Group 4

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Changes in Project Scope

Often there are numerous factors that have influence on a project’s potential success. One such example is the outline of goals, tasks, and budget of a project, collectively called the project’s scope. Although teams may start out with an extent of knowledge regarding their scope and how to stick to it, the scope of a project is often changed to accommodate additional goals that the project team determines necessary to add. Project teams extend the scope in this way in some cases to make up for lost resources or make a good impression on their boss or leader by going above and beyond. These changes project teams add to their project plan to extend the desired scope can be dangerous to project success if not managed correctly or if too many new requirements are added to the scope. In order to save the project, the project leader and team must recognize the problem and address it by trying to find a solution tailored to their situation while also working to prevent this event from occurring uncontrolled in the future.

While trying to impress project sponsors, project teams often put too much value on exceeding expectations and trying to damage control lost resources by extending the scope instead of focusing on providing what is needed from them. For example, the “expansion of the requirements, coupled with inadequate prioritization, makes it difficult to deliver the most important functionality on schedule” and puts the project in a loop of trying to accomodate for goals they were unable to reach by implementing even more goals that will be hard for the project team to accomplish (Wiegers). This details specifically how changes in a project’s scope can affect the success of the project and how trying to damage control by extending project scope is incorrect. If a project team cannot accomplish its current goals, the worst possible thing the team could do is give themselves more goals to add onto the pressure they are already feeling.

By focusing on the basics of the project and only what is expected of the project, projects suffering from scope issues can be salvaged. For instance, “[t]he value of the project to the clients is reduced when their expectations are not met and consequently their support to the project is lost,” causing the project to be a failure (Gao and Lechler). This clearly shows the importance of sticking to the expectations of a project in that projects that choose to change scope often lose the interest of sponsors and clients. This is because prior goals before scope changes may have captured the sponsors interest in the first place and may be the reason they sponsored the project. By focusing on what is expected of them, project teams can keep sponsor interest and deliver exactly what the project was created to deliver.

Scope extension issues can be in part prevented by defining the scope well before the project’s start and ensuring that all members are familiar with it and the importance of sticking to it. To illustrate, creating project scope early on and sticking to it “minimize[s] the risk of change orders and disruptions, while staying on budget” (Clarizen). Giving the project team of goals and benchmarks to help them stay on task during the project can only lead to clarity and success. Teams cannot sufferer from the detrimental effects of changing scope if they do not change focus in the first place. If project teams prioritize clarity of goals and informing members of the importance and reasons behind each step in a project’s scope, there will be no reason for teams to extend their scope.

Project scope remains one of the most important factors that impact a project’s success. A project’s success is wholly defined by its goals and if the project team manages to reach them. Project scope is created to give reasonable goals and benchmarks to keep project teams on track and make sure that they meet the expectations of the sponsors and clients interested in the project. Often the reason that project teams stray from the scope they defined is that they try to impress sponsors by adding more goals or extend the scope to make up for lost time and resources. However, as long as the eventual goal of the project is met and expectations are fulfilled, the project is much closer to becoming a success and improves the chances for sponsor involvement in the future.

Works Cited

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