COMP1611

Project Management

Name

Ifeoma Patience Chukwuemeka

Student ID

001285252

Scenario -- Diamond Business Offices

# Key features of the project

With a view to improving its overall customer service provision and the diverse competition in the market, Diamond Business Offices are struggling in some areas which they are trying to improve which would help to survive in the market and secure more customers;

Choosing the location for new centres as the business is expanding which could be affected by factors such as infrastructure and local transport. Areas with good mobile network coverage for efficient and reliable communication with the customers. Securing modern IT which is really important for easy and fast internet connections as customers expect to work from anywhere. Rules, regulations and requirements needed in a certain location such as; the tax position of companies, commercial and employment law, data protection law, and health and safety law. Effects of economic recessions and growth at local and international levels. Recruiting and training staff for their customers.

Diamond is experiencing challenges that need to be addressed so as to achieve their goal which include; skill shortages in particular locations, need for flexible work to suit women with families returning to work, language barriers as it is an international business and their staff does not know any foreign language as they only speak English. Inconsistency of information as room bookings are handled by individual centres each using an Access database application leading to data variations. Delays in dealing with customers due to lack of a centrally managed accounting software for each country leading to data errors as it requires re-entry by different account staff from different countries.

These challenges need to be acted upon so as to secure a large customer clientele and the following are the proposed solutions; increasing the amount of time and resources needed for training and recruiting more staff so as to offer customers competitive staff and ensure they find everything in place which increases their trust and satisfaction, creating more favourable working schedules accommodating women with families so as to enable the employees balance between work and their families, investing more in foreign language training sessions so as to enable the employees communicate and handle customers without any language barriers which would increase efficiency, secure a modern Information Technology to ensure easy and timely communication with customers through fast and reliable internet connections, acquire a centrally managed database so as to reduce data variations and misunderstandings with customers, securing an interface with a centrally managed accounting software for each country to ensure a smooth running accounting process, creating survey teams to do research on spotting the best suitable locations for new centres. Acquiring an efficient website that allows customers to give their feedback, views and provide a platform to keep in touch with their needs.

Also the issue of timeliness is a key feature of the project as the managing director has set time for some of the objectives to be accomplished; she wants to have 40% of staff speaking a foreign language within the next 2 years, and the objective of customers can enquire, book, and pay for rooms, staff and services in 10 minutes anywhere in Europe, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week she has let it be known that within the next 18 months this should be true for 90% of all bookings.

# Major stakeholders impacted by the Md’s vision

Project manager is a professional who organizes, plans, and executes projects while working within restraints like budgets and schedules. (Gaddis, 1959), he is a key decision maker in the project and have a strong interest in the project and has significant power to influence its success. He belongs to the ‘HIGH INTEREST, HIGH POWER’ side of the stakeholder’s quadrant.

Country manager, he is in charge all operations of the country to whom all the Business Centre managers’ report and therefore he is in the ‘HIGH POWER, HIGH INTEREST’ side of the quadrant as they are involved in decision making and governance of a project.

Finance manager as he is in charge of the accounting for a given country as the managing director needs the accounting processes in all countries run smoothly without any errors. Finance managers are on the ‘HIGH POWER, HIGH’ INTEREST’ side of the quadrant as they are key players in the project’s success or failure as they are involved in governance and decision making.

Accounting staff, they are found in the ‘HIGH INTEREST, LOW POWER’ side of the stakeholders’ quadrant as they engage closely in the projects activities and contribute significantly to the project but they need to consult and follow orders from their seniors.

Booking staff as the MD’s vision will reduce the amount of time any property remains unoccupied, and in the long-term increase the number of bookings. They are among stakeholders who do not lose or gain but contribute significantly to the project and hence, found in the ‘HIGH INTEREST, LOW POWER’ side of the stakeholder’s quadrant.

Customer is a person or an organisation that buys or orders products or services offered by the business, (Ireland, 1992). They are among stake holders who have little interest in the project but possess significant power to influence its success. They are grouped as ‘LOW INTEREST, HIGH POWER’ stakeholders.

Project sponsor, is a senior management role that provides resources, support, and leadership to the project team and generally owns the project, (Kloppenborg & and Tesch, 2015.) They are stakeholders who have a strong interest in the project and have significant power to influence its success and can be greatly affected by its failure. They are grouped in the ‘HIGH POWER, HIGH INTEREST’ part of the stakeholder’s quadrant.

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## Increasing shareholders participation.

Country manager, he is the head of all operations in Diamond Business Offices in a given country. Affirming goals and communicating progress throughout the execution of the project would really increase their participation. Project manager should set goals and continuously remind the country managers so as to ensure they are actively participating and pushing their subordinates so as to achieve the set goals.

Booking staff, make sure they understand their contribution to the project by ddetermining how project goals benefit them and communicate this, allowing stakeholders to share their concerns and ideas.

Accounting staff, continuously access their performance in achieving the set goals so as to remind and keep them in track with the projects activities and providing them with positive feedback when they perform well.

# Who to involve in Project testing and why

Members of the test team, such as performance and security testers, are required in unit testing to check that individual pieces of code are operating as intended and correctly.

Test automation specialists, technical testers, database, system, security, and network administrators are required to verify the setup of the systems, check how various individual units of code interact with one another, and fix any issues that may arise.

Development staff, they include managers, developers, architects, they are needed in system testing which is the third phase of project testing where the entire project is tested to ensure it functions as intended.

User experience analysts are required in the last project testing stage known as acceptance testing, which is done to ensure that the system satisfies all client or customer criteria prior to the project's launch.

# Critical risks associated with the project and recommendations on what actions to take to minimize their impact

Lack of clearly defined objectives, this could occur when the stakeholders; accounting staff, booking staff, finance managers do not clearly understand the aim and targets of the project due to lack of clear communication. This could be minimized by creating clearly defined project guidelines an agreeing upon them with the stakeholders and communicating the vision of the project from the beginning (Barker Stephen., et al., 2009).

Underperformance, this could occur when the project doesn’t perform as well as initially expected, for example the aim to improve capabilities of staff so as to improve and update the services offered to their customers and ensure that a customer can enquire, book, and pay for rooms, staff and services in 10 minutes anywhere in Europe, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week fails. By recognizing potential performance risks early on in the planning process, you may help yourself prepare and reduce this risk to a minimum.

Project schedule risk refers to the possibility that tasks will take longer than anticipated, which could have an influence on your project's budget, delivery date, or overall performance. For example, the MD’s aimto have 40% of staff speaking a foreign language within the next 2 years fails to get accomplished within the set time which may require some extra time and resources and this could be unfavourable to the overall performance of the project. This risk could be reduced by overestimating work completion times in the planning stage and including a time buffer. You’ll have flexibility for scheduling in this manner. A timeline can be used to establish a project schedule. Project managers can dynamically adjust to time risk as it arises by having clarity regarding the work, dependencies between the work, and any delays. You can estimate how long each task will take by understanding the project lifecycle.

Operational changes, this risk occurs when change happen in team processes, for example unexpected change in roles, changes in processes that may require adjustments which requires additional resources, hence increasing the estimated costs of the project and lead to distractions which in result affect project timelines. This can be mitigated by making sure your team is prepared for the change and has time to adjust through team meetings, scheduling tools, or additional trainings.

Risk of limited resources, this occurs when the resources needed to complete the project are not enough which include things like skills, money or tools. Allocation of these resources should be done early in project planning before implementation of the project. For example the number of booking staff allocated to achieve the managing directors goal maybe less which may delay the project. This risk may be mitigated by creating a resource allocation plan which helps in ensuring efficiency in utilisation of the project’s resources and proper estimations.

# Steps to take to ensure that all stakeholders received the right level of communication.

## ****Establish regular review points****

You can communicate project-wide changes to your team and stakeholders by scheduling regular review points. These points can be used to inform meetings and project boards. Meetings should have a predetermined agenda that includes discussions of continuing risks, budgeting performance, and assessments of milestones. To ensure routine evaluations The responsibility for planning meetings and maintaining a record of them should fall under the purview of one individual. This makes sure they are effective, that the work you need to do is finished, and that earlier actions are carried out. Also keep in mind to invite a variety of people to your evaluations. Urge more seasoned members of your project team to allow less experienced employees to speak during these meetings. It will aid in their professional development and promote a climate at work that is more transparent and open.

## Stakeholders’ involvement

To ensure routine evaluations The responsibility for planning meetings and maintaining a record of them should fall under the purview of one individual. This makes sure they are effective, that the work you need to do is finished, and that earlier actions are carried out, also to keep in mind to invite a variety of people to your evaluations. Urge more seasoned members of your project team to allow less experienced employees to speak during these meetings. It will aid in their professional development and promote a climate at work that is more transparent and open. Once all the stakeholders are proactively involved, messages are conveyed and all stake holders get immediate information hence avoiding miscommunication.

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## Making use of online collaboration tools

To make it possible for your team to easily share files and manage projects from a distance. Google Docs, Microsoft Office 365 Suite, Monday, and Asana are a few of them. If properly implemented, they actually aid in bringing a new level of accountability and openness to the project. By defining defined working procedures, giving one team member the task of keeping online records current, and clearly stating that work must be accomplished on specified platforms, collaboration tools can be used effectively in a project.

## Project documentation

Everything of your project material, including your project strategy, roadmap, and how to allocate knowledgeable tasks, position descriptions, and project briefs are sent to your team as part of communication. Your project documentation shouldn't contain any uncertainties because doing so will make it more difficult for the project team to execute its duties on schedule. Make sure your project documentation is up to par by doing regular reviews, asking the responsible team member for clarification when necessary, and holding them accountable to take the necessary actions if any information is missing. Using online collaboration solutions to keep your project documents in a centrally placed and managed space, such as on a shared hard drive, online, housed on your internal servers, or as a printer that is easily locatable in the workplace, could make project documentation simple and reliable. Additionally, this might be significant for later use. Another excellent technique to avoid errors and project scope creep is to manage your project documentation (Hajjar & AbouRizk, 2000).

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## Flexible working patterns

This is one method to keep workers on your team and assist them in striking a better work-life balance. Employees should be reachable even when working from home. This does not imply that you must spend all of your time at work. Your project team needs to know when to reach you when you are away, as well as what your preferred method of contact is or who they should be contacting in your place. You can do this over Skype or even Whatsapp to verify that your numbers are accurate.

## Creating an open and transparent working environment

About every area of the project, be sincere with your project team. Maybe your business is going through a trying time, is being acquired, or maybe your project hasn’t reached the goal milestone you were hoping for. Make sure to let your staff know about issues; doing so will assist to foster a more welcoming work environment. Also, it demonstrates to them that sharing unpleasant news is completely normal and will stop anger from unnecessarily escalating. Also, it fosters a stronger relationship with your project team and increases their respect for you as a leader.

## Celebrate achievements together

Celebrate as a team when you meet your objectives during various project phases. Everyone’s contribution is valued. Everyone has something to offer, and acknowledging it as a group inspires the team as a whole. Always be sure to take time to recognize accomplishments because doing so demonstrates that you are aware of the positive aspects of the project.

## Forms of communication to take

Effective communication is more than just passing information from one person to the other but it’s about understanding the emotions and intentions behind that information (Fielding, 2006).

The written mode of communication uses typed or handwritten words. This indicates that there is less direct person contact and more text-based communication. For example through emails, written messages, internal memos, written notice and posters. The project manager may communicate any news to the team members, in terms of referencing it is the best form of communication. This form of communication really helps in laying down apparent principles, policies and rules for running a project, it is useful where record maintenance is required and therefore very useful in project as record keeping is key. It is also vital when it comes to matters of legal compliance conformity which relies on written communication as it provides defensible records (Prabavathi & Nagasubramani, 2018)

Verbal communication, this is an oral-based form of communication, it involves conveying messages through speaking. For example, the project manager may inform the other stakeholders on any changes or the progress of the project through speaking in a meeting. Also the project teams may raise their concerns to the team leader one on one. It is the most effective form of communication as it gives immediate feedback and therefore it eases the process of communication. It is the most effective and effective for all as it provides clear and complete understanding of the information conveyed and also more clarity through more explanations of words and ideas (Day, et al., 1975).

Visual communication, it involves use of visual elements to communicate information or ideas, it includes use animated GIFs, screenshots, videos, pie charts, infographics and slide check presentations. For example Diamond Business Offices use slide presentation to advertise and promote their business in terms of reforms and new services by sending them to their prospective customers. The project manager might also use pie charts and graphs in presenting statistical data of the project to the team members for example, cost estimates per the required resources could be presented in graphical form. This form of communication helps in delivering information more directly as information such as statistics is better explained in a picture than in words. Moreover, visual communication is more adaptable because everyone can understand an image regardless of individual variances in culture, geography, ethnicity, or language. An image or a slide presentation, for instance, may more effectively communicate the idea to clients in different geographic locations and languages if Diamond Business Offices were promoting a new product (Dudhal, 2022).

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