Case Study 1: Identifying & Managing Project Work Using Best Practices – Creating a WBS.

CSU Central Books Publishing is a successful printing and publishing company in its third year. It has survived the bringing on a large new customer and all the challenges of new work that this customer needed in a very short time. Much of this work for the college is customized eBooks. eBooks utilize the newest technologies to deliver customized content in every subject area. They have revolutionized the printing industry. While much of the technological aspects are different, the challenges of the industry are similar to before. As the first term progressed with CSU Central Books making customized eBooks for this college, there were a number of issues that affected the quality of the eBooks produced and caused a great deal of rework for the company. The local university was unhappy as their eBook products sometimes reached campus late for use by professors and student. In some cases, the books were a week or two late.

The management of CSU Central Books was also challenged by these projects. The college expected them delivered on-time and at a low cost, and the company was not always doing that. Accounting was having difficult tracking the costs for each of the books, and the shift supervisor were often having problems knowing what tasks needed to be completed and assigning the right employees to each task. Some of the problems stemmed from the new part time employees. Since many of these workers had flexible schedules, it wasn't always clear which tasks they were supposed to be working on when they came in to work. Each book being produced was indeed a book; but that was all they had in common. Each book had different production steps, different contents and reprint approvals required, and different layouts and cover designs. Some were just collections of articles to reprint once approvals were received, and others required extensive desktop publishing. Each eBook was a complex process, but was going to be made just once, as these eBooks were all customized for each professor and course each semester. Each eBook had to be produced on time, and had to be made to match just exactly what the professors requested.

Understanding what each eBook needed had to be clearly documented and understood before starting production. CSU Central Books had been told by the college how many different printing jobs the college would need, but they weren't all arriving at once, and orders were quite unpredictable in arriving from the professors at the college. Some professors needed rush orders for their classes. Some orders arrived as projected, but some came later than anticipated. When CSU Central Books finally got all their orders, some of these jobs were much larger than they had thought they would be. Each eBook needed to have a separate job order prepared that listed all the steps that needed to be completed, so that tasks could be assigned to each worker. These job orders were also becoming a problem. Not all the steps needed were getting listed in each order. Often the estimates of time for each task were not completed until after the work was done, causing problems as workers were supposed to move on to new tasks but were still finishing their previous tasks. Some tasks required specialized equipment or skills, sometimes from other groups within CSU Central Books. Not all of the new student hires were trained for all of the printing and binding equipment used to print and assemble to books.

CSU Central Books wanted to start developing a template for job orders. This template should list all of the possible tasks that should be performed in producing an eBook for the college. These tasks could be broken down into the different phases of the work. In the Receive Order phase, the order should be received by CSU Central Books from the professor or the college, it should be

checked and verified, and a job order started. In checking and verifying each order, the customer representative should make sure that they have the requester's name, email and phone number; the date needed, and a full list of all of the contents. They should also verify that they have received all of the materials that were supposed to be included with that order, and have fully identified all of the items that they need to request permissions for. Any problems found in checking and verifying should be resolved by contacting the professor.

In the Plan Order phase, all of the desktop publishing work is planned, estimated and assigned to production staff. Also, all of the production effort to collate and produce the eBook are identified, estimated and scheduled and assigned to production staff. Specific equipment resource needs are identified and equipment is reserved on the schedule to support the planned production effort.

In the Production Phase, permissions are acquired, desktop publishing tasks (if needed) are performed, content is converted, and the proof of the eBook is produced. A quality assistant will check the eBook against the job order and customer order to make sure it is ready for production, and once approved by quality, each of the requested eBook formats are created. A second quality check makes sure that each requested format is ready to release to the college.

In a Manage Production Phase, happening in parallel with the Production Phase, a supervisor will track progress, work assignments, and costs for each eBook. Any problems will be resolved quickly in an attempt to not have any rework or delays in releasing the eBooks to the college. Each eBook will be planned using the standard job template as a basis for developing a unique plan for that eBook project.

Comment on the following aspects of the case study:

1. Printing books in a print shop, especially large quantities of a single book, is a process.
A process is an ongoing day-to-day repetitive set of activities the print shop performs when producing its products. How are these customized eBooks different from a standard printing process? What characteristics make these customized eBooks a project?

2. Who are the stakeholders in these eBook projects? How are they involved in or affected by the eBook project?

3. Why is it important to have a defined project scope? Why is it important to make sure there is agreement about the scope and what will be done in producing each eBook?

4. Create a Work Breakdown Structure for an eBook project.
      a) What are the major phases of work for making an eBook?
      b) What are the steps in each phase?
      c) Can you identify any sub-steps for any of the steps? What are they?
      8. What are the lessons learned?

5. What could a comprehensive risk management plan for an eBook project look like and how would you include it in the overall program plan going forward?