**Title: Objective Appraisal of the Pilot Angels Project**

**Date of Preparation: 20/05/2016**

**Group4C Members: u5586058, u5587567, u5715141, u5326448**

**Executive Summary:**

This briefing paper provides an analysis on the current Pilot Angels project. The paper addresses both the concerns of the Husky Air CEO and observable evidence found through personal investigation. The target of investigation was the SoftSupport and Husky Air project development team. The findings of the investigation found that the final and third release of the project had been delayed. There was also a failure to achieve the expectation of stakeholder as they are dissatisfied with the project. Furthermore, the current development software is not free and is attached with a licensing fee charging each user of the software.

In order to manage stakeholder expectations, the paper recommends incorporating social media, road map interpretation and feedback. Recommendations for team motivation that are suggested include: changing leadership styles, replanning project roles and enforcing further management initiative. A suggestion when encountering bad news is through the process of understanding of the problem, its causes, possible solutions for the problem. Likewise with ethical dilemmas, the recommended process is to refer to the PMI Code of Ethics when making sensitive decisions and enforcing ethical training to mitigate further unethical behaviour.

**Introduction:**

The project management profession is continuously developing (Steinfort, 2002) and over time, best practices have been identified as a solution to accommodate evolving project success factors (Steinfort, 2002). Many of these factors will be critical to address if the Pilot Angels project is to achieve success.

Project success will be largely dependant on a firm communication plan between stakeholders and users in order to manage their expectations. Additionally, finding an leadership effective leadership style will be essential to motivate the team towards completing the project. A further success factor will be the identification of processes which will mitigate potential fallout when delivering bad news, and all of these factors must be done whilst considering ethical responsibilities.

The Pilot Angels project has been going on for 13 months and concerns have grown for both the Husky Air and tender winners, SoftSupport. These concerns have encouraged Husky Air to employ an audit to provide an objective appraisal of the project. This briefing paper is a result of the audit’s findings. The purpose of the brief is to analyse the current issues which are obstacles to the completion of the Pilot Angels project and provide recommendations which offer actions and practices to achieve project success.

**Managing stakeholders’ expectation:**

In recent years, many companies established the project management system in order to determine user requirements for new products (Wikipedia, 2016) since it is an effective and comprehensive way. However, in this scenario, project management hasn’t been organized well due to poor communication. It would be better to implement an efficient communication plan, which would guarantee the Angel Pilots project in achieving its promised goals (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2006).

First, we can separate stakeholders into two general categories, internal stakeholders and external stakeholders (Group 4A, 2016). External stakeholders mainly represent the staff at Husky Air and their concerns about this project are listed as the following:

The Husky Air CEO wanted to know the whole progress more clearly. He hoped to receive a detailed project plan, a requirements specification and design document since he could not understand those professionally knowledge of road map and burn-up chart. His experience told him that a project should have adequate testing phase to avoid potential problems. He was really worried about the quality of the project. As for Husky Air Pilot Angels scheduler, the new system improved the efficiency of scheduling flights and could do scheduling much easier, which makes him satisfied. However, some pilots were complained that they could not update their details and query schedule online. Due to the poor communication, they were not informed that the third release was delayed which contained their concerns. Another stakeholder in Husky Air company, the support officer wanted to use the old paper system instead. This is a little bit unreasonable since the new system has its own features and may be different from the old one. Users may find the software inconvenient and difficult to use. The project team could provide an explicit instruction of new software for users to help them get used to it, for example: teaching video and instruction book.

The internal stakeholders are the Soft Support CEO and project development team. The project manager believes that using agile software development is a good way to complete this project. She trusted her team member and believed that they could do right things by themselves, which is totally in contrast with team member’ opinion.Team members had no idea what to do and they thought that the project should be well managed as everyone knowing exactly what they need to do since many of them did not have IT experience.

The leadership which the project manager chose is not suitable for this team. Failure of communicating to each other in this team and inefficient collaboration caused the delay of the third release. Possible conflicts between team members were caused by bad communication. Hence, SoftSupport really needs some communication space like a social intranet platform, which will help to create cohesion and efficiency in the communication and collaboration process and enhance the productivity. The project manager needs to provide an interpreter to translate the road map and burn-up chart into a detailed plan to show CEO what each period is doing and how long it costs. And then CEO would not be worried because he will find that testing phase is contained in each iteration. The project team are responsible to keep the stakeholders informed about the process of the project as well as their difficulties and constraints weekly or monthly. Keep in touch with users may avoid deviating from stakeholders’ expectation. Feedback should be considered as well to make users satisfied, which would create a good relationship with stakeholders (Group 4A).

**Leadership styles and team motivation**:

Team cooperation is the most significant factor for the modern world of business to maintain competitiveness and vitality. Due to this situation, leadership, a necessary method to achieve to advance the efficient of team work, is extensively applied on many companies (Reeves, Deimler 2011). Nowadays, we have seen that leadership plays a primary role in directing the organizational goals and keep the team on the track. Moreover, when the project to encounter serious problems, the leadership may motivate the team to keep the project out of chaos (Group 4B, 2016).

Based on the scenario, as the Husky Air CEO said, the SoftSupport project is poorly planned and managed which leads to the project turning troubled. Firstly, the disordered team is without balanced work and clear ideas. Two team members lose the direction and are told that they make their own decisions by the project manager. This situation demonstrates that the project manager subjectively considers all team members are full of experience and chooses the wrong leadership style, which is the delegative leadership style. This leadership style is when the leader describes the problem, makes suggestions, and leaves questions and plans to experienced team members to decide the blueprint for the project. (Scheedlitzki & Edwards, 2014) Clearly, the project manager chooses leadership incorrectly.

Second, there are only two team members having the experience of the agile project. In other words, most people are conditioned to traditional project development approaches. However, the project manager doesn’t recognize the condition and knowledge of everyone. She never makes statistics of everyone’s capability and experience but subjectively considers everyone enables to finish the work independently. Moreover, the communication between manager and team members is a terrible issue which causes them to misunderstand each other.

The most significant problem is the attitude of the project manager. She receives feedback passively and trusts the team unconditionally due to lack of investigation and communication. The expression decreases the enthusiasm. A recommendation is for her to choose the consultative leadership style. This involves telling the team members what to do, hearing their opinions, and advising them how to improve at the beginning. As a result, the team may not go off the troubled direction. (Scheedlitzki & Edwards, 2014) Regretfully, she over-rates the team members and never operates measures to keep the project on the track.

**Delivering Bad News:**

It is an unfortunate fact that bad news is unavoidable in software development process, ranging from minor issues to show stopping roadblocks, and can come from any area of the project. Therefore, we must accept that at some point bad news must be delivered. However, all is not lost, and there are processes which can help mitigate the potential fallout of delivering bad news. (Group 4C, 2016)

There is sadly plenty of bad news to be delivered to the client in this project. Although the project has delivered some value in the first two releases, the third release has failed to meet its deadline, which was three whole months ago. The CEO of Husky Air himself is feeling doubtful about the project as a whole, given that he hasn’t received any sort of feedback with reasons for the delay. This is very worrying as it indicates a lack of communication with the CEO, and effective communication is frequently the most important factor in determining the success or failure of a project (Group 4C, 2016). SoftSupport needs to have a better way of communicating bad news to its stakeholders, or it risks the project failing entirely. I recommend that this problem is resolved by organising regular correspondence and the occasional face-to-face meeting between the project manager and the Husky Air CEO.

There is another piece of bad news to be delivered in the consequences of the ethical dilemma resulting from the choice to continue using paid development software, or to switch to a FOSS alternative. No matter which choice is made (although we have a recommendation on that as well) the outcome involves having to deliver bad news to Husky Air (either by delaying the project a month, or increasing the cost of the project). Once a decision is made, it is important not to delay notifying the stakeholders of the project, as otherwise the bad news may leak out through other means (Group 4C, 2016). This would be catastrophic for SoftSupport, as with the Husky Air CEO’s opinions about the progress and managements of the project being quite low, he may choose to drop the project entirely.

Yet another piece of bad news that needs to be delivered is the issues relating to team management and communication within SoftSupport. No matter the decision made to fix the issue, whether it be a change of management styles or otherwise, it will undoubtable cause delays in the project as team members are brought up to speed and accept the new system of development and communication.

Had all of the bad news relating to the project been delivered earlier, many of the projects issued would have been resolved. The majority of problems with the project stem from communication issues. Had the CEO of Husky Air been notified of the delays in the project earlier, he would most likely have had a much better opinion of and understand of the project.

On one hand, it is important to do a necessary amount of work before raising an issue outside of a team. The project manager should first obtain an understanding of the problem, its causes, and come up with some possible solutions for the problem (Group 4C, 2016). However, in this case, the project manager has clearly had time to do this, even going so far as to come up with multiple approaches for how to solve the software licensing problem. In short, there is no reason not to communicate all of the bad news to the CEO of Husky Air at this point.

**Software Development Licensing:**

At the present moment, there is an issue with the development software which has been chosen. Although the software provides the required functionality, the SoftSupport project manager has discovered the current software involve an annual license due to having an excess of five users. The Husky Air CEO signed the developmental contract of the software’s use and the software was thought to be free. The license will be costly taking into account Husky Air’s 23 employees (Case Study - Husky Air, COMP3120). However, she has found an alternative solution which could help Husky Air and SoftSupport but requires ethical considerations. As the number of failing organizations caused by unethical behavior becomes significant, it is becoming evident that ethics plays a major role in project management (Group 4D, 2016).

The SoftSupport project manager has identified a Free/Open Source Software (FOSS) (Chawner, 2004) product which will reduce the costs of software development by removing the license fees of the current system. The FOSS product also provides a conversion tool which claims to be able to automatically translate the current Pilot Angels system to the new FOSS environment. Because of the automatic conversion tool, the developers will not be required to perform the conversion completely by themselves, and thus saving time and resources.

However, the SoftSupport project manager acknowledges that she does not know the complete effectiveness of the automatic conversion tool. She intends to build a prototype of the code conversion to provide her with a better understanding of the requirements to implement the FOSS product. The prototype is expected to take one month. Before commencing the prototype, the project manager has two options: she can decide to inform or not to inform the CEO’s of the current licensing issue.

If she does notify both CEO’s, Husky Air may decide to reject the FOSS initiative and stay with the current software. This will mean that the SoftSupport developers will have to continue to develop the environment conversion completely by themselves. The SoftSupport project manager believes that her company are not liable for the additional expenses of the licensing mistake, but Husky Air may appeal against SoftSupport which could further complicate the project and company relationships.

If she does not notify either of the CEO’s, in one month, she may have either a successful or failed prototype. If she is able to get a successful conversion using the FOSS product, the company SoftSupport will be lauded for their initiative and efforts. Husky Air will also reap all the benefits of the new FOSS environment. If the prototype fails, the risk for SoftSupport is not significant as by then, SoftSupport will have billed 75 percent of the project value. However, SoftSupport’s resource security will be at the cost of Husky Air’s. An unsuccessful FOSS implementation will significantly increase Husky Air’s potential costs to rectify the situation.

This presents the project manager with an ethical dilemma - does she act in the best interests of Husky Air or her own company, SoftSupport? A research paper provided by Group 4D provides recommendations for ethical decision making (Group4D, 2016). One of the recommendations is to follow the best-practice Code of Ethics (PMI) for project management when making ethically sensitive decisions. The primary principles of the Code are as follows: Responsibility, respect, fairness and honesty (Project Management Institute, 2006).

If the project manager is to act with responsibility, she will need to accept the full consequences of her actions (Project Management Institute, 2006). However, she intends not to notify either CEO’s of the annual license problem and will keep the FOSS solution to herself. As mentioned above, if the prototype fails, her company remains intact but Husky Air will have significant costs to cover. The project manager knows that her actions will not result in complete consequences for SoftSupport and herself. She is acting irresponsibly and is also violating the principle of respect. She is not showing high regard for others, which in this case is Husky Air (Project Management Institute, 2006).

To have made an ethical decision, the project manager must also be fair. This means to make decisions which are unaffected by personal agenda (Project Management Institute, 2006). The decision to not notify either CEO’s is attractive due to the benefits which come for both herself and her company SoftSupport. This is both unfair and dishonest as she has acted to the benefit of her company whilst purposely withholding critical knowledge of the faults in the current development software.

If the SoftSupport project manager wants to abide by the principles of the PMI Code of Ethics, she will need to make her unpreferred decision which is to to inform both the CEO’s of Husky Air and SoftSupport of the licensing issue. This will need to be done before the project manager makes any further action, such as prototyping. Immediately notifying the CEO’s will ensure that both Husky Air and SoftSupport are treated fairly and well informed. The project can then swiftly resume progress. Had she made the unethical decision, it could have resulted with the entire project failing due to the significant costs Husky Air needed to cover.

This is why ethics plays a major role in project management - the “wrong” ethical decision can directly result in the failure of a project. To avoid unethical behaviour in future of the projects, Group4D’s paper recommends ethical training (Group4D, 2016). This can bring greater understanding in project ethics, raise incentives and provide examples of consequences. Had the project manager been given incentives or knowledge of consequences, she may not have originally considered to unethically withhold information.

**Conclusion:**

Project success is largely determined by whether the success factors can be met. In the Pilot Angels project, through incorporating social media, road map interpretation and feedback, the concerns of stakeholders can be communicated and their expectations can be managed. There needs to be a change leadership style, replanning of project roles and further initiative to motivate the team which is another major success factor. In order to mitigate a potential fallout when delivering bad news, there should be an understanding of the problem, its causes, possible solutions for the problem.

All of these actions should be done whilst considering the role of ethics in project management, as unethical behaviour can directly result in the failure of a project. Following the PMI Code of Ethics and enforcing ethical training will ensure the unethical behaviour is avoided.

**Reference:**

Group 4A, COMP3120, 2016. *COMP3120 Assignment 1, Topic 1: Communicating with stakeholders and managing their expectations*. Australian National University.

Group 4B, COMP3120, 2016. *COMP3120 Assignment 1, Topic 2:* [*Leadership styles and team motivation*](https://wattlecourses.anu.edu.au/mod/book/view.php?id=823671&chapterid=165555). Australian National University.

Group 4C, COMP3120, 2016. *COMP3120 Assignment 1, Topic 3: Delivering Bad News*. Australian National University.

Group 4D, COMP3120, 2016. Incorporating Ethics into Project Management. Australian National University.

Paul Steinfort, 2002. TCRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT GLOBALLY AND HOW THEY MAY BE APPLIED TO AID PROJECTS. *RMIT University*. Melbourne, Australia.

Project Management Institute, 2006. *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct,* s.l.: Project Management Institute, Inc..

Reeves, M, Deimler, M 2011 “Adaptability: The new Competitive Advantage” Harvard Business Review, Web. 16 Mar. 2016. <https://hbr.org/2011/07/adaptability-the-new-competitive-advantage>

Reynolds, G. W., 2010. *Information Technology for Managers.* Boston: Course Technology. Cengage Learning.

Scheedlitzki, D. & Edwards, G., 2014. Organisation as Purpose: Leadership as Relationship and Values through Social Enterprise. In: Studying Leadership. London: Sage, pp. 290-294.

Sport and Recreation New Zealand. (2006, May). Creating a Stakeholders Communications Plan. Wellington, New Zealand

Wikipedia. (2016, March 16). *Software project management*. Retrieved from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Software\_project\_management