

### **What would the C-suite position say are the top three issues the company is facing?**

From the C-suite's perspective, the company is facing three major issues. First, retail performance is steadily declining as competitors, such as Amazon and other e-commerce giants, reshape the industry. Steve Masters, the CEO, admits that many customers now prefer ordering parts from their phones instead of visiting stores, which is driving down same-store sales. Second, the Phoenix Project has become a massive failure. It is three years late, \$20 million has been spent, and customers still have not seen any value. Despite this, executives like Sarah insist that it must launch soon to keep the company relevant in the digital age. Third, shareholder dissatisfaction and leadership instability are growing. The board has stripped Steve of his chairman role, and key executives have been fired. Additionally, Alan Perez from the private equity firm has openly advocated for restructuring and divestitures as ways to increase profitability. Overall, the company's most pressing issues are falling behind in the market, failing to deliver transformation, and losing credibility with its shareholders.

### **What would middle management say is the main issue facing the company?**

Middle management, however, would describe the issue differently. Managers like Chris and Randy are consumed by the daily challenges of getting work done and managing people under constant pressure. Chris tells Maxine repeatedly not to "rock the boat," showing that his priority is survival, not problem-solving. Randy, meanwhile, admits that his developers cannot even perform basic builds because the environments are poorly set up and the documentation is missing or outdated. Contractors sit idle for weeks because they cannot check in their code, yet the company continues to pay them. For middle managers, the primary issue is the inability to execute effectively due to broken systems, excessive bureaucracy, and disorganized processes. They feel stuck managing symptoms instead of being empowered to address root causes.

### **What would Maxine say is the main issue facing the company?**

Maxine, on the other hand, views the problem through a cultural lens. For her, the most significant issue is not just the Phoenix Project's dysfunction, but the toxic environment of fear and blame that surrounds it. She is blamed for the payroll outage while she was on vacation, showing how leadership chooses expedient blame over accountability. In her eyes, this culture discourages honesty, hides mistakes, and extinguishes innovation. She notices that developers are demoralized, isolated in their cubicles, and unable to collaborate productively. Even when she tries to be useful, she cannot find basic tools, source code, or documentation without running into endless dead ends. To Maxine, the real issue is that leadership has created an environment where talented people are prevented from succeeding, which is far more dangerous than any single failed project.

### **Compare and contrast Maxine's reaction to having to track activities in a timecard vs using her developer journal? What are the contributing factors to the difference in her reaction.**

When comparing Maxine's reaction to filling out timecards versus keeping her developer journal, the contrast is clear. Timecards feel like a meaningless red tape chore that forces her to misrepresent her work. She is required to input project codes like "PPX423-94-10" that have no meaning, and she must write slightly different descriptions for each day, even though her actual experience was waiting for others to provide her

with the tools she needed. This feels dishonest and demoralizing, especially after a week where she accomplished almost nothing. In contrast, Maxine treasures her developer journal, which she has kept for over a decade. It allows her to record what she worked on, how much time she spent, lessons learned, and even “things never to do again.” For her, the journal is authentic, empowering, and a way to continuously improve. The difference comes down to purpose and honesty: the timecard serves only politics and budgeting, while the journal reflects real growth, problem-solving, and professional pride.