

## **Project Management Reflection**

Cindy Patterson, CETPA CTO Mentor Candidate

### **Outcomes**

**rM-05.** Demonstrate the ability to apply Project Management Initiation and Planning Tools to gain board approval to implement a technology project

### **Context**

My first classical project management experience was at a large corporation where I was transferred to the newly formed Project Management Office as a Project Manager. I quickly learned that role was not a good fit for my personality and skill set. Guiding a project in which I had little overall authority, working with a team that I did not manage, was not in my wheelhouse. I have always enjoyed managing projects from the trench that were under my supervision and within my expertise. Currently I work as the Manager of Application Support at Santa Clara County Office of Education and manage a group of eight Application System Analysts. In this role I manage and contribute to several diverse projects. The project I reviewed for this assignment is the longest project I have ever managed and was completed recently, right after this seminar.

### **Artifact**

My artifact is an assessment and review of the QSS Server Migration Project Plan. This artifact demonstrates my ability to initiate a project, use tools to plan the project and gain board approval.

### **Reflection**

The QSS Server migration project has spanned a decade. In 2005 QSS announced the creation of a new graphical user interface with a client server structure that would eventually lead to the migration of data from the HP3000 to a modern platform. It was estimated to take 2 years. Four years later I was promoted to manage the group that supported this product. I created a project document to organize the effort and communicate with the Administration. The project plan demonstrated the complexity of the task and conveyed the ever changing timeline. In the summer of 2015, still waiting for the final pieces from the vendor, we experienced system issues that required an immediate migration to the new platform. The project plan helped us execute quickly and we were able to migrate to the new platform successfully.

The seminar on Project Management focused on leadership and project management. The highlight of the day was the Lego exercise. The class was sworn to secrecy however I can divulge that it was a dynamic project management experience. During the exercise I realized one of the biggest things I am learning from this class – the collaboration style in education. While Information Technology is ubiquitous, every industry has a unique set of requirements and customs. I migrated my skills from banking, to custom house brokerage, pharma, and now K-12. These group activities, such as the Lego exercise, allowed me to practice interacting and negotiating within this dynamic. I was learning more about what kinds of questions would be asked, or interestingly not asked, and how conflict would be resolved within the K-12 mindset.

The instructor, Robin Canale, is a seasoned Project Manager and provided interesting anecdotes and some new tools I intend to use. Our pre-work included the site MindTools.com. I have been searching for ways to improve my subordinate's problem solving skills and found some great ideas on MindTools.com. Robin also recommended a book, *The Dip*, by Seth Godin, which has been added to my reading queue and I hope will heighten my critical thinking about projects.

The framework provided by Robin for project risk mitigation, (Avoid, Control, Retain or Deflect), was very useful during the execution of the migration. I introduced this to my team and as problems arose during the QSS server Migration project we first identified what kind of solution we were going to seek. This helped focus discussions during a very frantic time.

This class was excellent on several levels. It provided practice interacting with k-12 peers outside of my workplace, I had new tools that I put into practice immediately, and it provided ideas for future growth to use with my team and for me. I hope to continue to advance my project skills and experience as a functional manager within the K-12 community.