

Rescuing Troubled Projects

Course Summary

Description

This seminar is designed as a graduate-level course for experienced project managers. It is designed to reinforce many of the project management "Best Practices" taught in other project management classes. It focuses specifically on how to recognize that a project is in "trouble" and concentrates on the actions that project managers need to take to assess, and ultimately plan to recover or terminate a project that has experienced significant difficulties. Tools and templates will be presented and put into context through various exercises and scenarios and case studies.

Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop working definitions of project success, failure and trouble.
- Discuss how and why projects get in trouble.
- List and discuss the root causes of project failure.
- Discuss techniques for performing project reviews.
- Determine the type of project review required
- Develop the Intervention Plan for fixing a troubled project.
- Discuss techniques and strategies for recovering a troubled project.
- Discuss techniques and strategies for terminating a troubled project.
- Discuss project closure activities

Topics

- Introduction
- Project Success and Failure
- Project Reviews - Diagnosing Project Problems
- Project Rescue - Recovering from problems
- Terminating a Troubled Project - Planning and Executing a Project Termination
- Class Closure

Audience

Students enrolling in this course should be PMPs or have significant project management experience.

Prerequisites

To ensure your success, we recommend you have significant working knowledge or experience in working in a project environment.

Duration

Two days

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Course Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Session Overview
- B. Class Norms
- C. Resource Table – Homework
- D. Key Questions

II. Project Success and Failure

- A. Exercise – Define Success and Failure
- B. Successful Outcomes
- C. Failed Project Objectives
- D. What about Casualties?
- E. Zones of Success/Failure
- F. Project Outcomes
- G. Exercise – Identifying Trouble Indicators
- H. Labels for Projects in trouble
 - 1. Runaway Projects
 - 2. Crunch Mode
 - 3. Death March
 - 4. Project Disasters
 - 5. Troubled Project
- I. Exercise – Root Causes of Troubled Projects
- J. Questions – Root Causes
- K. Acceptable ranges for Variance
- L. Range of Problem Projects
- M. Team Exercise - develop a working definition of a "Troubled Project"

III. Project Reviews - Diagnosing Project Problems

- A. Project Status Meetings
- B. When do you want to find out about problems?
- C. Project Audits or Delivery Review
- D. Objectives of Audit
- E. Project Delivery Report
- F. Planning for the Project Audit
- G. Exercise – Review an Assessment Report
- H. Project Health Check
- I. Project Health Check Template
- J. Troubleshooting Review
- K. Troubleshooting Process
- L. Troubleshooting Review Ground Rules
- M. Team Exercise - Develop a template for conducting a Troubleshooting Review.
- N. Review Focus Areas
- O. Discussion - How are Quality Issues addressed on troubled projects?

IV. Project Rescue - Recovering from problems

- A. Project Rescue Effort
- B. Types of Project Rescue
- C. Runaway Project Remedies
- D. Exercise – Project Rescue Process
- E. Rescue Project Charter
- F. Turnaround Strategy
 - 1. Analyze Current Position
 - 2. Define Target Position
- G. Exercise - Ideal Solution Element
 - 3. Evaluate Strategic Options
 - 4. Generate Plans & Endorse Strategy
- H. Outcomes for Project Rescue
- I. Other Ramifications
- J. Checkpoints
- K. Discussion - Why is it a challenge to terminate a project?

V. Terminating a Troubled Project - Planning and Executing a Project Termination

- A. Project Termination needs to be planned
- B. Why terminate a project?
- C. Making the termination decision
- D. Guidelines for project termination
- E. Lessons Learned
- F. Team Discussion – Project Closure
- G. Final Exercise

VI. Class Closure

- A. Course Summary
- B. Course Review