

Project Manager's Case Study for Technology Consulting Organization

Introduction

As part of the recruitment process for the Project Manager's (PM) position at a Technology Consulting Organization, you are provided with a hypothetical but realistic scenario reflective of the possible challenges faced in such a role. The PM's role has an end-to-end accountability for the project delivery. This role involves considering all the dimensions of the project delivery like scope, timeline, quality, profitability, timely invoicing and bringing in efficiency in the way project is executed. Along with the project delivery the role also expects you to maintain good relations with the client stakeholders, which can be leveraged to cross-sell and up-sell other offerings.

Scenario

Your organization has recently taken on a strategic project to digitize and automate the procurement process for one of its enterprise clients. As a part of the client's procurement processes, currently there are 8-10 forms which are filled manually and then taken through a series of internal approvals with back-and-forth reviews. Once the final approval is granted, the process is handed over to the finance team and marks the end of the process automation. The digitization and automation are required to bring in efficiency, reduce the turn around time, bring in transparency in the review process to the senior management.

This project is crucial due to its high visibility and its potential to lead to more engagements with the client. This project will be delivered using Microsoft's Power Platform. The project involves multiple teams located in different geographical locations.

During the pre-sales stage, it was estimated that the project should be delivered in 16 weeks with 2 weeks of hyper care. The total cost to company including all the resources and all other costs (travel, administrative, overhead cost etc) was estimated around \$75,000. The contract value quoted to the customer was \$150,000.

Project Initiation:

You've been brought in as a Project Manager to ensure that this project aligns with both the client's expectations and the organization's profitability and quality standards.

Expectation from Candidate Set # 1

Develop a strategic plan using power point presentation for a smooth project delivery and covering the below pointers:

- After the project is awarded to you, you have your first upcoming connect with the entire team from the client side. This meeting will set up the tone for the project delivery. Design a strategy for this meeting.
- Finalize the invoicing/payment milestones for the project delivery which needs to be signed off by the client's sponsor. Once the milestone is delivered by your team, you are eligible to raise an invoice. The payment is received after 60 days from the day you raise an invoice.
- Develop a strategy to win over the customer's confidence early into the project delivery.
- Develop a way to represent and report the overall project health, invoicing status, profitability to your senior management.

Project Challenges:

Few weeks into the project execution and you discover several potential and existing issues as you begin your audit:

1. Project Delays:

- During the requirement session, the client has introduced new requirements which are tightly coupled with the existing processes and will need to be understood, designed, and developed to be able to deliver an end-to-end solution. As per the project sponsor these requirements are a must have for getting the end user sign off on the project delivery.
 - The BRDs submitted earlier for the in-scope items are also kept on hold for sign off due to the new requirements.
 - The project is running two weeks behind schedule due to unforeseen complexities in integrating with the client's existing systems.
2. Budget Overruns: Preliminary reports indicate a 10% budget overrun already, primarily due to the extended hours needed to resolve integration issues.
 3. Quality Concerns: Early testing shows that the software may not meet the high-performance standards set by the client.
 4. Communication Gaps: There is inconsistent communication between teams, leading to duplicated efforts and gaps in responsibilities.

Expectation from Candidate Set # 2

As the Project Manager, you need to develop a strategy to address these challenges. Your power point presentation should cover:

- Methods to bring the project back on track.
- Strategies to manage and realign the budget without compromising project scope.
- Quality assurance processes to ensure the product meets or exceeds client expectations.
- Improvement of communication channels and project documentation.

Presentation Requirements

- Combine the Expectation Set # 1 and Set # 2 in one single presentation
- Duration of presentation: 30 minutes.
- Format: PowerPoint
- Scenario Analysis: Provide a detailed strategy during the project initiation and a detailed analysis of the issues and your proposed solutions, demonstrating your understanding of PM role responsibilities.

Evaluation Criteria

- Strategic Thinking: Ability to develop strategies that helps the team to start on the right note and address complex project challenges.
- Analytical Skills: Skill in analyzing data to make informed management decisions.
- Communication: Clarity, organization, and effectiveness of the presentation.
- Innovativeness: Creative approaches to problem-solving and project management.

This case study is designed to simulate the real-world challenges a Project Manager might face and evaluate how effectively you can handle such a role. Your ability to think critically, manage multiple project dimensions, and communicate effectively with both teams and leadership will be key factors in this assessment.