

Assignment: Memo

Predict 475 Project Management

Professor: Dan Roth

Section 55

Winter Quarter

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School of Continuing Studies

Northwestern University

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Daniel Prusinski

Business Intelligence Data Analyst

Target Corporation

Minneapolis, MN

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In Compliance with Master of Science Predictive Analytics

Dear Mr. Big Cheese,

Paul Stephenson's Widget in Space (WIS) project has the potential to win big for ABC corporation, but adequate planning and reflection are equally necessary in order to turn the win into a profit to make up for the past five project failures. In order to glean wisdom from the past, I recommend that we spend time diagnosing past hurdles while planning to implement new learning's on project WIS. Please write down the answers to the subsequent questions, and I additionally will have Paul do the same in order for all us to be on the same page moving forward towards success.

In order to translate the strategy for project WIS into tactical implementation, we need to better define the goals, specification, tasks, and responsibilities involved in WIS. I would strongly recommend that Paul answer these questions and walk us through them in the form of a scope statement that translates into a core project objective, key deliverables, milestones, technical requirements, limits and exclusions. In the meantime, it would be very helpful for Paul to know where goals have fallen short in past projects, where ambiguity ruled over specifications, where deliverable and milestone were missed, and where technical requirements fell short. By answering these hard questions, it will better position project WIS to overcome the obstacle that failed past projects.

After the above questions are answered in the form of a scope statement and we have connected, planning project WIS is a logical next step. We will walk through a priority matrix and have Paul and you decide where time, performance, and cost line up in regard to constraining, enhancing, and accepting. This will clear the air and get you two on the same side. After the priority matrix, Paul will design and review with you schedules, budgets, resource allocation, risks, and staffing needs. Given the size of the WIS and the current vulnerability of ABC corp., I recommend you both take the time do talk through project and organization risks through writing out the technical, external, organizational, and project areas. Once the list is established, rate each risk twice on a scale of 1-5. The first rating is the probability of the risk coming to fruition, and the second rating is the severity of the risk. Plot the risk coordinates and create a risk response (change control and contingency plan) for the risks plotted in the upper, right quadrant first, then moving towards the bottom left. It would also be very helpful for you to highlight past project risks, both seen and unseen, and how ABC corp. responded to the risks.

Before starting to execute the projects, Paul needs to share with you're the communication plan entailing what information needs to be shared throughout the project, who the audience is, when it needs to be shared, method of communication, and provider of information. Each aspect of the project needs to be broken down into tasks and the tasks need to be scheduled into the organizational structure as well as into an Activity on Network (AON) diagram. The timeframe for the project will be much clearer in this phase. After Paul shares the AON with you, you both should discuss different schedule compression techniques and define the possibility of resource constraints, time constraints and solutions for both like: outsourcing, reducing project scope, applying critical chain methodologies, fast tracking, and etc. After you clearly understand these steps, executing follows planning.

During executing, Paul should be receiving and issuing status reports, change/quality/forecast requests. These are all tools to gauge the health of the project in its critical stage. I would strongly

recommend you two meet weekly in order for him to update you on the status of the project. As issues arise, he can implement the pre-discussed compression techniques in order to meet the deliverables. As the project closes, Paul needs to host a series of training's on how to use WIS and inviting the media might be a good idea. Documentation, evaluations, and resources need to be transferred at this point in time as well.

As a final recommendation, you need to assess whether Paul has "the right stuff" and a proven track record to empower/lead a team to successfully implement this project. The fate of ABC corp. could be greatly affected if WIS fails or goes over budget. A project of this proportion needs a seasoned project manager to navigate the rough seas of project development. While Paul may be a good fit, you need a great fit for a project of this size to succeed. Blessing and good luck as you work through these exciting questions and steer ABC corp. towards success.

Dan Prusinski

PS: I am available to facilitate any additional questions or meetings you would like to have with Paul or myself.