Assignment 08 – Software Project Management Discussion

Is the customer always right?

From the information in this article, the customer is not always right. But on the other hand, the Vendor is not always right either. The focus isn’t even about anyone being right in the first place, rather it’s about accurate and truthful communication between the customer and the developer. Without this communication, the process of the two parties doing business with one another can be confusing and frustrating. It’s in everyone’s best interest for both parties to genuinely engage in an equal partnership that addresses the political and legal issues of each side. In order to do achieve this, a process of software project management must be carefully followed, and equally contributed to, by all of the organizations involved.

The request for proposal is the document in which the customer draws out their expectations of the work to be carried out by the vendor. It is important that great care is taken when forming this document to ensure that the expectations are clear and straightforward. If the vendor decides to accept this list of expectations, they are then required to respond with a list of requirements, outlining what they expect in return for providing these services for the customer. It’s common for misunderstanding when requirements are not clear enough, in which case one party might read into the document and have a different interpretation than the other party intended. These terms and requirements are negotiated amongst the two parties until an agreement is made, which equally satisfies both organizations’ needs.

If either party does not fully keep up their end of the responsibilities, the entire project can end in failure. The ultimate goal for both the customer and the vendor should be to ‘strike a balance between reasonableness and the attainment of profit’. A legal contract is developed by presenting an offer, acceptance, and consideration. The customer presents the offer by sending their request for proposal to the vendor. The vendor can then choose to accept this offer by agreeing to meet the expectations drawn out by RFP. The consideration is what each party is giving to the other in exchange for the service / payment they are receiving. If both sides maintain their end of the consideration, then the process can be executed efficiently, resulting in successful profit / gain for both parties.