Your team members may suggest that you allow them to give you feedback anonymously. You may do whatever feels right, but in our experience, if you're trying to build a sense of accountability, your team should feel empowered to offer all reasonable and constructive feedback with their name attached. We're all accountable for our actions and our words, and we should all be willing to own what we say. Welcome the feedback — positive or negative — as long as a name is attached to it.

Case Study: Completing a Project Post Mortem

You are a software project manager for KT Consulting, Inc., a medium-size consulting firm specializing in software project management. You've been with the company since it was founded six years ago and are one of the most respected project managers in the firm. That's why senior management asked you to lead a project for a sometimes difficult client — Barbwire Helmets, Inc. — which wants to create Web-based tutorials for its production staff.

The client is a manufacturing firm creating much sought after barbwire helmets, and is having some difficulty with worker safety because some employees have not been following proper safety procedures. The executives have determined, through root cause analysis, that the employees aren't following the appropriate procedures because they don't always understand what those procedures are.

The client held several meetings with you to define the business purpose and objectives of the project. These are as follows:

✔ **Business purpose:** Decrease the number of worker accidents, which will result in

- Fewer fines by the associated government agencies
- Increased worker productivity due to less time off work because of injuries
- Increased employee morale
- Decrease in money spent on broken equipment
- Decrease in health and accidental death/dismemberment insurance

✔ **Project objectives:** Create a Web-based tutorial for production workers that will instruct employees on appropriate safety procedures for manufacturing barbwire helmets:

- Software should provide a database where employee scores are kept
- Tutorial should provide hints when an employee enters an incorrect answer

- System reports should be automatically distributed to employees' supervisors, and they should include final scores and number of attempts before passing

- System should require 80 percent for passing score

- Software should allow training department to schedule classes online

- System should send online reports to managers if an employee registers for a class but does not show up on the specified day

- Full system documentation, including instructions on how to troubleshoot most common errors, should be included with the system

You're energized about starting such an interesting software project, and have been anxious about working with Barbwire Helmets, Inc. You hope that this will be as exciting as your last project, working with Fire-Filled Pants, Inc. You're ready to get rolling. You've gathered the appropriate project team members, met with the client to understand the project requirements, and started the project planning process.

Your client, Mr. Safedee, is impressed with the amount of detail that you've put into the scope documents, project plan, quality management plan, and risk management plan. He's also impressed that you understand the importance of involving the appropriate stakeholders right from the beginning. You reviewed the work breakdown structure (WBS) with the client and the team and everyone understands that if a task is not in the WBS, it will not be done — no exceptions. Your software project team is thrilled that you've set the correct expectations with the client. They know that you will have fewer problems in the future by performing this level of detail in the planning now.

Your client is satisfied with the project schedule plan, cost management plan, and risk management plan. Your project team understands the roles and responsibilities matrix and the staffing management plan. Everything is going so well that you're wondering why your boss warned you about working with this difficult client. What's so hard about all this, you wonder?

Then you look at the schedule and realize that with the small size of your team and the tight schedule required of you, you will not be able to complete the entire project in time. You and Mr. Safedee agree that you should outsource part of your project. You decide that you will contract out the software testing phase of your project. You contact Testy McTesty, the world-renowned software testing agency, and your contact agrees to provide the following services for your WBT project:

✔ Unit software testing

✔ Functional software testing

✔ Integrated software testing

✔ Volume testing

- ✔ Issue identification
- ✔ Issue resolution
- ✔ Testing documentation

You and the Testy McTesty representatives agree to a fixed-price contract with an incentive for completing by a predetermined date. This is important to you because you need to have time to perform other activities after the software is completely tested and you don't want to take a chance on getting behind schedule.

You've documented all of the details in your procurement management plan and contract management plan and included constraints, assumptions, deadlines, performance reporting requirements, evaluation criteria, payment methods, and change control.

You understand from your client, Barbwire Helmets, Inc., what is expected of you as the vendor; Testy McTesty, your vendor, understands what is expected of you, their client. All is right with the world.

Being the exceptional software project manager that you are and working with your brilliant hand-selected project team, you complete the Web-based tutorials on time and within budget. Testy McTesty completes its portion of the project but have a few testing issues from the integrated software testing phase. These issues are still unresolved. You don't worry too much about it, though, because these issues are deemed a low priority.

At project closure, your client, Barbwire Helmets, Inc., performs the following actions:

- ✔ Quality audits
- ✔ Scope verification
- ✔ Close vendor contracts
- ✔ Receive your invoices
- ✔ Performance review on your work as the project manager

You and your client sign the scope verification documents and all project closure documents and you perform the following actions:

- ✔ Document performance reviews on your team members
- ✔ Provide surveys to your project team members to solicit their input on your performance as a project manager

✔ Complete your lessons learned document (the one that you started at the beginning of your project)

✔ Review lessons learned documentation with your team members and distribute it to the appropriate stakeholders

✔ Celebrate your team's success by writing an article about your project team in your company's newsletter; distributing gift certificates to each team member; holding a team lunch where you prepare and serve the meal; providing hot air balloon rides for your team members and their families

✔ Perform audits of Testy McTesty's work

✔ Receive Testy McTesty's invoices and pay your bills

✔ Close out all contracts

✔ Turn over all system documentation and review it with your client

When you submit your performance reports to your superiors, they realize that this wasn't a difficult client after all. You explain to your superiors that because you were proactive and followed the appropriate software project management processes throughout the project, you gained the trust and respect of the client and attained a higher level of continuous success. You also explain that because you make a habit of documenting what you learn from each project, you have continued to hone your skills. You attribute the fact that you have the respect and admiration of your team to your positive attitude and generosity when the hard work is complete.

Your superiors agree, you get promoted, and you are engaged to teach other KT Consulting project managers the proper methods of project management — particularly the activities around project closure.