

Case study on franklin equipment, Ltd.

[Business](#), [Management](#)



1. The main criteria used by FEL to assign managers to projects are expertise and availability. Client relationships can also become important for assigning managers, as it was the case with Gatenby, who managed to secure the Abu Dhabi project for FEL. These factors are essential for building functional teams because they ensure that managers that are assigned to the project are knowledgeable and experienced enough to deal with the task and are able to dedicate sufficient time to project completion. However, the reliance on these three criteria is often insufficient for success. Thus, for the Abu Dhabi project it is necessary to take into account also managers' credibility, members' political connections and individual motivation (Larson & Clifford, 2011). Interviews conducted by Carl Jobe revealed that this limited consideration of factors affecting teamwork is leading the Abu Dhabi project towards a disaster. Firstly, personal conflict between Perry and Bruder is likely to create a hostile environment, where the two will try to sabotage each other rather than cooperate. Secondly, Gatenby's credibility is not strong in the team, as he was not able to communicate the right vision and to overcome the scepticism about the project's success. Moreover, none of the team members, except for Gatenby, is strongly motivated to work on the project or volunteered to do it, therefore it is unlikely that they will demonstrate exceptional performance later on. The last questionable aspect about FEL's assignment practices is the limited influence of the project manager on the composition of the team. This approach is inefficient because it over-formalizes the selection and limits the number of subjective soft factors that considered.

2. Team cohesion is particularly important for international projects both due

to the strategic importance of such projects and due to their complexity. For the Abu Dhabi project, success would allow FEL to enter the region, which is hard to penetrate due to political and economic issues. As the environment of the new market is largely unknown, it is crucial to leverage on the expertise of every team member. Furthermore, failure to complete the project successfully would reflect on the reputation of FEL in the new market, thus potentially jeopardizing the future of the company in this region.

3. As an internal consultant Jobe should understand that the current situation in the Abu Dhabi team is a recipe for failure. However, the strategic importance of the project and the rigid FEL's criteria for team creation make it impossible to cancel the project or to recruit other people. Furthermore, the way FEL's management addressed the dysfunctional conflict between Perry and Rankins only exacerbated the situation by creating an additional incentive for the two to sabotage each other's work. Additionally, some team members do not realize the severity of the existing issues and disregard them as potential obstacles. Therefore, Jobe now faces a dilemma on how to reconcile interests within the team, facilitate information flow, and unite people around a common vision that would enhance members' commitment and the desire to work together, without formally changing the team composition.

4. As a first step Jobe should recommend Gatenby to dedicate some time to team-building, to explain the importance of the project for FEL and to create a common vision. This step should enhance internal motivation and improve Gatenby's credibility as a leader. Secondly, he should ensure clear communication channels to avoid the fact that some of the members are

completely unaware of the critical issues the team is facing. This could be done through regular team meetings that would include team dynamics on the agenda. Finally, the conflict between Perry and Rankins should be managed. The easiest solution is to change the team composition. However, if that is not possible, Jobe should mitigate the conflict by talking to both Perry and Rankins and by trying to reconcile their differences. It is likely though that this is not going to be effective considering the long conflict history. In this case, Perry and Rankins, rather than just Rankins, should be taken off the project. Since both of them contribute to conflict escalation, it is fair to remove both from the project, thus sending the team a message that such behaviour cannot be tolerated (Larson & Clifford, 2011).

References

Larson, E. W. & Clifford, F. G. (2011). Project management: the managerial process. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill/Irwin