ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

Seminar Objectives

At the end of this seminar you should:
• Be aware of the main phases of the project life cycle with an emphasis on managing student groups

Why do projects fail?

• In Business

• In Assignment groups

What is needed for success?

• To ensure a successful project we need:
  – some plans
  – some objectives
  – some consensus
  – good, committed people
  – time
  – money

Seems simple enough, yet it’s complex to implement and effect
Following a Project Life Cycle helps ....

Initiation

- To understand the purpose and scope of the project in order to estimate cost and time
  - Specify the requirements/scope
  - Risk management
  - Assess feasibility – GO / NO GO decision
  - Is the problem well defined?
  - Are the users expectations realistic?
  - Is there enough money budgeted for the project?
  - Is this project in my business area?
  - Will I have adequate resources?
  - Are there political issues?

Initiation: Risk Management

- Project realities
  - Estimates are by edict
  - Fixed priced contracts are based on your first estimate
  - You never get adequate resources
  - Changes will always take place
  - Responsibilities remain undefined
  - Estimates increase after the analysis and the delivery date slips
  - When the project slips, more staff are hired which makes it worse
  - User is not sympathetic to problems
  - Management panics – gets involved, meetings double, thumbscrews are tightened

Initiation: Risk Management – The Solution

- Industry standard solution to these problems:
  1. Search for the Guilty
  2. Punish the Innocent
  3. Promote the Uninvolved
  4. Go to 1. and cycle through ad nauseum

Planning

- An effective plan that is regularly reviewed is needed as a way of measuring progress and managing the project team
  - “You can’t control what you can’t measure”
    - De Marco (1982)
  - Used to measure/review progress
  - Report to management

- How do we measure progress?
- What do we use?
  - Software packages do not manage projects for you – they are simply tools to help speed up the process

Executing

- Leading and managing the project team
- Successful leaders
  - Inspire a shared vision
  - Enable others to act
  - Model the way
  - Encourage the heart

... It takes time and is generally stressful

Ref: Rakos, J. J. (1990)
Executing: Leadership Styles

- Coercive – “Do what I tell you”
- Authoritative – “Come with me”
- Affiliative – “People come first”
- Democratic – “What do you think?”
- Pacesetting – “Do as I do, now”
- Coaching – “Try this”

(Ref: Marlow Hampshire Leadership for the Future Program)

Executing: Project Manager skills

- Excellent communication skills
- Knowledge of project management
- Ability to organise
- Leadership skills
- Technical skills ???

Do you have what it takes ....
- Can you say ‘NO’?
- Can you attack problems as they arise?
- Can you live unloved?

Ref: Rakos, J. J. (1990)

Executing: Managing underperformance

Reasons for underperformance given:
- Unjust treatment, lack of appreciation for completed work, limited influence in the group, perception of neglect

Ways to manage underperformance:
- Knowledge
- Training
- Resources
- Motivation
- Job-Person Fit
- Personal Issues
- Willful

(Ref: Marlow Hampshire Leadership for the Future Program)

Executing: Managing underperformance in an Assignment Group

- Does not have the skills
- Does not attend meetings
- Does not contribute
- Does not complete work
- Work completed not to the required standard
- Disrupts meetings
  - chats, disrespectful, will not compromise, does not actively listen
- Can’t understand what is being said
- Cannot be contacted

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Executing: Achieving Desired Performance

The “Performance Equation”:
Performance = Skills + Motivation + Organisational Support

What does this mean?

How does REWARD fit in?

Executing: Controlling

- Ensures that objectives met, standards kept, staff occupied, time and cost schedule met
  - a well defined plan
  - regular HONEST progress reports from the team
  - regular review and update of plan based on actuals vs. expected
Controlling: What needs to be monitored

- Is the task being done as required?
- Are standards being followed?
- Are problems causing delays being solved?
- Are staff happy? – overtime, burnout, problem reporting
- Are the users happy?
- Is progress as expected?
- Are communication lines open

Done by Project leaders, Project Managers, Project Sponsors

Closing

- Formally close all internal and external relationships
- Obtain client acceptance of deliverables
- Finalise all documentation and handover
- Conduct review of project
  - What went right? What went wrong?
  - Learn for the next project
- Sleep, Celebrate, Get fired, Find new job, Start the cycle again

References

- IMS1502 Unit Outline
- Marlow Hampshire – Leadership for the Future Course
- Project Management Institute: Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) 2000 & 2003 (You can download parts of PMBOK 2000 from PMI website www.pmi.org)