the team don't pull their weight. Some team members think they are doing more than other members, and that progress is being hampered because people don't have a clear idea of what they should be doing. Some members suggest this is why phase three has been delayed. Two of the team complain they aren't told what to do, but rather the project manager tells them to make their own decisions and do what their experience tells them is the right thing to do. They don't like this and don't think this is the way a project should be managed.

During your interviews, you discover that only the two new members of the team and the project manager herself have any previous experience of working within an agile project management environment.

When you speak with the Husky Air director of IT he supports many of the CEO's concerns and says he believes the project manager is too trusting. He says she lets team members do whatever they want and that when he tried to discuss the issue with her she said there wasn't a problem, instead saying it is simply that the agile approach to software development is different from his experience of more traditional approaches.

When you speak with the project manager she says that she trusts her team; they are all experienced developers. She acknowledges the team has had some problems adapting to agile software development, but she believes they are all working well now. She says she has faith in the team's ability and says that she trusts her team to be competent, and to tell her if things aren't working. She says "if there's a problem, I'll make it a team problem, but if they don't tell me, then there's nothing I can do."

The project manager tells you she has just discovered that the software chosen for the development, which she believed was FOSS, will involve an annual licence fee because there will be more than five users. Her investigation has identified another completely FOSS product that could be used and which comes with a tool that claims it will do the conversion automatically. Although it is likely the conversion of the Pilot Angels system to the new FOSS product will require refactoring of parts of the code base, and will therefore delay the eventual project completion, she is hopeful that it will not be a significant delay because of the conversion tool.

The project manager tells you the current software was chosen on the advice of the Husky Air CEO. She says she believes SoftSupport is not liable for additional costs associated with the mistake: the Husky Air CEO suggested the original product and signed the development contract that specified its use.

Prior to advising both CEOs of the problem she wants to prototype the code conversion so she will have a much better idea of exactly what will be involved and how long it is likely it will take. She says she will need a month for the team to do the prototyping of the conversion.

The project manager acknowledges there is a problem with this approach. If she delays telling the CEOs about the problem for a month as she proposes, SoftSupport will have billed Husky Air for 75% of the project value by then and so they will have much less at risk. However, Husky Air's potential costs to rectify the situation will be higher unless the conversion tool works as advertised and the completed Pilot Angels system can be converted to the new FOSS environment automatically.