

Case study iscanner

Education



Analysis

1. Describe all assumptions seen in any of documents provided in the case study.

a. Kelly

1) Given the circumstances on how he invented and developed the iScanner for one year, he assumed that he cannot make program changes to it in under than a year.

2) He does not think that the budget proposed by Pat is conceivable.

3) He assumed that Pat does not need his expertise on this as much as he would have thought because he was not consulted first when the project was being conceptualized.

4) He assumed that he can make one feature work out of the other proposed feature of the new iScanner retail.

5) He assumed that Pat does not recognize his full authority on his team because she talked to some of his team members without going to him first.

6) He assumed that Pat cannot do things without him.

b. Pat

1) Because she is new and very much needed by the company, she thought that she can just make a proposal without holding a department meeting first and asking for everybody's opinion on it. She wrote in her progress report that she had design meetings with product development.

- 2) She creates her own prototype of the iScanner retail in paper and assumed that the product development team can make it happen, with only little changes to the existing product.
- 3) She assumed that she can produce the iScanner retail in 6 months, as she promised to beta test it already in one retail store.
- 4) She thought that she is not being respected because of the way Kelly corresponded to her emails.
- 5) She thought that she can work with the budget that she proposed, and she thinks that by adding another 350, 000 dollars to the budget will make the product be finished earlier.
- 6) She thought that quality control is not the way to go when under a budget and when pressed for time.
- 7) She assumed that the CEO will support her every decision, hence the personal email she made to Cliff requesting a meeting when she got into an argument with Kelly.
- 8) She assumed that she is creative and has a feasible project.
- 9) She assumed that she can save the company alone without asking for Kelly's help hence she wants to bring into the company a new product developer.

c. Cliff

- 1) He thought that the best way to save the company is to hire Pat Lambert.

2) He assumed that I can help make the transition of iScanner to retail go smoothly.

3) He assumed that he can give only 2/3s of the budget, 400, 000 and still make the August launch.

d. Chris

1) He assumed that Pat consulted with Kelly as he asked her to do.

2) He thought that Pat's idea is great and will help save the company.

2. Explain the arguments made by each of these people.

a. Cliff O'Connor: As CEO of the company, he is the one person who could approve or disprove whatever programs or plans his subordinates have, and as such, he did not think that he can pass the \$575, 000 budget proposed by Pat. At the first day of my hiring I was already prompted to have budget cuts by 15% to help save the company's financial crisis, and Mr. O'Connor made it clear that this was necessary. When he hired Pat Lambert to have her marketing expertise help the company, he assumed that everybody was okay with it and that all the departments were fine and that Pat understood budget cuts. It was until Pat asked for a meeting regarding an outside program developer team that he only figured out that something must have gone wrong and asked for my help. He is right to consider cutting the proposed budget to 2/3s as he is under pressure in keeping his company alive.

b. Pat Lambert: She wants to hire an outside program developer team because she thinks that Kelly cannot give her what she is asking him to do. She wants to believe that a soft launch or a beta version of the iScanner will

be possible, and there is already one willing retail store owner to test the product. She argued with Kelly that he can make all features of the iScanner retail in less than six months, and that if he is not willing to cooperate she will find someone else to do the job for her.

c. Kelly Thomas: He argues that there is no possible way to finish or even to do all that Pat has conceptualized in her new project. He said that because of the recent budget cuts, he lacks enough manpower to finish the product in six months time. He does not want to make a beta version of the product knowing that it will not pass quality control. He did promise that he can do just one feature of the iScanner retail in six months and given the budget, which Pat did not really like.

d. Chris Martinas: Chris is staying neutral in a way, but is reminding everybody of the much needed budget cuts. Since he is working with Pat and that he approved of her optimization project, he has to make sure that Pat consulted this with Kelly. However, he argues that Pat has to make it work with Kelly because she would need him to make this project.

3. Evaluate each argument listed above as sound or unsound and why.

a. Cliff O'Connor: Cliff is very logical in his argument. He does not want the company to close down and more people will lose their jobs, hence he is strictly enforcing his budget cuts. It is also sound that before he would approve or deliberate with Pat her request to hire another program developer for the project he appoints me to see if there is anything that I can do to alleviate the problem. He is making himself neutral in the issue and surely wants only the best for the whole company.

b. Pat Lambert: She is making unsound, emotional arguments. First is her rush decision about the project. She was probably so excited and she wants to prove herself worthy to Cliff that in her haste she did not ask for her colleague's valuable opinions especially that of Kelly's. Then she submits the proposal readily to the CEO, which he then approves and when asked by Chris to consult with Kelly, she thinks that he does not want her proposal. She lets her emotions get the best of her because of that one argument with Kelly she hastily decides that she doesn't need his expertise and asks the CEO to grant a meeting with her to consult about her idea to hire someone else.

c. Kelly Thomas: I think Kelly has the most authority because he is the one who will turn the project into a reality. So I think that his arguments are logical and sound when he said that he cannot make what is being asked of him. He has had much experience with the program and with the costs and manpower entailed. He is very concerned about quality control and disproves of the beta version that Pat wants him to. I understand that he is busy, but if he could have sat down in a meeting with Pat before the whole project was conceptualized they could have compromised.

d. Chris Martinas: Chris is logical to ask Pat to consult with Kelly and in forwarding Pat and Kelly's email correspondence he does not want to be biased. He wants me to judge and criticize the situation on my own.

4. Describe specific fallacious arguments, and identify the people who hold them.

- a. Pat's argument that Kelly does not want to cooperate with her hence the need to hire outside program developers.
- b. Pat's argument that she does not need Kelly, and she overlooked his importance.
- c. Pat's argument that she already got a beta tester and does not care about quality control
- d. Kelly's way of addressing Pat, not wanting to meet up with her until she picks one feature is inconsiderate of the company.

Conclusions

5. Describe all problems in this situation.

The problem is that Pat made her project hastily, without consulting with the proper people and it was too late when she realized that Kelly, the program developer will be as much involved as she is. She came up with an impossible project that she has now promised a retail store owner that will be available in 6 months time. Pat crossed lines of authority when she met up with one of Kelly's software engineer's and consulted with them, not with him. Kelly not wanting to meet up with Pat is presenting a problem because Pat thinks that she isn't welcome into the company by Kelly, and he's not giving her any of his time, making her discardable. Pat now proposes to hire an outside programmer, unreasonable move since they are now experiencing budget cuts.

6. For each problem listed above, describe the data, arguments, and reasoning that contribute to the problem.

There is no question about Pat's creativity and her credentials. However she should have first asked the one who made the iScanner if her ideas were even remotely possible. She was advised to do so, but she already came up with her project proposal before consulting. I think she acted on her own for most of the planning, and had met up with possible buyers of the project and yet she has not consulted each and everyone in the company. She did not even know that the CEO would cut the budget more to \$400, 000, making Kelly's estimated budget smaller than what he can work around with. The idea of hiring from the outside cannot be possible, because that would mean additional expenses for the company. The email correspondence of Pat and Kelly proved Kelly's strong repugnance against Pat's ideas, knowing that Pat did not consult with him before offering the project to a retail store owner, making the company's name on the line. The way they talked to each other in their email completely ignored respect for their colleagues and the duties of their respective departments.

7. What is the underlying problem that is the base cause of the conflict within AcuScan?

Miscommunication and disrespect for authority are the two main issues that I see within the company. The email communication is too risky to actually handle the whole future of the company. If they were really aware of what's at stake, I think they should have gone out of their way to talk about their ideas and proposals. Pat's pride prompted her to want to hire someone else instead of taking Kelly's option to choose just one feature and make it completely flawless. That is something unacceptable.

8. What alternative solutions would you propose for this situation?

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I would like to propose a meeting between all the VP, including the CEO so that everybody can talk about their proposals and problems. Also I do not want Pat hiring an outside programmer; instead, I want Pat and Kelly to reach a compromise within the proposed budget. In doing so maybe Pat can contact his iScanner retail store owner beta tester to wait for a few more months, Im sure Pat can come up with a creative way to delay the launch and excuse the company. Hiring someone from outside the company is not acceptable because not only will it add expenses, it will get Kelly really upset, because it's his job and hiring someone will make him think other things.

9. State the relative strengths and weaknesses of each alternative solution.

The strength of my proposed solution will hopefully address existing miscommunication problems within the company, prevent hiring of another programmer, and meet budget cuts and compromise between Pat and Kelly. Unfortunately, my solution is going to be more biased towards Kelly, and Pat may feel more unwelcome in this company.

10. Which solution will you recommend to the CEO and why?

I would suggest to the CEO that we have a meeting wherein I will disclose all the information that I have gathered for the past weeks that I have worked here. I will let them explain their sides and themselves respectively, and then I will ask Pat and Kelly to compromise and stay within the budget. Pat will then have to coordinate the change in plans with the retail store owner

that she got to beta test the product and ask if she can deliver a better product given a longer time period.

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AcuScan, Inc., maker of the iScanner, a retinal scanning program, has been in the market for ten years providing only the best quality product and professional technical support to its customers across the country. However, in lieu with the vast number of available technology and the growing number of competitors in the market, the iScanner have not been able to make newer profits nor clientele. This has prompted the company to have an overall budget cut of 15 % to balance existing expenses and profits. Due to these circumstances, AcuScan decided to revamp its product and aimed to create a new platform that will be able to cater to more business establishments, hence, opening up new clientele. Furthermore, Ms. Pat Lambert, the new product developer, was added to the team in hopes that her creativity and experience will aid the company in this new venture.

“ Operation Optimize” was proposed by Ms. Pat Lambert with endorsement by Mr. Chris Martinas. Operation Optimize set sights on modifying the existing iScanner to a new product called the iScanner retail, which she claims to have been inspired by a dream. The iScanner retail will cater to the retail store owners and the database gathered from this can be sold later on also. The iScanner retail’s features will enable retailers to:

1. Identify incoming customers through retinal scanning
2. Track customer movements through the store

3. Track customer's eye movements through the store
4. Capture data about each consumer's needs, wants, and desires
5. Capture data about customer's specific characteristics e. g. eye color, vision needs, etc.
6. Link data to each consumer's retinal scan
7. Report data in real time to any retailer, in flexible, customizable reports

The proposed budget for this project is estimated to be around \$575, 000, an amount that guarantee to provide the iScanner retail for beta testing in six month's time in a retail store contacted through Wilson Marketing. However, the \$575, 000 cannot be released in full because of financial constraints and has prodded Mr. Chris Martinas to cut down proposed budget to \$400, 000, as ordered by Mr. Cliff O'Connor.

After the project proposal of Ms. Lambert was circulated in all departments, Mr. Kelly Thomas, chief software engineer, rejected the proposal. His reasons were as follows:

- The only feature that he can do in six months time given the budget is the identification of incoming customers through retinal scanning.
- With the recent budget cuts, he only has a few men on his team left and he cannot create the other features proposed by Ms. Lambert under these circumstances.
- Some of the features, although not impossible to do, will take longer than six months time to make and also for testing and quality control.

Ms. Lambert and Mr. Thomas corresponded in a series of email messages regarding the reasons why Mr. Thomas rejected her proposal. Ms. Lambert suggested that instead of producing the iScanner retail with all the features, which will perceptibly take more than six months, Mr. Thomas should just work on a prototype. She wanted an iScanner complete with all her intended features even if it is not fully developed. However, Mr. Thomas reiterated that he cannot do such a beta version, knowing that it will not pass quality control standards and may put the company's reputation in jeopardy. He promised Ms. Lambert that she can have just one fully developed feature workable with the given budget and six months deadline. Ms. Lambert did not agree and proposed to hire an outside software design firm to Mr. O'Connor instead.

There are three problems that the current situation presents:

1. A fully-developed product was promised to be released to a willing beta tester in 6 months; the reputation of the company is at stake if this cannot be done.
2. A misunderstanding between Mr. Thomas and Ms. Lambert can forever become a hindrance to a harmonious working relationship.
3. The suggestion of contracting an outside firm is not acceptable, considering that the key developer and creator is Mr. Thomas and will only add expenses to the company.

In accordance to the presented problems, the solutions suggested in this paper are:

- Have a sit-down, closed door meeting with the CEO and the team members, especially Mr. Thomas and Ms. Lambert, to discuss what can be done to make the budget work for this new product to be ready for release in the soonest possible time.
- Make a compromise for Mr. Thomas and Ms. Lambert by asking Mr. Thomas to make more than just one feature and at the same time, ask Ms. Lambert to come up with a creative reason to the retail store owner who agreed to beta test the product, to extend the six months development time to 9 months.
- Have weekly meetings instead of just passing memos to make communication lines available between departments

Using the aforementioned suggested approaches will hopefully create pleasant working relationships and make project Operation Optimize become a reality through constant and continuous communication and cooperation between coworkers. If successful, this project will be able to help AcuScan, Inc., regain the lost profits over the years and become the leader in retail retinal scanning technology.

Reference:

University of Phoenix Simulation Assessments. (2008). Critical Thinking GEN 480 Assessment Case [Simulation]. Available from https://mycampus.phoenix.edu/secure/aapd/vendors/tata/GEN480/uop_assessment.html.