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System Analysis

Project 3

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Topic E: Why objectives that are measureable need to be established

As a child, my mother, would tell me that I was destined for great things and to never give up on a dream. As I grew older I realized that dreams are a wonderful thing but there is a distinct difference between realistic and unrealistic dreams. Now in my personal experience I believe that goals and dreams go hand in hand. Most of us set goals for ourselves on a daily basis, whether it is to lose weight or graduate from college. These goals can help us attain a dream such as: be in the best shape of your life or work your dream job. The same principles remain true even in the workplace. In many different fields there are projects and deadlines but in order to complete them optimally goals and objectives should be in place.

Earlier in the semester we discussed how important it is set attainable objectives. We talked about projects that took longer to complete because of miscommunication or features that needed to be added for better functionality. As an example I will reference the website, Healthcare.gov, which was used for this project. When first presented with a project there is really three ways that one can go about completing it. First, there can be little to no direction and structure and each person is left to fend for themselves and just hope that the pieces fall into place. Second, there can be order with each person have a designated job with multiple updates to make sure that everything is running smoothly. Third, much like the second there can be structure but progress is so slow that nothing really seems to be happening. The Healthcare.gov project proves that objectives need to be established in order for a successful application.

The Wall Street Journal article that we read paints a very vivid picture of what an application looks like when it is created without clear objectives. The title alone is really all you need to see to understand the gravity of the situation, it was entitled “Poorly Managed HealthCare.gov Construction Cost $840 Million, Watchdog Finds.” It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to know that $840 million dollars is a lot of money to spend on a project and if that much money is going into a project it have better be done right. Unfortunately the article goes on to explain how the project wasn’t done correctly and many factors attributed to this but one of the most important was how they started development “without effective planning and oversight.” This maybe an extreme case but it happens more often than not. Projects are started without clear objectives and goals and then the budget gets blown, the application takes longer to develop or may not end up getting developed at all. The bottom line is that objectives are made for a reason and applications that have clear and attainable objectives have a much higher success rate than those who don’t.

**Works Cited**

Radnofsky, Louise. "Poorly Managed HealthCare.gov Construction Cost $840 Million, Watchdog Finds." Wall Street Journal  30 Jul. 2014. Print.

Topic F: How UML diagramming tools are effective in communication between IT and Business Users

UML stands for Unified Modeling Language and is very useful form of communication for both the Business and IT user. UML consists of things, relationships, and diagrams. The textbook compares the UML toolset to a set of blueprints. I found this to be a perfect example because it provides a visual of an object-oriented system in a diagram. This allows pretty much anyone to see and understand what is going on much easier than if someone was just explaining it to them.

A perfect example of how effective UML diagramming tools are was evident in project two. We met with a business user and they describes aspects of their job and things that their job entailed. Now let’s take a look at the results without UML diagramming. The user would have probably had to repeat themselves multiple times but eventually would have had to continue on their way. On the IT side we would have been left with everything we either wrote down or remembered. Nothing is impossible but it highly unlikely that we would have fully grasped everything that the user had told us. By the end of the project we would have met with the user and basically recited everything that we had. It would have been much harder for the user to follow along, or furthermore, correct us if we made a mistake. UML diagramming made this whole process much easier by allowing us the opportunity to create a visual that the user could just look at and either decide that everything was correct or a few of the processes required correction.

On the opposite side UML diagramming is also very useful for the IT user as well. Still speaking in terms of the project, I had many questions but once I started diagraming things became more clear or vice versa. After I began to diagram I thought of new questions or processes that didn’t quite make sense to me that I otherwise may have overlooked if I hadn’t seen it in a diagram. It provides a simple way to break down complex ideas and processes that would otherwise be very difficult to decipher otherwise. These are just a few of the advantage that UML diagramming tools provides for both the business and IT user.

Topic B: Advantages of Prototyping in Highly Visible Projects

Before I can explain the advantages associated with prototyping I must first explain what prototyping is. Prototyping is a way to prompt a response about a system from the user by basically creating a build of the system and then re-building the system based on the feedback received. This can be a very effective way to implement a large system or facilitate a systems integration. The Healthcare.gov website would have benefited from such a system.

In the article “Where did Healthcare.gov Go Wrong? Let’s Start with “Everywhere””, Andy Patrizio explains how the website was supposed to work. Users were supposed to have options that they could choose from, then choose an option for payment, see if user needed a subsidy, collect payment information, and transmit health insurance provider in user’s state. So the team had objectives but on the official day of launch only six people were able to sign up. Now there are multiple reasons for this but I believe that things would have been much easier if prototyping would have been involved.

In order for prototyping to be successful, however, there are a few components to consider. First off a budget needs to be put into place and a decision needs to be made. If there is enough money to warrant the creation of the prototype and the man power to do it then everything can proceed. Assuming that the budget was there in the Healthcare.gov project then the site would have been more functional. Since it was a large project prototyping would have allowed the developers to work in manageable modules, which in turn would have allowed them to create a build rather quickly rather than taking longer than was expected. Then they could have tested it to find out how useable it was and what needed to be changed. After the changes were made then they could have repeated the process until the site was ready for use. This would have cut down on cost and saved the developers and contractors precious time. This is just one example of how prototyping can be used in larger projects and the overall benefit that it can provide to both the user and the developer.

**Works Cited**

Patrizio, Andy. "Where did Healthcare.gov Go Wrong? Let’s Start with “Everywhere”." SmartBear  3 Apr. 2014. Print.

Topic A: Project Management & Organization

Throughout the course of this year and last we have had a variety of different projects in both System Analysis classes. While this year’s projects have been very independent last years were very group oriented. Last year was one of the first opportunities I had of working with a group on a project. At first I didn’t know quite what to think. Everyone had their own idea of what needed to be done and I wasn’t sure what I could contribute. After further discussion I became the project head, if you will, and we each divided up assignments amongst ourselves.

I had to remain in constant contact with each of my team members and relay any questions that we may have had with our instructor. During the course of the project I found out firsthand how important communication, organization, and project management really were. Each and every one of our team members knew what they were supposed to do but assuming that everything would work out in the end just wasn’t an option. I constantly was updating and being updated by each team member when something was being worked or completed. This allowed us to know exactly what was going on at all times even when we weren’t working right next to each other.

The same holds true to the individual projects with the only difference being that they’re much less moving parts because you are in charge of all of it. For each and every project I have had I make it a priority to understand just what is expected of me. It is very difficult to complete something to the best of your ability if you don’t know just what you’re trying to create. Project Management, I believe, goes hand in hand with setting realistic and attainable objectives. Having something to work towards makes all the difference and can be used in harmony with organization. If someone is organized then most likely they have already given themselves objectives in order to complete their project.

The Healthcare.gov project is unfortunately a prime example of a complete lack of both organization and project management. In the Wall Street Journal article, “Poorly Managed HealthCare.gov Construction Cost $840 Million, Watchdog Finds” Louise Radnofsky states that, “HealthCare.gov insurance website suffered from poor management and skimpy scrutiny of its contracts.” They also go on to describe that the site was being built without “without effective planning or oversight practices.” This lead to a site that didn’t function the way it was supposed and with it, a huge price tag. Many issues could have at least come to light earlier if not been completely avoided if the developers took the time to organize and properly manage the contract that they were given. Proper project management and organization applies to more than just the projects we work on from day to day it also applies to our daily life. It can greatly improve what we can accomplish and that in and of itself makes it so important.

**Works Cited**

Radnofsky, Louise. "Poorly Managed HealthCare.gov Construction Cost $840 Million, Watchdog Finds." Wall Street Journal  30 Jul. 2014. Print.