

Professional or academic experience



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Running Head: PROJECT MANAGEMENT Professional or Academic Experience

PROJECT MANAGEMENT Project Management is the ability to see some task through successfully from the stage of an idea through to its logical conclusion. The most important part of project management is the initial planning. If this is done methodically with attention to the minutest details, the implementation goes smoothly and the manager is usually congratulated on a task well done. This was amply and abundantly illustrated when my department was given charge of organizing and conducting an inter-school contest that was projected to attract entries from schools all over the state and could well include around 900 to 1000 participants. The aim was to uncover the hidden talent in a child and nurture it. The task was daunting; we were four of us, we had few resources and were expected to make a success of a venture the size of which was intimidating enough without the added burden of our regular school curriculum and teaching assignments. The only factor in our favor was that we had a couple of months to plan it. However there were a thousand things that could go wrong and the biggest problem was raising the funds to conduct a contest of this size.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The computer department of my school was special because at that time very few schools could boast of having even a few computers much less a computer section. I was the head of the department and had helped set it up. The school had organized many inter-school contests in such varied fields as dance, music, debates, quizzing etc. Naturally since we had such a hi-tech computer section we were expected to organize an inter school computer contest. As head of the department this was solely my responsibility and I had only a couple of months to plan it, and show results.

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I had to do some fast thinking about how I would go about this with the few resources available – both financial as well as in terms of man power. The first thing I did was call a meeting of my department. It was a brain storming session where every idea was put down on paper and discussed threadbare. We finally had a broad outline of the kind of contests we could organize for each of the various age groups that would take part; as well as a rough plan of dates that would not interfere with the school curriculum and exam timetable. We decided to invite an outside party to conduct the contest to make it absolutely fair and transparent. This would involve being able to convince a third party with the necessary credentials and expertise to help out. The name of the contest was very important and had to be decided early. After much discussion we finally came up with Cyber Genius. Since our school was a private one, finance was the biggest problem. Money for the contest would necessarily have to be organized through a sponsor. We decided to make a presentation to a few software companies to get them interested in our cause. Keeping in mind that motivation is the key that spurs kids on to greater efforts; we decided that we had to raise a sizeable amount of money to organize participation

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

certificates for all participants and attractive prizes for the winners, as well as cover the costs of advertising, sending out invitations to the various schools, and hiring a hall for the prize distribution ceremony. I made a presentation on the objectives and goals of the contest to the managers of some top notch software companies. My approach was that the talent pool thrown up by the contest would be employed by them in the near future and since in the final analysis, they would be the beneficiaries, we were

appealing to them for help. Within a week, we had both a sponsor who would finance the contest as well as a company whose employees would conduct it. This initial success gave us the necessary morale boost and knowing the funding was there, we began to set out a systematic plan. We roped in our art teachers to help with the designing of an attractive logo for Cyber Genius, and a design for the trophies. We set down the smallest things that would be needed and divided the various activities among ourselves according to our strengths (what we did best). We also decided that we would meet everyday before our classes began and again after school was over to review what had been done, as well as what still remained and discuss any problems. This also gave us an idea of how effectively we were implementing our plans.

The first meeting with those who had agreed to fund and help out in the conduct of the contest, threw up a new dimension. The company chairman decided that he would fund this contest for five years if we included children from the financially weaker sections of society. These included kids who had never seen a computer, let alone handled one. This was a new challenge and I had little choice but to accept it. I decided to conduct a computer literacy workshop for these kids every day after school. I confess honestly and with humility that as a teacher, I have never had greater satisfaction from my profession.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

These children were like sponges, hanging on to every word and the speed with which they picked up the basics was unbelievable. We decided that we would have a separate category for these kids and hone their skills gradually till they could compete on an equal footing with their more well off peers. We

ended up with 270 kids in this category!

The advertisements in the local newspapers began to give the necessary publicity to the event and invitations and application forms were sent out to the various schools, and then we were faced with another problem. The unprecedented response that we received forced us to hold some elimination rounds. The contests were organized on weekends over a period of some weeks and were a roller coaster ride for all of us with their highs and lows and neither we nor our conductors had any off days during this time. Every day brought with it new challenges and overcoming them was a test of our resolve to see this through successfully. It is to the credit of our conductors as well, that they too kept to our deadlines in addition to their own in their respective work places. In all those weeks we had nothing but Cyber Genius on our minds, and we succeeded in making the competition a resounding success.

The happy faces of parents and prize winners and the pride of the board of trustees of the school in our achievement was reward enough for us. The endeavor which a few months ago seemed a Herculean task had been accomplished by meticulous planning, minute and detailed break down of activities, distribution of responsibility and the will and group effort to accomplish the given task.

After all that is the essence of project planning and it proved the truth of what project managers believe that “ Project management is the process by which projects are defined, planned, monitored, controlled and delivered such that the agreed benefits are realized.”

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

References

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Taken From: Association for Project Management

Definition retrieved from <http://www.apm.org.uk/Definitions.asp>