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Team Case Analysis

Problem Statement: Blake finds himself at odds with his summer internship at Fancy Consultants when his *Cappuccino!* App project at the Royal Hotel ends in failure.

- Time management skills were not used when planning out this project.
- Blake ignored the technological and economic environments of the Royal Hotel and implemented the *Cappuccino!* App without thorough troubleshooting.
- The maintenance staff at the Royal Hotel lost interest in the *Cappuccino!* App, after classmate Jack Scarso took over the project upon Blake's departure from the premises.
- Fancy Consultants did not follow the traditional employee onboarding protocol and failed to provide adequate training and support for new interns.

Possible Concepts

The key responsibility for the failure of this project rests entirely with Fancy Consultants. For an agency with a solid local reputation, they seemed to have broken all the rules for successful project management, including inadequate staffing and training. It was clear that sending a new intern into a major project with only two weeks of orientation was a recipe for disaster. Had they provided adequate training and mentoring they would have followed a more methodical and structured approach to defining the true problem at The Royal Hotel. Then, they could have engaged key end users and stakeholders, provided suitable training and support, and fully explained the benefits of the need to upgrade their information system. Instead, Blake jumped hastily to a technological solution and failed to grasp that their existing, manual information system was working fine for the staff.

Relative Quantitative Data:

- Blake went through two weeks of orientation with Fancy Consultants before arriving at the Royal Hotel.
- Blake was only given one week to work on the Royal Hotel project.

- The Royal Hotel brings in 150,000 guests annually, bringing in total revenues upward of \$30M. This includes the high percentage of repeat visitors.

Relative Qualitative Data:

As a project manager, it is important to realize that one of the biggest challenges of your task is managing your timeline effectively. Blake made this critical error during his first attempt in project management by failing to adhere to the proper time management protocols necessary to complete this complex task in his allotted seven-day period.

According to Kissflow (2021) "Time management is defined as the time spent and the progress made over the project." This is notoriously one of the most overwhelming, yet imperative, aspects of project management because it helps to break down complex tasks into workable subsections, assign tasks, and complete projects on time goal. Blake did none of these things. He did not create a project outline (also called project plan), project schedule, define the project activities, define dependencies, sequence activities against the time goal(s), or estimate duration of resources.

Throughout the time management plan's implementation, he should have used some traditionally effective time management tools that he did not. These include creating task lists and encouraging others on your team to do the same, prioritizing your daily tasks, avoiding distractions (like other clients), delegating tasks onto other members of the team, and actively identifying bottlenecks (Kissflow, 2021). Had he been avoiding distractions and identifying bottlenecks, he would have been more cognizant of the situation with Jack Scarso. He also would have been much more involved in this project had he been following these time management and project management protocols.

Blake also did not adhere to the technological and economic environment of the Royal Hotel. He interviewed the GM (General Manager) and directors of housekeeping, maintenance, and I.T., but he did not interview the staff themselves about how they would feel about their needs or the functionality of the chosen product. Because of this lack of communication with the target user base, he failed to meet the needs of the staff. It is likely that the phone to central application system was both overly complicated for the user base and inconvenient in comparison to their alternate mode of operations.

The staff's economic environment was again not met during the implementation process when Jack Scarso finished the training and then just left. This goes directly against the ten basic principles of Economics stating that people respond to incentives (Marquette University). Although this was not a mistake directly made by Blake, he could have prevented it and is hence dealing with it now. Blake did not hold Jack in the highest esteem, yet he left him to his own devices anyway. There should have been an incentivized implementation process following the training involving positive reinforcement tied to career advancement, culture rewards, or financial incentives. This would have kept the staff interested long enough to abolish the old system (Office, n.d).

Blake chose M-Tech's *Cappuccino!* App without any troubleshooting. If he were being knowledgeable about the technological environment of the Royal Hotel, he would have

carefully troubleshoot this issue by identifying the problem, establishing a theory of probable cause, establishing a plan of action to resolve the problem and implement the solution, verifying full system functionality and, if applicable, implementing preventive measures, and documenting findings, actions, and outcomes (Cisco Press). Blake did not run an A/B test phase with a prototype and that led to several preventable problems happening.

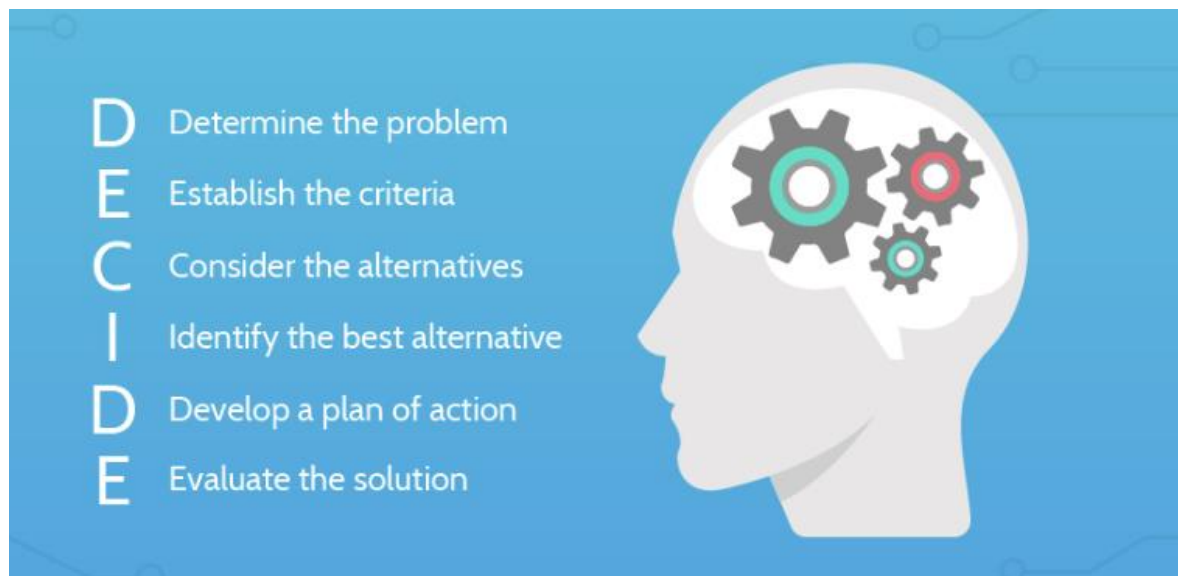
It is also worth mentioning that Fancy Consultants did not professionally train Blake before dispatching him to the Royal Hotel with this complex task. They merely onboarded him with a two-week orientation formality. According to The US Department of Labor (2018) interns working with for-profit companies are legally considered employees, not students. Therefore, it was FC (Fancy Consultants) who broke the traditional employee protocol by sending in an undertrained and underpaid intern alone to do a professional's job. Blake should have been properly vetted, trained, mentored with the buddy system, and then slowly branched out on his own (Pavlou, 2018). So, this thread of project management mishap began well before either intern entered the picture.

The evidence from this assessment clearly points to a complete failure on the part of Fancy Consultants. Had they adhered to a more structured approach, utilizing adequately trained and supported consultants, and fully evaluated the current information systems and staff, they would have stood a much higher chance of success. As it was, they "broke every rule in the book" and ended with a failed project and unhappy customer.

If Fancy Consultants were to reengage with this project, they would be more likely to achieve a successful outcome if they followed basic project management practices, such as:

- Sending in qualified, fully trained consultants who have a strong understanding of project management practices.
- Providing support and mentoring, especially for more junior consultants.
- Allowing sufficient time to assess the current information systems and carefully define the problems to be addressed.
- Spending time with the client's management and executive sponsor(s) to understand their objectives and motivations.
- Fully exploring the end-users and their interactions with the current system. Their buy-in is crucial to the overall success of the project.
- Taking adequate time to address the people/process/technology involved.
- Determining which level of organizational change this involved (Informaté) and put in place tools to help.
- Exploring all technologies before settling on the preferred option. Do not rush to a decision!
- Once a solution is implemented, provide appropriate training and tools.

- Monitor the implementation and subsequent use to ensure it meets the needs of the staff. Address any issues as they arise.





Short Term Action Plan:

Blake should consult with the GM, directors of housekeeping and maintenance to discuss issues with the Cappuccino system from their point of view and to detail the actions that occurred after Blake left the site. Blake should also consult with employees directly to hear their feedback on the system and where the system processes are falling behind.

During these conversations, Blake should ask:

1. Describe the actions Jack took to ensure a smooth implementation of Cappuccino!
2. What reminders were given to employees about the system
3. When Jack left, who from the Royal Hotel promoted Cappuccino!
4. What positives things do you like about the Cappuccino! Application
5. What do you dislike about the application?
6. What changes would you make to the system
7. What about the past manual system worked well for you?
8. What about the past manual system did not work well for you

Upon collecting feedback from the employees, since it had been some time since the system had been properly utilized, a new training session should be conducted. Assuming the contract that Blake negotiated with Cappuccino! Also requires the Royal Hotel to pay a monthly fee to M-Tech based on system usage, this would put Blake in a great spot to negotiate an additional training session at a lower cost as M-Tech will also be invested to ensure Royal Hotel employees are using the system. Blake should notify M-Tech immediately to request a new training session. Blake should also discuss with M-Tech regarding a train the trainer program to ensure either the GM or the director of housekeeping or the director of maintenance has some level of ownership in the system moving forward.

This way as new employees onboard with the Royal hotel, there is already an internal trainer that can ramp up the new employees fast and with no additional cost to the business.

Budget:

Training session for train the trainer: \$2500 estimated.

Conversations with Employees: \$0

Total budget for short term plan: \$2500

Medium-Term Action Plan:

To ensure the hotel staff is still aware of the system and they know how to use it correctly, re-training to all members of the hotel staff should be provided within 24-48 hours. During this training, it should highlight why the system is important to use for the Royal Hotel and provide an incentive.

One additional week-long training session should be negotiated with M-Tech for a reduced fee of around \$250, assuming that a typical trainer's cost would be at least \$2000 a week. This rate should be negotiated by letting M-Tech aware that the system have received poor initial feedback from the employees and Royal Hotel is considering dropping their contract unless employees become re-engaged with the system. The hotel GM should ask the Directors of Housekeeping and maintenance to keep an eye out Cappuccino utilization daily. The GM should hold both accountable if employees fail to use the new system. Blake should partner closely with the GM to act as a champion for the system throughout the hotel.

A re-launch campaign should also be started to get employees excited about the use of the new system. Employees should be given Cappuccino! 'swag' such as a T-shirt. Housekeeping and maintenance employees should receive other branded items for Cappuccino including branded cleaning cloths, so that they have constant reminders about the system.

Incentives for utilizing the new system should include:

1. Employee dinner and group outing if there is 100% daily use of the Cappuccino system

2. The employee that has the most utilization of the system is rewarded with recognition at an employee meeting and receive small gift card award of about \$25
3. Daily recognition from the GM to employees to use the system, while also recognizing those that ask questions and remain engaged

Budget:

Training session: \$250

Cost of Cappuccino! Swag: \$1000

Employee outing: \$1500 (Assuming there are 30 employees

Top employee utilization award: \$50 - \$25 certificate/plaque and \$25 gift card

Daily recognition from GM: \$0

Total Budget for Medium Term plan: \$2800

Long Term Action Plan

After the training conducted by M-Tech, the royal hotel should focus on system optimization. Taking the feedback received from the short-term action plan, Blake should focus on reviewing the processes inside Cappuccino! And ensuring that the system is the most effective for the business. As Blake is still new to FC, he should consult a more senior consultant who has worked on similar implementations.

During the session, they should map out the full end to end process of how the Royal Hotel interacts with Cappuccino and ensure there are no redundancies. As the process is mapped, it should be reviewed against the feedback provided by the GM, director of housekeeping, director of maintenance, and the housekeeping and maintenance employees. During this review, Blake should work with M-Tech to improve any processes that are clunky, and inefficient and causing potential duplicate work. While looking at the areas to improve, Blake should work to ensure that the items that employees state are working well continue to be a part of the system and process.

While ensuring the process is efficient, as it does not appear to have happened in discovery, Blake should also start the RFP process to look at other pieces of software that are available on the market. If M-Tech is not able to make any changes to make the Cappuccino! Application more efficient, new software options should be reviewed. At least three other applications should be reviewed. When performing the reviews of other options available on the market, Blake should ensure that they are not as clunky as Cappuccino! and are more streamlined in its processes.

If another application is the best fit for the Royal Hotel, steps should be taken to ensure that the application is reviewed by different employees of the hotel, including housekeeping

and maintenance staff, along with the directors of housekeeping and maintenance, the GM and executive members of the Royal Hotel.

If the decision is to keep utilizing the Cappuccino! application, regular incentives should be put into place to ensure employees continue to use the system as needed. These incentives should include:

1. Recognition from hotel management
2. Gift cards to top utilizers, around \$25 per gift card
3. If guest satisfaction stays above 95%, a personalized gift should be given. You can set up a database of employees likes and choose items based on their responses, generally up to a \$50 gift. If Guest satisfaction is 100%, a higher amount around \$100 could be allocated.

Budget:

Gift Card to top utilizers: \$50 (Top 2 employees x \$25)

Guest Satisfaction Gift: \$1500 (\$50 x 30 employees)

Total Budget: \$1550

Conclusion

FC (Fancy Consultants) should hire Blake as a full-time employee. Given his limited exposure when he started on the Royal Hotel project, Blake really took charge on a project without much direction. This shows that Blake can work independently without much direction. Blake can utilize his resources but will need guidance on when to ask others for help.

As he wanted to ensure the Royal Hotel is set up for future success with Cappuccino! or potentially another system, Blake should be extended a full-time role and supporting the Royal Hotel project. As Blake gains more experience in this fields, he has qualities that would ultimately lead to a Sr. consultant or leadership position down the road. Once Blake heard that the Royal Hotel project was off track, he jumped right in to make things right.

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