SOFTWARE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

CONTINGENCY PLANS

A contingency plan is essentially a "**Plan B**"
It's a backup plan in place for when things go differently than expected
In other words, a contingency plan in project management is a defined, actionable plan that is to be executed if an identified risk becomes a reality

Contingency planning are action steps to be taken if an identified risk event occur

Contingency plans in project management are a component of risk management

They should be part of the risk management plan

Contingency plans can only be created for identified risks

if you don't know what your risk is, it's impossible to plan for it

It should be noted that contingency plans are not only put in place to anticipate when things go wrong
They can also be created to take advantage of strategic opportunities
For example, you've identified that a new training software should be released soon
If it occurs during your project, you may have a contingency plan on how to incorporate it into the training phase of your project

The difference between a contingency plan and a mitigation plan

A *mitigation plan* attempts to decrease the chances of a risk occurring, or decrease the impact of the risk if it occurs
It is implemented in advance
A *contingency plan* explains the steps to take after the identified risk occurs, in order to reduce its impact
Think of a contingency plan as the last line of defence

How to prepare a contingency plan

When preparing your contingency plan, consider the following guidelines

Event Identification

Identify what specific event or events need to happen to trigger the implementation of the plan

Event Identification

Action step assignment

in each step of your plan:
- who will be involved
- what do they need to do
- when does it need to happen
- where will the plan take place
- how will it be executed

Event Identification

Action step assignment

Reporting and Communication Plan

Have clear guidelines for reporting and communication during the implementation of the plan
- How will internal and external stakeholders be notified?
- Who will draft and send the notice, and how soon after the incident will it be released?
- How often will updates be provided?

| Event Identification | Action step assignment | Reporting and Communication Plan | Monitoring |

Monitor the plan on a regular basis to ensure it is up-to-date

| Event Identification | Action step assignment | Reporting and Communication Plan | Monitoring | Diffuse awareness |

Contingency planning is viewed as a low priority
However, not having a properly planned out contingency can lead to project failure

Since the plan may never be needed, there can be a tendency to put off the creation of it
Team members may be overconfident or overly-invested in Plan A
Therefore, they may not be motivated to create a detailed, actionable Plan B
If all stakeholders in the organization are not aware

Event Identification	Action step assignment	Reporting and Communication Plan	Monitoring	Diffuse awareness

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Team members may be overconfident or focused only in Plan A and therefore, they may not be motivated to create a detailed, actionable Plan B

In order to put contingency plans into action all stakeholders in the organization must be aware of

If a risk has not been properly identified, it's impossible to prepare a viable contingency plan