Department Of Computer System Engineering

CSE 406 ENGINEERING PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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Name: MUHAMMAD ALI

REG.NO: 19PWCSE1801

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ASSIGNMENT IS RELATED TO CLO 2 and CLO 1

CAREFULLY READ THE CASE STUDY AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS AT THE END.

Yahoo!, a pioneer in Web search and navigation, struggles to remain relevant in the face of competition from the likes of Google, Facebook, and Twitter. It missed the two biggest Internet trends—social networking and mobile. However, in July 2012, after the company did its own search, it snagged a gem as the company’s new CEO—Marissa Mayer, one of the top executives at Google.

Mayer had been one of the few public faces of Google and was responsible for the look and feel of Google’s most popular products. Guiding Yahoo! as it tries to regain its former prominence is proving to be the challenge that experts predicted, but they’re also saying that if anyone could take on the challenge of making Yahoo! An innovator once again, Mayer is the person.

Two of her initial decisions included free food at the office and new smartphones for every employee, something that Google does. However, in February 2013, Mayer launched an employee initiative that has generated lots of discussion—positive and negative. She decided that as of June 2013, Yahoo! employees who worked remotely had to come back to the office.

The memo from the vice president of people and development (code for head of Human Resources) clarified that the new initiative was a response to productivity issues that often can arise when employees work from home. With a new boss and a renewed commitment to making Yahoo! a strong company in a challenging industry, employees were expected to be physically present in the workplace, hopefully leading to developing a strong common bond and greater productivity.

The announcement affects not only those who work from home full time—mainly customer service reps—but also those employees who have arranged to work from home one or two days a week. Yahoo! isn’t the only company asking remote workers to return. Bank of America, which had a popular remote work program, decided late in 2012 that employees in certain roles had to come back to the office. Before Mayer became CEO at Yahoo!, it was a wonder anything ever got done there. What she found wasn’t even remotely like the way employees functioned at Google.

At Yahoo!, few people were physically at work in the office cubicles throughout the building. Few cars or bikes or other vehicles could be found in the facility’s parking lots. Even more disturbing: some of the employees who were physically You Work Where? there at work did as little work as needed and then took off early. She also discovered that other employees who worked from home did little but collect a paycheck or maybe work on a sideline business they had started. Even at the office, one former manager described morale as being as low as it could be because employees thought the company was failing.

These were some of the reasons that Mayer abolished Yahoo!’s work-from-home policy. If Yahoo! was to again become the nimble company it had once been, a new culture of innovation,

communication, and collaboration was needed. And that meant employees had to be at work; physically at work together. Restoring Yahoo!’s “cool”—from its products to its deteriorating morale and culture—would be difficult if the organization’s people weren’t there.

That’s why Mayer’s decision at Yahoo! created such an uproar. Yahoo!’s only official statement on the new policy said, “This isn’t a broad industry view on working from home. This is about what is right for Yahoo!, right now.” Where work is done most efficiently and effectively—office, home, combination—is an important workplace issue.

The three main managerial concerns are productivity, innovation, and collaboration. Do flexible arrangements lead to greater productivity or inhibit innovation and collaboration? Another concern is that employees, especially younger ones, expect to be able to work remotely. Yes, the trend has been toward greater workplace flexibility, but does that flexibility lead to a bloated, lazy, and unproductive remote workforce? These are the challenges of designing work structures.

**Discussion Questions**

1. **Evaluate Yahoo!’s new work initiative. Did it have to be an “all or nothing” proposition? Discuss.**

**Answer: -**

Yahoo!'s new work initiative, which required employees to come back to the office and abolished the unique work-from-home policy, can be evaluated considering the "all or nothing" proposition.

Here are some points to consider:

**Productivity and Collaboration: -**

The memo from Yahoo!'s vice president of people and development stated that the new initiative was a response to productivity issues that can arise when employees work from home. By having employees physically present in the workplace, the aim was to foster a stronger common bond and greater productivity.

**Pros: -** Requiring employees to be physically present in the office can potentially improve collaboration and communication among team members. It allows for spontaneous discussions, face-to-face interactions, and immediate problem-solving. It may also help build a stronger company culture and sense of belonging.

**Cons: -** The "all or nothing" approach may overlook the fact that some employees are productive and efficient while working remotely. For certain roles or tasks that require focused work, individuals might find a quieter environment at home more conducive to their productivity. Restricting remote work options entirely could lead to demotivation and potentially result in talented employees seeking opportunities elsewhere.

**Work-Life Balance and Employee Satisfaction: -**

Flexible work arrangements, including remote work, have become increasingly important for many employees seeking work-life balance and flexibility. Younger generations, in particular, often value the freedom to work remotely.

**Pros: -** Requiring employees to work from the office can foster a sense of routine and separation between work and personal life. It may provide a more structured environment that helps employees maintain work-life boundaries and reduce burnout.

**Cons: -** For some employees, the ability to work remotely can enhance their overall job satisfaction. Removing this flexibility entirely might result in decreased morale and job dissatisfaction, particularly for those who rely on remote work to accommodate personal responsibilities or preferences.

**Individual Job Requirements: -**

Not all roles or tasks require employees to be physically present in the office. Some jobs can be performed effectively remotely, while others necessitate in-person collaboration or access to specific resources.

**Potential Approach: -**

Instead of an "all or nothing" proposition, Yahoo! could have adopted a more nuanced approach. They could have evaluated job roles and tasks individually to determine which ones would benefit from in-person collaboration and which could still be effectively carried out remotely. This approach would allow for a more tailored and flexible work arrangement based on job requirements.

In conclusion, while Yahoo!'s new work initiative aimed to address productivity and foster collaboration, adopting an "all or nothing" proposition might have overlooked the potential benefits and individual differences in job roles. A more balanced and flexible approach that considers job requirements, individual preferences, and the need for collaboration could have been more effective in achieving desired outcomes.

1. **What can managers and organizations do to help employees who work from home be efficient and effective?**

**Answer: -**

To help employees who work from home be efficient and effective, managers and organizations can take several actions:

**1. Clear Communication: -** Establish open and frequent communication channels between managers and remote employees. Provide clear guidelines and expectations regarding work schedules, deadlines, and deliverables. Regularly check in with remote employees to provide guidance, support, and address any concerns or challenges they may be facing.

**2. Goal Setting and Performance Measurement:** - Set clear goals and objectives for remote employees and establish metrics to evaluate their performance. This helps create accountability and allows managers to assess productivity and progress. Regularly review performance, provide constructive feedback, and recognize achievements to keep remote employees motivated and engaged.

**3. Technology and Infrastructure: -**Ensure that remote employees have the necessary technology, tools, and resources to perform their tasks effectively. This includes providing access to reliable internet connections, collaboration software, project management tools, and any specialized equipment required for their roles.

**4. Training and Development: -** Offer remote employees opportunities for training and professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge. This can be done through virtual workshops, webinars, online courses, or mentorship programs. Investing in their development shows a commitment to their growth and can increase their effectiveness in remote work.

**5. Supportive Work Environment:** Encourage remote employees to create a dedicated workspace at home that is conducive to productivity and minimizes distractions. Provide resources and guidance on setting up ergonomic workstations and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Encourage breaks, regular exercise, and self-care practices to promote well-being.

**6. Flexibility and Trust: -** Demonstrate trust in remote employees by offering flexibility in work schedules and allowing them to manage their time effectively. Recognize that remote work offers certain advantages in terms of autonomy and work-life balance. Trusting employees to deliver results and allowing for flexibility can boost their motivation and effectiveness.

**8. Regular Feedback: -**Provide ongoing feedback to remote employees regarding their performance and progress. Acknowledge their contributions and accomplishments through regular recognition and appreciation. This helps remote employees feel valued and connected to the organization.

**3.) Take the three main concerns—productivity, innovation, and collaboration. From the perspective of management, how do you think flexible arrangements stack up? How about from the employee’s perspective?**

**Answer: -**

The three concern, From the perspective of management, flexible work arrangements can have both advantages and potential concerns regarding productivity, innovation, and collaboration:

**Perspective of Management: -**

**1. Productivity: -**

**Advantages:** -Flexible arrangements, such as remote work or flexible hours, can improve productivity by allowing employees to work in environments where they feel most focused and motivated. It can reduce distractions commonly found in traditional office settings, leading to increased efficiency and output.

**Concerns: -** Managers may worry about maintaining productivity levels when employees have more autonomy and flexibility. They might be concerned about the potential for decreased supervision and accountability, especially if performance metrics and communication channels are not properly established.

**2. Innovation: -**

**Advantages**: Flexible work arrangements can foster innovation by providing employees with greater autonomy and freedom to explore creative ideas. Remote work, for example, allows individuals to work in their preferred environments, which can stimulate innovative thinking and problem-solving.

**Concerns**: Managers may fear that lack of in-person interactions and spontaneous discussions in flexible arrangements could hinder collaboration and the generation of new ideas. They might also be concerned about the difficulty of fostering a collaborative and innovative culture when employees are physically separated.

**3. Collaboration:**

**Advantages**: Flexible work arrangements can enhance collaboration by leveraging technology tools for virtual meetings, video conferencing, and document sharing. This allows employees to collaborate across different locations and time zones, promoting diversity of thought and expertise.

**Concerns**: Managers might worry that reduced face-to-face interactions and the reliance on virtual communication channels may hinder effective collaboration. They may also be concerned about potential delays in decision-making and difficulty in building strong relationships among team members.

**Employee's Perspective: -**

From the employee's perspective, flexible work arrangements can also have varying impacts:

**1. Productivity:**

**Advantages**: Flexible arrangements allow employees to adapt their work schedules to their most productive times, leading to improved work-life balance and job satisfaction. Remote work can eliminate commuting time and provide a quieter environment, enhancing focus and efficiency.

**Concerns**: Some employees may struggle with maintaining self-discipline and motivation in flexible arrangements. Without proper structure and routine, distractions at home or difficulties separating work and personal life may hamper productivity.

**2. Innovation:**

**Advantages**: Flexible work arrangements can promote innovation by providing employees with the freedom to work in environments that inspire creativity. They can engage in deep work without interruptions and explore new ideas at their own pace.

**Concerns**: Lack of in-person interactions and spontaneous brainstorming sessions may limit opportunities for collaboration and idea generation. Some employees may miss the creative energy that can come from in-person collaboration with colleagues.

**3. Collaboration:**

**Advantages**: Flexible work arrangements can foster collaboration by leveraging virtual communication tools and allowing employees to work together regardless of their physical location. It can provide more flexibility for employees with diverse schedules and work styles.

**Concerns**: Building relationships and trust may be more challenging in flexible arrangements where face-to-face interactions are reduced. Employees may miss the social connections and spontaneous conversations that occur in traditional office settings.

**4.) Is “face-time” (that is, showing up at work to be seen by your boss and others) critical to one’s career? Discuss.**

**Answer: -**

The importance of "face-time" (showing up at work to be seen by your boss and others) to one's career can vary depending on the specific industry, company culture, and individual circumstances. Here are some factors to consider when evaluating the significance of face-time:

**1. Visibility and Perception:-**

Being physically present at work can help individuals build visibility and establish a presence within the organization. It allows for face-to-face interactions with colleagues, superiors, and decision-makers, which can contribute to a positive perception of one's dedication and commitment.

**2. Relationship Building: -**

Face-time provides opportunities for informal conversations, networking, and relationship building. Building strong professional relationships can be beneficial for career advancement, mentorship opportunities, and gaining access to valuable information and resources within the organization.

**3. Collaboration and Teamwork: -** In certain roles, being physically present can enhance collaboration and teamwork. In-person interactions facilitate immediate feedback, quick problem-solving, and effective coordination among team members, particularly when tasks require real-time communication or physical presence.

**4. Organizational Culture:** Some companies may have a culture that places high value on face-time and equates it with dedication and loyalty. In such environments, not being physically present may be perceived negatively and could potentially limit career growth opportunities.

However, it is important to note that the significance of face-time is evolving with changing work trends, such as remote work and flexible arrangements. Here are some counterpoints to consider:

**1. Results and Output: -** In many industries, what matters most is the quality of work and the ability to deliver results, rather than the number of hours spent in the office. Employers increasingly focus on outcomes and productivity rather than mere presence.

**2. Remote Work and Flexibility**: The rise of remote work and flexible arrangements has challenged the notion that physical presence is essential for career success. Many organizations have embraced remote work and recognize that individuals can be productive and contribute effectively from different locations.

**3. Performance and Competence:** Demonstrating competence, skills, and meeting job expectations are crucial for career advancement. Managers and employers often prioritize performance metrics, achievements, and the ability to meet deadlines over mere face-time.

**4. Work-Life Balance:** Employees increasingly prioritize work-life balance and seek flexibility in their work arrangements. Companies that prioritize employee well-being and accommodate flexible work options can attract and retain top talent, recognizing that productivity can be achieved regardless of physical presence.