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Incidents for Discussion

Pritchard Soap Co.

Samantha (Sam) Calderon is manager of a project that will completely alter the method of adding perfume to Pritchard Soap's "Queen Elizabeth" gift soap line. The new process will greatly extend the number of available scents and should result in a significant increase in sales. The project had been proceeding reasonably well, but fell several weeks behind when the perfume supplier, the Stephen Marcus Parfumsissary, was unable to meet its delivery deadline because of a wildcat strike.

Under normal circumstances this would not have caused problems, but the project had been subject to a particularly long evaluation study and now was in danger of not being ready for the holiday season. The major scheduling problem concerned Pritchard's toxicity lab. Kyle Lee, lab manager, had been most cooperative in scheduling the Queen Elizabeth perfumes for toxicity testing. He had gone out of his way to rearrange his own schedule to accommodate Sam's project. Because of the strike at Marcus, however, Sam cannot have the perfumes ready for test as scheduled, and the new test date Lee has given Sam will not allow her to make the new line available by the holidays. Sam suspects that the project might not have been approved if senior management had known that they would miss this year's holiday season.

Questions

1. What was the source of change in this project and how will it affect the project's priority? What are Sam's alternatives? What should she do?

Sutton Electronics

Eric Frank was still basking in the glory of his promotion to marketing PM for Sutton Electronics Corporation, manufacturer of electronic fire alarm systems for motels, offices, and

other commercial installations. Eric's first project involved the development of a marketing plan for Sutton's revolutionary new alarm system based on sophisticated circuitry that would detect and identify a large number of dangerous gases as well as smoke and very high temperatures. The device was the brainchild of Ira Magee, vice-president of research and the technical wizard responsible for many of Sutton's most successful products.

It was unusual for so young and relatively inexperienced an employee as Eric to be given control of such a potentially important project, but he had shown skill in handling several complex, though routine, marketing assignments. In addition, he had the necessary scientific background to allow him to understand the benefits of Magee's proposed gas detection system.

Four weeks into the project, Eric was getting quite worried. He had tried to set up an organizational and planning meeting several times. No matter when he scheduled the meeting, the manager of the manufacturing department, Jaki Benken, was unable to attend. Finally, Eric agreed that manufacturing could be represented by young Bill Powell, a Benken protégé who had just graduated from college and joined Sutton Electronics. However, Eric was doubtful that Powell could contribute much to the project.

Eric's worry increased when Powell missed the first planning meeting completely and did not appear at the second meeting until it was almost over. Powell seemed apologetic and indicated that plant floor crises had kept him away from both meetings. The project was now 5 weeks old, and Eric was almost 3 weeks late with the marketing master plan. He was thinking about asking Ira Magee for help.

Questions

1. Do you think that Eric should involve Magee at this point? If so, what outcome would you expect? If not, what should he do?

Continuing Integrative Class Project

The topic of negotiation will come up in two guises during the class project: When the PM is trying to assign tasks to the team members and they are resisting, and also possibly when the PM or class is negotiating for resources with the Instructor, the Dean, or others. The topic of conflict can arise at any time and over any issue, obviously. In all these

circumstances, the individuals would be well advised to recall the principles of negotiation (or quickly refer back to this chapter). The class historian should also be noting when conflicts and bargaining occurred during the project, as well as its nature, how effectively it was addressed, and if and how it was ultimately resolved.



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