

CASE STUDY-- PROJECT MANAGEMENT – ENGSCI 9510

Requirement: A group research report on a project which has been completed within the last 15 years, emphasizing “lessons learned” that can be gained from the project. The students should focus on management lessons, NOT technical lessons. The students should focus on what to do in the future, not just what was done in the past. To ensure the broadest depth of Project Management material is covered, it may be convenient for the student’s lessons to be categorized into the *PMBOK Guide* knowledge areas: Scope, Cost, Time, Quality, Risk, Procurement, Communications, Human Resources, etc. Use several sources – refereed journals (if available – for many of these projects they will not be), government reports, newspapers and magazines, personal interviews, websites.

You cannot choose the same project as another group, therefore please send an email to the instructor of the course soliciting approval for your topic.

Max Wideman’s PM Glossary at www.maxwideman.com defines “lessons learned” as:

- “The capture of what went well as well as past errors of judgment resulting in material failures, wrong timing or other mistakes, all for the purposes of improving future performance.
- The project team’s learning from the project. Usually defined during close out.”

The *PMBOK Guide* (PMI, 2004) says: “The learning gained from the process of performing the project.”

Your paper should be arranged as follows: 1) Introduce the project 2) A series of numerous lessons. For each lesson, state the lesson learned in one sentence, then explain in logical convincing detail why you concluded that. 3) Lessons selected can be both good and/or bad examples. 4) For each lesson, state something that happened or failed to happen. Did the project management team carry out or fail to carry out good practice as described in your textbook or in the class (or, optionally in the reference book)? 5) Describe why and how this can be a “lesson learned” for use when managing future projects. Most group reports will contain between 8 and 16 lessons.

For example, from a previous report:

“Lesson Learned #5: Stakeholder input must be sought, and must be seen to be valued.

Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation Fred Salvucci secured local government support for the Central Artery / Tunnel program by making two crucial pledges...”

Teams might choose construction projects, because it is easy to find ones which are high profile. But be sure to consider other types of projects, especially ones relevant to the engineering discipline of the team members. Look at software development, new product development, aerospace, etc. Military equipment projects of the US Department of Defense can be good choices – they exist in a serious PM environment, have lots of stakeholders, and there may be good published sources of information. Two places to look are Project Management Institute’s “Project of the Year” winners and finalists, and the IPMA project award winners (www.ipma.ch).

Written Report Specifications:

Length: a title page, an executive summary of 1 page, and then the body of the report is 14 pages, followed by reference list and possible appendices. Tables and figures may in the body or may be in the appendix. If you use tables and figures, they must be discussed in the body text. The body of the report should be double spaced, Times New Roman. Zero tolerance for plagiarism. All references must actually be cited in the text, according to Chicago Manual of Style

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. It is always surprising how many groups lose points through missing these formatting specifications.

As much as possible, include factual data to support your arguments. This can be quantitative or qualitative project data, such as budget or schedule variances, number of changes, statements from key qualified stakeholders, or qualitative comparison to other similar projects.”

How To Submit the Lessons Learned Case Study: Have one person from the team submit it to their drop box. Makes sure all names are recorded on the front page of the report. All members of the group will receive the same grade regardless of who does the work. Make sure you do not do too much or too little for your group. I will not be intervening in petty disputes regarding deservedness of marks.