**Effective mitigation strategies to deal with scope creep**

**Abstract**

Scope Creep is when a projects requirements are changed during, before or after the project has started. There can be many reasons for a Scope Creep including the disagreement of stakeholders, change in management or change in demands from the customers. These are some of the major reasons for Scope Creep. This can be a serious issue for the team working on the project and stakeholders for the project as last-minute changes are always difficult to manage and complete. On the other hand, you could end up with a project with lots of approved, considered changes, that never ends because every time you think you have finished, a new project requirement such as a new product feature arrives in your inbox, and you must make more changes.

**Scope Creep in Project Management**

Scope creep occurs when changes are made to the project without any control procedure like change requests. Those changes impacts all aspects of the project from start till end and also includes delayed project or project completed without adequate fulfillment of the requirements. This can be a pain for the team working on the project, stakeholders around the project and overall company and its reputation in long run.

During scope creep, if too much attention is given to the guidelines or newly emerged guidelines , then final product can be too much complicated and can lack the most up to date requirements and on the other hand if less attentions is given to the newly emerged demands and requirements then the project can lack relativism in new market .

**Sources of scope creep**

**Client** : Most of the time , clients are the biggest causes of the scope creep .Clients may want some addition or removal from the project midway through the process and that can lead to the scope creep as the entire team has to re-strategies for the project .

**Users**: Sometimes , when the initial drafts are released for the audience , the user feedback can be negative and that could lead to the scope creep as the entire project has to be re-evaluated focusing on the the user feedback .

A classic example of this case is X-Box user X consoles catching fire .When Microsoft released X-box X in limited quantity back in 2020 , many of the users complained that the consoles caught fire when turned on for a long time so Microsoft had to give their denial in the media but later had to refocus on the entire product before its actual release causing a scope creep for entire project .

https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/tech-old/1789252/xbox-series-x-console-fire-microsoft-hoax/

**Stakeholders (Internal and external):** Sometimes, the stakeholders are not satisfied with the project and they can demand more value being added to the product .They maybe be unhappy with the end result or the product cycle and that could lead to multiple demands from shareholders and can lead to scope creep .

**Group -Members/Team** : Team can also lead to scope creep as individuals can present new ideas to work on the project and that can lead to the scope creep .That can often happen during the daily scrum meetings or during the project brainstorming sessions or by a random teammates idea .

**Manager** : Managers can also lead to the scope creep as managers may find some projects outcome unworthy or not good enough and hence can lead to scope creep

**Reasons of scope creep**

**Poorly defined Scope Definition** : Poorly defined scope definition is the biggest reason for scope creep .When the team have no clear idea of what is expected from the project and how to go about handling the project , this can lead to scope creep .The teams are not equipped well enough without the proper definition of the project .

**Poor Management** : Sometimes poor management can also lead to scope creep. Project managers or senior management can sometimes bow down too much to the demands from customers or users and hence can create too much scope creep .So if the management has a strict policy that a project threshold cant be changed above a certain percentage , that can ensure less scope creep . This can also be the case in lack on involvement by the leadership team .When the leadership team doesn’t intervene and make sure that the project teams are not getting bossed around by internal or external stakeholders , that can lead to scope creep so the leadership team also has to be pro active in mitigating this .

**Scope drift** : This is another major cause of the scope creep. Sometimes scope of the project can drift way too much, and some extra horizon can be added into the project by its leadership and hence that could lead to mix up and scope creep.

**Project Duration** : Project duration and length are sometimes big reason of scope creep. That is why agile and scrum framework needs to be added into all the projects. Agility in project ensures no wastage of time and agility within the team and tasks can ensure proper completion of project within required timeframe.

This Graph shows how Scope creep can impact negatively on teams’ goal and performance.

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

**How to avoid Scope Creep**

There are several strategies that the companies can use to minimize scope creep.

**Planning in advance**: Scope creep is inevitable and its almost impossible that there will be no scope creep . So what the companies can do to mitigate the impact of scope creep is designing an efficient change control process. What this will do is it will highlight the ways in which scope creep can be managed by looking into the documentation .Which details to add and what kind of details to avoid can be an effective way of managing the changes arising from scope creep .

**Creating a proper Project Schedule** : By creating a schedule for the project and creating an effective timeline for the project the scope creep impact can be minimized as the project already in process will only have few things added into it while its still on going . The schedule should also have a contingency plan as to how to deal with some urgent requirements that needs to be added into the project .

**Taking all stakeholders onboard before the Project starts** : This is another good way in which all the inputs and ideas from all the stakeholders are taken before starting the project .This way no new thing will be added into the project by stakeholders while it has begun .Every stakeholder will have their say in the matter so once the project has been started , their will be less inputs from stakeholders for addition in the Project .

**Engaging the Project Team Member** : When the whole team member will be onboard , there will be no extra addons during the project .So every team member including the managers should be onboard the ideas and goals of the project before starting the project .

**Historical Example**

**WASA and Scope Creep**

This is probably one of the most significant stories of scope creep . In 16th century , Sweden was at war with Poland .The kind of the time Gustav 2 ordered for the making of the biggest naval ship in Swedish History called WASA .He assigned Master Ship Builder Henrik this task .Henrik accepted the task and started working towards it .Few days later the king ordered new modification to the size of the ship .Again few days later , King ordered that the ship should be made to carry more soldiers .Henrik accepted this but when he was working on the Ship , king again asked for few more changes to the size of the ship .Again Henrik obliged after small protest .Later when he was almost done with making of ship , king again ordered few more changes which caused a heart attack to Henrik causing his death . Henrik’s assistant took over and started rebuilding the ship with new demands from the king but as soon as he was about to complete the project , the king asked for more alterations to the ship which the assistant had to no choice but to accept .When the ship was completed in 2 years’ time , all the change requirements had made it unstable for sailing but due to lack of time the king demanded that the ship be immediately set on sail along with a crew of 153 soldiers .After 20 minutes of sailing , because of poor infrastructure , too much load , the ship sank and killed all 153 onboard . So what can we learn from the tragic story of the WASA? The pressure of a tight deadline, combined with constant requirement changes, lack of technical specifications, and the need for innovation – these things can kill any project.

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