Project management 101 *by Zavanak*

21. DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

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21.5 Delays and disruption

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Delays and disruption

Disruption
Events which prevent work proceeding in the way that was agreed.

Delays
Events which cause the project to proceed more slowly than was agreed

Disruption cause **delays**, and **delays** cause **disruption**

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Triggers for trouble

Delays

- The customer is late supplying information.
- **Vital meetings are postponed or cancelled.**
- The customer takes a long time to approve designs, plans, changes, etc.
- **Equipment or material arrive late.**
- A task cannot start because its predecessor is not finished.

Disruption

- Unexpected events occur; risks materialise.
- **Serious mistakes are made demanding re-work.**
- Ambiguity or lack of detail in contracts or plans leads to confusion.
- **Extra staff are put on to speed project up.**
- Key staff are removed to work on something else.

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A bad day in the office

A 100 day project to re-fit a floor in an office block
for a new blue-chip tenant. Budget £150,000.

1. Install heating
2. Install electrics
3. Fit floor
4. Paint and decorate

Each contractor has a fixed start and end date, and a fixed price contract.

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A bad day in the office

1. Install heating
2. Install electrics
3. Fit floor
4. Paint & decorate

Who suffers due to the delays and disruption?

Who pays?

Who is paid?

Heating units arrive late	3 days lost	£3,000 extra cost
Electricians are held up until heating units are fitted	2 days lost	£2,000 extra cost
Floor contractor puts down floor as per contract		
Installing electrics damages floor	3 extra days work	£5,000 extra cost
Painters held up by floor repairs	2 days lost	£3,000 extra cost
Fixing leaks from heating units	3 days lost	£2,000 extra cost
Total calendar days lost and extra cost	**13 days**	**£15,000**

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How to deal with delays and disruption

- **Stop and think!**
- Don’t just throw resources at the problem
- **Operate strong issue management and change control**
- Use problem solving to minimise re-work
- **Encourage a co-operative approach to re-planning work**

At what point do delays and disruption threaten the business case?

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How to avoid delays and disruption

Vision – Is the vision understood and agreed by all the partners?

Strategy – Are the partners' strategies complimentary?

Sponsorship – Is it clear who the project is being done for?

Stakeholders – Are the partners' ambitions complementary?

Specification – Is the specification agreed by all the partners?

Scope – Is the scope agreed by all the partners?

- Have a realistic, rational approach to planning.
- **Employ active risk management.**
- Include adequate contingencies, especially for tasks on the critical path.
- **Develop and nurture good working relationships between partners.**
- Write clear, fair contracts that incentivize minimising delays and disruption.

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