

Company X

End of Project Report

MODULE NAME: PROJRCT MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

This report will outline the end-of-project (EOP) report of a project undertaken by Company X. Company X is a textile processing firm. During the project, the firm changed a piece of machinery in its production line to boost its production capacity and reduce labour costs. Specifically, the firm replaced its manual fabric finishing machine with an automated platform with a conveyor belt accessory. To compile the EOP report, this write up will reflect on the success of the project in achieving its objectives, the benefits that the project has brought for Company X, and the changes in scope and activities made during the project's implementation. Finally, the lessons learned from the project on a corporate and personal level will be outlined as well as recommendations for the implementation of similar future projects.

Objectives of the Project

The objectives of the project were to boost the production capacity of Company X through the installation of an automated platform in its fabric finishing section. Likewise, this automated machine was to be procured from Chinese manufacturers and installed by the manufacturer. Additionally, the defects in the products of the firm was expected to drop to less than 1% after the full integration of the platform. Also, the project was expected to reduce labour costs by at least 40% and boost production to at least 265,000 meters of fabric per day. Finally, it was expected that the project would be completed from start to finish within 6 months.

When projects are implemented, the objectives might not be fully realized for a variety of reasons. One of such reasons is the unexpected occurrence of unforeseen challenges (Rumeser & Emsley, 2016). Another might be a change in the business climate that might warrant a change in the objectives of the project's sponsor (Hewett, 2010). However, during this project, the only limitation that impacted the realization of the objectives was the unexpected challenges that arose during the project's implementation. Some of the objectives were attained and they include the installation of the automated platform in the finish section during the project's timeline. Additionally, the current defect rate in products has been reduced to about 1.8% through the use of the machine. The reason the defect rate has not dropped below 1% might be the fact that the workers are yet to fully grasp the workings of the

equipment. However, the current 1.8% is significantly lower than the previous 5% defects recorded when using the manual finish machine. Additionally, the labour cost of the finishing section has been reduced by 60% which is above the 40% objective of the project. The reason for this improved performance was because the platform installed required lesser supervisory hands when working, hence only 3 or 4 workers were needed instead of the expected 6. Finally, the firm has not been able to boost production to 265,000 meters of fabric a day because there has not been demands to warrant such. However, it is believed that the equipment can churn out 265,000 meters of finished fabrics should the demand arise.

Project Benefits

A well-executed project gives both expected and unexpected benefits as the project implementation phase gives additional insight and solution into the business problem that the project is trying to address (Geraldi *et al.*, 2010). For the current project, there were a lot of expected benefits that were part of the initial objectives of the project. For example, the firm targeted that the utilization of the automated platform would reduce the defect rate of the products produced in the manufacturing line. The targeted baseline in the objective was a lower rate of 1% of all finished fabrics made. However, the project has only been able to reduce the defect rate to about 1.8%. As stated in the previous section, the reason for this is that the workers are yet to master the process of using the platform. However, an unexpected benefit obtained was that the project generated for the firm was the ability to produce complex finishes on fabrics. The firm had always turned down these complex designs due to the increased rate of defects that accompanies such production. However, the automated platform was able to reduce the defect rate of the complex finish production to about 2.3% from the previous 11.6% that was recorded when the manual platforms were used. Furthermore, the new platform reduced the labour cost of finishing fabrics by 60%. This was unexpected as the firm had anticipated a 40% reduction in the labour cost. While this was quite beneficial, it also undermines the previous agreement with the workers' union that stipulated that the staff strength of the section should be reduced by only 40%. Finally, perhaps the most vital benefit that the implementation of the project has brought is the renewed reputation of the firm among its peers and consumers. The newly installed platform has attracted more interest from the customers and has helped in portrayed the firm as a

financially viable company that is committed to improving its operation and customer service.

Project Scope

The implementation of the project was well within the initial scope that was outlined for the project. A well-executed project must be guided by and must adhere to the boundaries that were set up during project planning (Kerzner, 2018). It is expected that a proper plan would have accounted for all the possible challenges that might arise during the execution of the project (Kerzner, 2017). Therefore, the project's execution would be easier if the steps outlined in the plans were followed. For the current project, the planning phase had outlined a strict budgetary limit for the project and a fixed timescale. The budgetary limits of the project were set at £50,000 as this was the maximum budgetary amount approved by the board of management of Company X. However, the project outshoots the budget by 20%. The budget exceeded the limits because of the challenges faced during the execution phase. Most notably during the procurement stage of the implementation and the training stage as well. The procurement, delivery, and installation of the automated platform was expected to cost about £ 36,785 according to the market estimates as at the time of planning. However, during implementation, the real cost was eventually adjusted to about £42,764 due to price changes that were caused by various factors, including the current global pandemic. Additionally, the cost of materials that were used for the training of staff and the initial use of the platform was estimated to cost about £ 2,873 and £8,259 respectively. However, the price changes in the market meant that the cost incurred was £4,156 and £12,569 respectively. Also, the project's timeline was originally slated to last 6 months. However, the duration of the project's implementation lasted about 7.5 months due to managerial delays in approving an increase in the project's budget. Although the project overshot both the budget and the timescale, it was considered a success as the changes in the project were warranted by external factors that were beyond the control of the project implementation team and the company itself.

Changes in Project's Activities

It is known that planning a project to total perfection is impossible. Therefore, challenges are expected to crop up during project implementation. However, a project manager must be resourceful in improvising solutions to these unforeseen challenges (Lee & Yong, 2010). Likewise, the improvised solutions must not compromise the project's standard and must help the project achieve as much of its initial goals and objectives as possible (Kerzner, 2017a). The major changes that were made to the project activities list was the change in the platforms' supplier. The project initially planned to procure the automated fabric finishing machine from Chinese suppliers. However, the cost estimates of the procurement, delivery, and installation was significantly higher than what was planned. The cost was higher than those of local UK manufacturers. Also, the delivery time given by the suppliers meant that the project timescale would have to be extended by at least 3 months. Additionally, the manufacturers claimed that they would be unable to commit to training the workers because of current restrictions on international travel and that their representatives in the UK were unavailable to deliver the training module as well. This complication made the project implementation team switch their focus to securing the platform from a local manufacturer in the UK. The switch meant that the cost of procuring the equipment was higher than was originally budgeted, but the cost was still significantly lower than those of the Chinese manufacturers. Additionally, the supplier that was eventually selected was able to deliver the machine in 2 months and committed to the training of the workers. This quicker delivery meant that the timescale was only extended for a month. Another challenge that affected the activities of the project was the difficulty experienced during training. The machine procured from the British manufacturers had a lot of computerized functions. The complexities in operating this machine meant that the workers took a longer than expected time to learn the basics of the machine's operation. This also meant that the process of deploying the machine was delayed as well. In the same vein, the effect of these changes meant that a lot of errors were made during the training and initial use, hence more materials were needed, which accounted for the increased cost of training the workers and the integration of the platform into the production operations of the firm.

Lesson Learnt and Recommendations

One of the lessons' learned during the project's implementation phase was that the improvisation and adaptability are key elements of project management. The essence of careful planning is to mitigate against all risks and possible challenges that might arise during the project implementation phase (Doloi, 2013). While improvisation is less than desirable in project implementation, it allows the project implementation to creatively proffer solutions to challenges that might interfere with the success of the project's execution (Pinto, 2013). At the same time, adaptability is a creative thought process that enables teams to find solutions to project issues from existing resources (Kapsali, 2011). In the current project, the timely switch to a local supplier was key to the success of the project and the implementation's adherence to the initial timescale. Another lesson learned was that alternatives need to be provided during project planning. Alternatives provide mechanisms that help protect the integrity of the project from external and internal changes (Teller *et al.*, 2014). Likewise, alternatives limit the need for improvisation as back up options would have already been provided for the project. For the current project, the lack of alternatives provided during the planning phase made it imperative for the implementation team to improvise. However, in the future, alternatives should be provided to ensure that the plan is robust enough to absorb the shocks of external changes.

In the same vein, the project's implementation showed that ensuring budgetary flexibility is vital to a successful execution of the project. Like the provision of alternatives, allowing budgetary flexibility increases the robustness of the project plan and reduces the risk of unsuccessful execution because of depleted funds (Meredith *et al.*, 2017). For the current project, the fixed budget limited the options available during the planning and this impacted the timeline of the project because the board had to reconvene to approach additional funds for the project. Furthermore, considerations involving budgetary flexibilities are vital in accounting for variations in market prices (Heagney, 2016). For the current project, the prices that were available during the initial planning stage were different from those obtained during the implementation phase and this caused a significant budgetary difference during implementation. Therefore, in addition to allowing for flexible budgets, plans embarked upon in the future will include possible predictions of the expected

fluctuations in market prices of materials that would be used during the project execution phase.

Generally, the procurement and installation phases of the project went well without many challenges. However, the training and integration phases of the project left a lot to be desired. This was because the project plan did not evaluate the abilities of the workers that would be trained. This missing evaluation causes a significant delay in achieving the training objectives as the workers could not easily grasp the computerized concepts of the automated platform. In project management, the evaluation of the available human resources needed to execute a project is quite important as it shows the limitations and strengths of what is available in such a climate (Tohidi, 2011). Therefore, in a future project, the capabilities of the human resources available for all phases of project execution will be evaluated along with other requirements. If this had been done, the management would have understood that there might be a need to employ younger or more computer-oriented workers who will fully utilize the features of the automated platform. On a personal note, the experience of coordinating the project's execution as a project manager has improved my abilities and knowledge. For instance, apart from the increased knowledgeability of project management, I was able to learn how to handle pressure. The pressure that built during the supplier crisis in the implementation phase improved my leadership qualities, especially those needed to lead a group during a crisis. Acquiring both skills is pertinent to improving as a project manager because it helps to increase the creative innovation and adaptability skills that one has.

Reflection on Risk Management

The risk management plan of the project was able to account for all major risks that might have impacted the successful execution of the project except for the risk of the inability to find a supplier. However, the risk plan had already included a component that ensures that the firm only moves forward with the project execution when a suitable product has been identified only. This unidentified risk was unpredictable as the cost and delivery costs and timeline were suddenly changed by the global pandemic that is currently ravaging the world's economy. However, the adaptability

of the implementation team enabled the timely resolution of the challenge and hence the success of the project's implementation.

Conclusion

The EOP report has been able to identify and measure the attainment or attainment of the objectives of the project. Also, the report explained the possible reason why some of the objectives were attained or surpassed and why some were not reached. Especially the objectives about the defective rate of products and the reduced labor cost. Furthermore, a good layout of the benefits provided by the project was given. the report showed that part of the unexpected benefits was an increased ability to efficiently produced complex finishes on fabrics and an increased operational reputation of the company. Additionally, the EOP report demonstrated that the project generally stayed within the scope and that the major change that was made to the activity list was the change from a Chinese manufacturer to a local Supplier. Some of the lessons learned during the project's execution as well as recommendations for future projects include: inclusion of alternatives in the project plan, the addition of budgetary flexibility, and the evaluation of pertinent human resource capabilities. Also, the report showed that all-important risks associated with the project were well covered except for the unpredictable event that threatened to disrupt the project execution stage. Overall, the project's implementation was successful because it was able to address most of the objectives and reasonably adhere to the project's scope. This then demonstrates that careful planning is important in ensuring the successful implementation of projects.

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