Discussion 6 Risk and Uncertainty

Discussion Topic:

As it has been discussed in the text and the lecture, risk and uncertainty is a constant in all projects. As the newly appointed project manager for the deployment of a new biometric system across four locations (four major metropolitan areas and 12,000+ employees), the board has several questions for you as you begin.

- Coming into this deployment, what is one of the top foreseeable risks to this new system, and how likely is it to occur?
- What preparations should be made to respond to extreme events?
- What sort of risk should the company be willing to accept? Define risk tolerances for use in managing this particular deployment.
- What role does management have in leveraging the skillsets required to deploy the system?
- Are there any organizational blind spots that need immediate attention?

Given your understanding of risk and risk management, utilize your knowledge and skill to answer these questions.

My Post:

Hello class,

Given my understanding of risk and risk management at this point in the course, I will answer the discussion topic questions about a new biometric system across four locations (four major metropolitan areas and 12,000+ employees), like so:

First, let us define risk. Our textbook defines it as an uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, can have a positive or negative effect on project objectives (Ucertify, n.d.).

Question-1: Coming into this deployment, what is one of the top foreseeable risks to this new system, and how likely is it to occur?

Coming into this deployment, the top foreseeable risk is system failure or malfunction, due to the scale and integration complexity of such a system. Complexity and scale emerging from the high number of interdependencies between biometric devices + identity systems + network + site-specific constraints + 12,000+ employees. The likelihood of this risk occurring, I will rate it as medium-to-high early in the rollout, as complex systems have a significant number of interdependent parts, and failures often show up after deployment under real load and real use.

Question-2: What preparations should be made to respond to extreme events?

Technical resilience and operational readiness preparations should be made to respond to extreme events such as major outages, security incidents, or site disruption. These preparations should include system redundancy and graceful degradation for critical components to protect against a single point of failure, resulting in a full system shutdown, and they should also include a documented contingency plan and a fallback plan (Plan B) if the first planned response does not resolve the issue or is ineffective.

Question-3: What sort of risk should the company be willing to accept?

The sort of risks that the company should be willing to accept are:
- Risk Appetite, that is, the degree of uncertainty an organization is willing to take on in anticipation of a reward.
- Risk Tolerance, that is, the specified range of acceptable results (variance).
- Risk Threshold, that is, the level of risk exposure above which action must be taken. Below this level, the risk may be accepted.

(Ucertify, n.d.)

Question 4: What role does management have in leveraging the skillsets required to deploy the system?

The most important job/role of management is to make risk management tangible, not a symbolic exercise; by implementing the right processes or mechanisms to manage risks, potential positive or negative effects. This requires management to understand and be capable of categorizing risks; as well as appropriately escalating these risks if needed, as some risks belong at the project level, others must move up the organization level (Ucertify, n.d.).

Question 5: Are there any organizational blind spots that need immediate attention?

The most often encountered blind spots for deployment, like this one, are:
- Unmanaged assumptions, for example, falsely assuming that the vendors handle all integration issues or that all sites will comply in the same fashion with the deployment protocol. To identify and monitor all deployment integration issues, a program manager should maintain an assumption log listing constraints and possible hidden dependencies (CSU Global, n.d.).
- Be aware of or be prepared for potential changes in resistance from employees and emerging training gaps within the deployment teams and employees, which can create deployment obstacles, effectively turning the project itself into a behavioral risk (Ucertify, n.d.)

-Alex

Reference:

CSU Global (n.d.). *Module 6: Risk and Progress Management*, Canvas. https://portal.csuglobal.edu

Ucertify (n.d.). Lesson 13: Uncertainty. Project Manager Professional (PMP) Based on PMBOK7. Ucertify. ISBN: 978-1-64459-415-5