

Topic:

Getting Project out of the woods: Project Managers when called in as Fire Fighters

Abstract:

A project is in serious trouble having overrun its budget, and deliveries are far behind schedule. The previous project manager has been fired, team morale is low, sponsors are hopping mad and senior management is fuming. You are brought in to take over the project and turn it around. What should you do? Well, before getting into the thick of action, consider the following reasons why projects generally run into trouble: It is not a surprise when project goes into crises and calls all customer escalations.

Learning objectives

- Understand the issue clearly, and how it has impacted or impacting customer.
- Existing team for source of information. You need historical data to make cognisant decisions. Value their opinion and understand what failed, and why
- Plan what resources you need. You have senior management in escalations, make use of the situation and get all support you need. Ensure all resources are available
- Understand what the objective is, and what is expected from you
- Have a team meeting and clearly explain the situation, impact and how their contribution will help
- Team availability, time zones. Agree on timings
- SPOC
- Planning: realistic time plan, breakdown smaller milestones
- It's a battle, you need to make strategy.
- You need a war room, and status board
- Prepare a communication plan. Make sure you have all contacts (email, phone)
- Escalation chart: internal and external
- Communication is the key: No news means bad news
- Information flow: when, how, what
- Clear and true reporting. No update is also an update.
- You are a leader, you need to lead by example. Be there and be part of the mission. Your presence makes a huge difference.
- Ask what support they need, set clear requirements. Avoid "are we there yet"
- Focus on your plan, and execution (forget your image, or must succeed)
- Daily target – list of activities (cross out as they are completed, it shows the progress)

The above experience will be shared related with a real project.