

Lesson 2.1: The Case of Limited Data Storage

Overview

Read this case study, to which you will apply the Four Steps Tool.

The Case of Limited Data Storage

Consultant: I think the best place to start is with your walking me through this problem. Just tell me what's been going on, please.

Alia: Well, a few months ago, my company was making the transition from startup to successful small business. It was so exciting! And with the new business coming in, I felt like it was time to sign a contract with a large data storage firm to maintain files securely offsite and to provide a disaster recovery plan.

Consultant: And that's what you did, I assume.

Alia: Yes. I chose a relatively modest data storage plan, but it was a big improvement over our previous data storage system, a drawer full of USB drives. I told all five of the department heads to urge their employees to take advantage of this fancy new system, which had practically unlimited storage space.

Consultant: And the department heads did exactly as you asked?

Alia: They sure did. Employees began to upload files to the data storage system, called Dolly, for reasons I don't know, at a great rate. Confident that Dolly provided practically unlimited storage space, they uploaded every possible bit of digital data. Files were safe, files were accessible, and everyone was happy. Or so I thought.

Consultant: Then what was the problem?

Alia: A few months later, I received the regular bill from Dolly's organization. But instead of the agreed-upon rate of \$2,500 a month, the bill showed a charge of \$6,300. I was stunned! Once I recovered from the shock and made sure that the number wasn't just a clerical error, I pulled the department heads into an impromptu meeting and asked what on earth had happened.

Consultant: So the problem was, essentially, that you told them what to do, and then they did it. Is that right?

Alia: Well, I hadn't thought of it quite that way, but I guess so. Now, though, the problem is that we are not generating enough revenue to afford a \$6,300 per month expense, even for data storage. What am I to do?

Focusing statement to consider as you identify the key problem in this case: What error did Alia make in initially setting up the process for using Dolly?

Now, please complete the Four Steps Tool for this case study.

 [WGU's Four Steps Tool Template](#) (Word version)

Note: The Word version can be downloaded to the computer.

How Did Your Ideas Compare?

To see how your answers compare with the way an experienced system thinker responded, see this document.

 [WGU's Four Steps Tool for Case Study Completed](#)

Introduction to Systems Thinking

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