Champlain College

Week 5: Assignment: Personal Learning Journal  
(#5)

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The King Shaka International Airport won the Overseas Project of the Year in 2010. “The development took just 32 months to build.” (PMI, n.d.) While there were delays, such as cultural differences, they were able to maintain their team “set in motion a plan to meet the 1 May 2010 deadline” (PMI, n.d.) With the “FIFA Football World Cup in 2010, the project was subject to a very tight timescale for design, construction, integration and handover to the operator.” (PMI, n.d.)

“Sometimes the normal time needed to complete a project is longer than the time available.” (Darnall, 2010, p42) They brought together multiple ways to hold to their deadline. Through tools such as knowledge sharing, cultural understanding, and coordination, they made their deadline and kept everyone informed and employees safe. One tool that helped was the central register, which assisted the project director in understanding risk areas and knowing the potential problem areas, allowing for speedy resolutions.

In this paper, I will explore the importance of controlling scheduling and the techniques they used on their airport project. I will also discuss how they know and control critical paths and the issues that will have to be mitigated. The King Shaka International Airport project can be valuable to use to teach compensating insights to progress a project and move toward a successful end, keeping all stakeholders engaged and satisfied at the project's end.

The King Shaka International Airport (KSIA) had a deadline of 1 May 2010. The goal of the South African Lead consortium – llembe – with Turner & Townsend would be to develop the project. The goal was to “transform a barren area of South African landscape into a billion-dollar green-field airport development that could efficiently manage 7.5 million passengers each year.”(PMI, n.d.) The greatest of the challenges was the FIFA World Cup, which was going to be hosted in South Africa. The World Cup would create a very tight project timeline in which the team could complete their project. In addition, there were contributing factors that needed to be ironed out. Cost or budgetary constraints require local labor.

The skill-based transfer is nothing new, but the team would need to find key people to train and disperse knowledge without over-committing to UK professionals. In addition, there were practices from the UK that would require adaptation to local conditions. Cultural differences of different types would require the team to identify, alter, or set aside the differences. In the area of the stage approval process, “the project team adapted their services to support the clients preferred management and governance approaches.” (PMI, n.d.)

Due to the location, “the decision from the Department of the Environment to start the development took longer than expected, which delayed the project by 77 days.” (PMI, n.d.) These problems, while unfortunate, did not cause the project team to be held back. The creation of a project cluster was the result of the delays. The idea is to combine stakeholders in a format that allows consistency in understanding “the design and integration and in order to drive the schedule.” (PMI, n.d.)

As discussed earlier, it seems the environmental agency was the only problem before the project cluster that caused delays. The team was proactive in identifying and compensating for positive changes and adapting to the environment their project was in. There were issues with UK approaches that needed to be adopted. As stated earlier, the approaches were changed to “local, more well-known method[s].” (PMI, n.d.) The team's adaptability allowed them to complete the project on time and within the budget, leading to them winning the APM Project Management Awards for an overseas project of the year 2010.

Critical path management is finding the project dependencies (activities that must be completed) and the minimal time for project completion. The critical path activities will be completed during the execution phase and can be planned for in the analysis phase. We can use the critical path to separate and understand which activities could impact our project the most. In the example of the above project, the Department of the Environment caused over two months of delays. The critical path can also be seen as the most time-consuming.

While I do not know if you can push an Environmental agency to do anything, the other critical sections of their projects were handled proactively after this event. Pushing for greater understanding and information sharing. Which ultimately worked in their favor. Using local practices and being flexible where they can while maintaining the budget and time frame led this project to success. The key takeaway that I have from this project is to be proactive and nimble in your approach to a project.

It is said that no project or project manager is the same, and you learn and grow as you develop skills in this field. This project shows how working with people to produce something as significant as an airport is achievable. KSIA, Turner & Townsend had many things against them from the start. The budget and the time frame would have been improbable for a less mature agency to complete. Their key decision for me was to combine cluster and dependency registers, which could track complexity and provide consistency.

References:

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