The Deadline
Jesse Ables jha92
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How do we manage risks?

We first need to know what our risks are and how badly they could affect the project. After we know the risks, we can predict their likelihood of happening and how much they will cost the project if they do happen. Then we need to determine symptoms of each risk so that we know when they start showing up within the project. In many cases, the developers tend to think they can do anything, so having one person appointed who is supposed to challenge ideas may be a good idea. Finally, having an anonymous way of communicating with management when a risk is beginning to happen or is happening will give developers an incentive to speak up instead of letting the problem fester. [1]

Why do workplaces become toxic environments?

Some managers may use threats to motivate performance. Mr. T says that this is an imperfect way of motivating performance. I personally believe this could cause a toxic workplace. When someone's job is on the line, they will do whatever possible to make sure they keep their job. This leads into Mr. T's pathology notes. The business has goals, and the employees have goals. If both do not line up, one or the other will take control. In the earlier case of being threatened, the employees goals may take over and end up affecting a project or a workplace in a negative way. This could become worse when two personal goals conflict with each other. One side wants their goal met, but if it is met then another group can't meet their own goal. This leads to groups conniving against one another and a loss of a trusting, healthy work environment. [1]

What allows organizations to embrace change?

Many organizations will stick to their roots because they know for a fact that a certain method works. The only way to show that a different method works better is to prove it. For this we need to model and simulate. Since Mr. T had an entire country to play with, he was able to experiment with different styles of teams, methodologies, etc. He not only could create theoretical models of how something could work, he could prove or disprove his thoughts. Organizations need to be able to embrace risks and experiment a little bit. [1]

How do we save time without reducing quality?

Invest in long term productivity improvements and not in the short term. Most things that are short term improvements are "snake oil." Even if a short term productivity fix does work, it won't work forever and you will have to spend more time reimplementing the short term fix again. Being able to see that a project is not working and cutting your losses quickly, you will lose more time if you continue a failing project. Don't create teams if you don't have to, use pre created teams who have already shown that they work well together. According to Mr T.: don't overstaff, it ends up costing more time than saving. [1]

References

[1]T. DeMarco, *The deadline*. New York: Dorset House Pub., 1997.