

EME 6705
Assignment 3: Avoid Issues at all Cost!

Group #: 5 Houman Rassa, Scenario #1

You have just conducted a project kick-off meeting with a client who really likes your team and has worked with you before, when your Lead Designer resigns.

1. What risk(s) can you identify in this situation?

- **Personnel:** Loss of key team member (Lead Designer) (Module 6, Slide 21; Module 9, Slide 5; Module 12, Slide 11)
- **Schedule and quality:** Delays or reduced quality due to personnel gap (Module 9, Slide 5-8; Module 12, Slide 11)
- **Knowledge loss:** Expertise and continuity issues (Module 9, Slide 13)
- **Client confidence:** Client may lose trust in team stability (Module 10, Slide 10)
- **Budget:** Additional hiring or contracting costs (Module 12, Slide 11)
- **Scope:** Internal scope creep as responsibilities shift (Module 12, Slide 16; 25)
- **Team morale:** Emotional and productivity impacts on the remaining team with a potential greater workload (Module 6, Slide 47; Module 10, Slide 10)

The resignation of the Lead Designer, immediately following the project kick-off, introduces multiple risks that span personnel, schedule, budget, and quality categories. The most immediate concern is the loss of a critical resource, which can disrupt workflow and delay deliverables while impacting design quality. This departure may also result in a knowledge and continuity gap, as the outgoing designer's specialized expertise and project insights are not easily replaced. Furthermore, the situation could erode client confidence, especially since the client has an established relationship with the team and may perceive this change as a threat to stability. From a financial standpoint, hiring or contracting new talent introduces budget variability, while internal scope creep may arise as remaining team members take on extra responsibilities beyond their defined roles. Lastly, team morale may decline due to the added workload and stress, potentially compounding performance challenges. Together, these risks threaten the overall health of the project and must be quickly assessed and addressed through a structured risk management plan.

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2. What can the Project Manager do to mitigate this/these risk(s)?

- Establish a Risk Mitigation Plan (identify, assess, mitigate, reassess) (Module 12, Slide 13-14)
- Document and cross-reference prior project work to prevent rework (Module 12, Slide 15)
- Ensure that each team is staffed appropriately to account for any staff changes (Module 9, Slide 7; Module 12, Slide 15)
- Conduct an exit interview with the lead designer to retain vital project knowledge
- Maintain transparent communication with the client (Module 10, Slide 10; Module 12, Slide 15)
- Appoint an interim lead designer to maintain continuity (Module 12, Slide 15)
- Reassess milestones and deliverables for schedule adjustments (Module 12, Slide 15)
- Provide team support and morale building (Module 6, Slide 32)
- Monitor and reassess risks regularly (Module 10, Slide 5)

To mitigate these risks, the Project Manager should immediately initiate a Risk Mitigation Plan (RMP) that identifies, assesses, prioritizes, and manages each potential threat. A top priority is to identify and evaluate risk probability and impact, maintain clear communication with the client, and share a proactive plan for continuity to preserve trust and confidence. The manager should conduct an exit interview with the departing Lead Designer to capture critical project knowledge and ensure minimal loss of expertise. Implementing robust documentation of completed work and cross-referencing systems will help to streamline the transition for whomever assumes the lead role. Assigning an interim lead designer from within the existing team can provide immediate stability and maintain project momentum while recruiting or contracting a replacement designer. For future risk mitigation, the project manager should ensure that there is enough experienced staff on critical teams. The manager should also review project milestones, adjusting schedules or resource allocations as needed to prevent quality decline without exceeding the original scope or budget. Additionally, focusing on team morale through support meetings, transparent communication, and acknowledging extra effort will help promote productivity and cohesion. Finally, the Project Manager should regularly monitor and reassess these risks, ensuring that mitigation actions remain effective and that similar disruptions are less likely to occur in the future.

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Scenario #2

You and your team submitted five large files of paper-based storyboards to your client via their collaborative portal, and a couple of days after posting the files, you realize that you posted the wrong version, a version that was not QAed. You have not heard from your client since the day you posted the files.

1. How could you have prevented this situation?

- Implemented document version-control and submission procedures within the Technical Approach section of the Project Management Plan (Module 7, Slide 17).
- Built formal QA and QC milestones into the project schedule to ensure every deliverable undergoes review before client release (Module 8, Slides 6-10; Module 11, Slide 8).
- Designate a QA reviewer or peer-check process, so that no file is uploaded without secondary approval (Module 11, Slides 12-13).
- Developed a Quality Plan outlining review types (content accuracy, instructional soundness, editorial, and technical functionality) to guarantee consistency across all deliverables (Module 10, Slides 12-16).
- Identified “incorrect file submission” as a potential internal risk in the risk section, with mitigation steps such as verification before posting (Module 12, Slide 29).
- Trained all staff on communication and file-management protocols defined in the PMP to reduce human-error risk (Module 7; Module 12, Slides 8 and 12).

In hindsight, this situation could have been prevented by strengthening our document control and quality steps. Clear procedures for managing drafts and tracking updated files would have helped to ensure that only the correct version of the materials was prepared for submission. Scheduling formal QA and QC reviews into the project schedule would have required each deliverable to pass quality review steps before release. Another layer of accountability could have been added by assigning a secondary reviewer for peer review. This would have added another level of safety against errors, while a more well-defined Quality Plan would have supported quality across content accuracy, instructional soundness, editorial, and technical expectations. Finally, identifying “incorrect file submission” as a risk and training all team members on communication and document control procedures would have minimized the chance of submitting the wrong version. Together, these preventive measures support accuracy and consistency, along with maintaining a good relationship with the client.

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2. What can the Project Manager do to resolve this situation?

- Contact the client immediately to explain the situation, apologize for the oversight, and provide the corrected QA-approved version (Module 12, Slide 15).
- Document the issue in the risk mitigation plan (Module 12, Slide 12)
- Review and update the quality review process to address the issue and strengthen the steps used to prevent similar problems in the future (Module 11, Slides 6-7, 14-15).
- Review the quality issue with the team, explain any updates to the quality review steps so everyone understands what needs to be done to prevent the problem from happening again (Module 11, Slides 6-7, 14-15).

From a project management perspective, the most important step in resolving this situation is to take accountability quickly and communicate clearly. The Project Manager should follow the impact analysis process outlined in the Project Management Plan by documenting what happened, reviewing how it affects the project's scope, schedule, and deliverables, and describing the steps that will be taken to address it. The client should be contacted immediately to acknowledge the mistake, have the circumstances explained to them clearly, and provide the QA version of the files along with an apology and assurance that proper procedures are now in place going forward. The Project Manager should also update the quality review process by clarifying the steps the team will follow to prevent similar issues from occurring again. In addition, the new issue should be documented in the risk section of the Project Management Plan. Sharing these updates with the team and explaining any changes to the process helps support accuracy and consistency. Maintaining clear communication and professionalism helps ensure the client understands how the project is being brought back on track.

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Scenario #3

You and your team just completed a draft version of a 20-hour course on how to use and maintain a critical piece of equipment for a military government customer. The course is getting ready to be posted for government review at the end of the week, when you receive notification from the government that the piece of equipment you developed the course for, is going to be upgraded. The government sends you a new user guide and other information related to this upgrade.

1. What kind of potential impact does this change cause the project?

- **Schedule:** May delay the government review milestone and require re-submission of revised deliverables (Module 4, Slides 14-16; Module 10, slides 10, 12, 15).
- **Budget:** Unplanned labor hours required for the updates to the course (Module 12, Slide 29)
- **Quality:** Invalidates portions of previously QA-approved instructional materials, requiring additional quality-assurance and validation cycles (Module 11, Slides 6-7, 9, 14).
- **Scope:** Represents a major external scope impact triggered by the client's decision to upgrade the equipment (Module 12, Slides 13-17). This could potentially trigger a change control process. (Module 12, Slide 32).
- **Technology:** Alters original scope, deliverables, schedule, and budget since course content, media, and assessments must be revised to match the new specifications (Module 12, Slides 15-17, 24).
- **Quality:** Invalidates portions of previously QA-approved instructional materials, requiring additional quality-assurance and validation cycles (Module 11, Slides 6-7, 9, 14).
- **Personnel:** The need to revise or adjust schedules as developers must update and review lessons and graphics within an existing timeline (Module 8, Slides 14-18; Module 9, Slides 19-23).

This equipment upgrade introduces significant changes that affect scope, schedule, cost, or resources that directly affects the project's established project plan. Since the client's new specifications alter the original course objectives and materials, the scope, schedule, and budget must all be updated/revised to reflect the added workload. Many of the previously developed and QA approved lessons, graphics, and assessments are now outdated, requiring a new round of quality reviews to ensure instructional soundness. These changes would tighten the schedule beyond reason and place immense strain on developers and SMEs who must revise and rebuild assets under impossible deadlines. Additionally, unplanned labor hours could impact the current approved budget. This change should be documented in the risk section of the Project Management Plan because it will affect cost, schedule, and client expectations if not managed effectively and could potentially trigger a change-control process. Finally, the project may face a delay in the government review milestone as adjusted deliverables are resubmitted for approval, creating potential effects on the overall timeline and resource allocation.

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2. What can the Project Manager negotiate with the client to resolve this situation?

- Determine if a course update or redo is required. Once the final deliverable is approved, the government cannot go back and change its mind. Will need to be addressed contractually at the cost of the government (Module 4, Slide 23, 43)
- Conduct a scope-impact and cost-schedule analysis to determine additional time, budget, and resource needs before approving rework (Module 12, Slides 13-15).
- Request a contract modification or amendment through the client's contracting officer to authorize new work and funding (Module 6, Slides 12-22, 24-25; Module 12, Slides 13-20, 22-24).
- Communicate clearly with the client, explaining the implications of the equipment upgrade, proposed mitigation, and revised schedule (Module 10, slides 10, 12-13, 15).
- Adjust the approved project plan, the project schedule, and budget to include new QA reviews, SME consultations, and media updates (Module 8, Slides 14-18; Module 11, Slides 7, 9, 14).
- Ensure quality consistency by planning a secondary QA cycle for all revised lessons and aligning new content with instructional soundness (Module 11, Slides 6-7, 9, 14).
- Document all negotiations, approvals, and lessons learned for future reference and maintain organized source files for potential future updates (Module 13, Slides 12, 14, 16-17).

Since this is a government contract a formal change process would need to occur since the majority of the deliverables have been approved. This change would be a breach of contract requiring renegotiation. The first step would be to conduct a comprehensive impact analysis to assess how the equipment upgrade affects the scope, budget, schedule, and resources. After that informational research, the PM can meet with the client to clearly present the implications and negotiate a contract modification that authorizes additional time, funding, and resources to complete the necessary revisions. Clear communication will be essential; the PM should explain how the team will update the course content, graphics, and assessments while maintaining instructional soundness. Once those negotiations are complete, the PM should update the project schedule and budget to reflect new deliverables, plan for an additional QA review to ensure all revisions meet content accuracy, and document all agreements in the project records for accountability. This process helps keep the project organized and ensures that the team and client share the same understanding of the updated requirements

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Scenario #4

You and your team just completed the initial draft version of a course and posted it for client review. As part of this project, you have an approved design plan and functional prototype that was well received by your client and the client's review team. After the review period is complete, you receive a list of requested changes from the client. Included in the change requests are significant changes to the course structure, the use of graphics and other media elements, and now the client wants to add new content that was not previously included in the design plan.

1. What kind of potential impact does this change cause the project?

- **Scope:** Major external scope creep by the client, changing the previously approved plan (Module 12, Slides 17, 18, 20, 22)
- **Schedule:** Development must pause for revisions, causing delayed milestones (Mod 12, Slide 18,20,22)
- **Budget:** Additional funds required for new work, redevelopment, and potential staff changes (Module 12, Slide 20, 22)
- **Quality:** Risk of quality decline if rushed to meet prior deadlines
- **Workload:** Prior work may need to be redone, or additional materials may need to be created and reviewed (Mod 12, Slide 20)
- **Personnel/morale:** Additional personnel may be required to execute the changes. Morale can decrease due to frustration or fatigue from rework and extended workload
- **Strategic:** Potential misalignment between instructional goals and client-driven changes requiring additional review by a senior designer. (Module 11, Slide 12)

The client's requested revisions represent a major external scope impact, triggering significant implications for the project's schedule, budget, and quality. Because the requested changes include new content, major structural revisions, and the redesign of graphics and media, the team must pause development and reevaluate deliverables, instructional design, timelines, and resource allocations. This rework will inevitably extend the project timeline and require additional funding to accommodate rework, new content additions, and potential staffing increases. If the team attempts to meet the original deadline despite these changes, quality could be compromised, particularly in the consistency and integrity of the course's strategic alignment. Attempting to absorb these changes without adjusting the schedule creates a risk of quality decline, as rushed revisions can compromise instructional consistency and strategic alignment. The changes may also undermine team morale, as designers must undo completed work and realign previously established instructional strategies. Strategically, the Project Manager must also evaluate whether these client-driven changes align with the original learning goals and evidence-based design principles or whether they are preferences without educational merit. While the client's evolving needs are understandable, these impacts threaten to derail the project's expectations from the contractual agreement, requiring formal modification and careful re-negotiation.

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2. What can the Project Manager negotiate with the client to resolve this situation?

- Pause development to update the design plan (Module 12, Slides 20,22)
- Conduct an impact analysis (schedule, budget, scope, quality) (Module 12, Slide 32)
- Initiate formal scope change process per contractual limits (Module 12, Slide 17, 32)
- Negotiate revised milestones and budget, justified by the new work (Module 12, Slide 17,32)
- Maintain open communication to preserve client trust and team morale (Module 10, Slide 11,12)
- Balance client satisfaction with project integrity and instructional soundness (Module 12, Slide 18)
- Ensure formal contract revisions are approved before resuming work.
- Meet with the team to ensure all members are up to date with the new plan.

To resolve this situation effectively, the Project Manager should stop the current project development and initiate a formal impact analysis to quantify the effects of the requested changes on scope, schedule, budget, quality, and staffing. Following organizational and contractual protocols, this analysis should initiate a formal scope change request, ensuring that the client understands the implications and that proper documentation supports any requested modifications. The Project Manager can then negotiate a re-structured project plan, updating milestones, deliverables, and cost estimates to reflect the revised design. If the client's budget or time constraints are inflexible, the project manager might propose prioritizing key changes by implementing the most critical updates first and deferring less essential ones to future phases, while emphasizing the areas where quality would degrade. Maintaining transparent communication throughout this process, with both the client and team, will help sustain client trust, mitigate shifts in team morale, and demonstrate professional control over evolving circumstances. By demonstrating flexibility with sound project management principles, the Project Manager can simultaneously protect the project's quality and instructional integrity and the team morale while still accommodating the client's evolving needs in a structured, contractually sound manner.

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Scenario #5

You have been assigned to a critical project for a medical customer with whom you have worked before on several projects. The scope of the project is to develop a highly engaging performance-based online course for medical staff. The client requested a full development cycle starting with a design plan, prototype, storyboards, then, a draft version of the course, a course pilot, and final delivery. The project was staffed with four instructional designers, including a new hire, and a Project Manager you have never worked for before. The project is going well, and the client approved the design plan and prototype. Everyone on the team contributed to the design of the course and provided good input. You are working on the initial storyboards, and because the deadline is rather aggressive, you divided up the lesson storyboards amongst all four designers. As part of peer review, you review the new designer's lesson storyboards and realize that the storyboards do not reflect the design that was agreed upon in the design plan. The storyboards are not well written and do not include enough interactions for the students. The deadline is six days away.

1. What kind of potential impact does this change cause the project?

- **Internal Scope Impact:** Addressing the issue will likely cost the company money that cannot be recuperated (Module 12, Slide 25) but the issue may still be remediated by the deadline.
- **Schedule:** The project may require an extension to meet the quality standards that should be in place. (Module 12, Slides 24-27)
- **Budget (Time & Staffing Re-allocation):** Unplanned labor hours could potentially require a change in budget to account for the time it takes to modify the storyboards (Module 12, Slide 29)
- **Quality/Deliverables:** A staff member's work is not meeting the expected level of quality so changes will need to be made to improve the quality of the work/deliverables (Module 12, Slide 11)
- **Personnel:** The new hire may require refamiliarization or additional training on the quality assurance measures in place. They may be removed from the project if they are unable to meet the position's requirements. (Module 12, Slide 11; 29)
- **Client Relationship:** If the deadline needs to be changed, the client may be disappointed (Module 6, Slide 47; Module 10, Slide 11-13)

If the issue isn't resolved quickly, internal scope impacts will affect the schedule, budget, quality, and personnel. The storyboards will need to be reworked since they do not align with the client-approved design. The PM will have to create a new internal schedule to address the issue and track its resolution. If the deadline remains the same, the PM may also have to reorganize staff or have staff work late to meet the deadline. Changes in labor hours may impact the budget. The new hire's work doesn't meet the quality standards as set out by the agreed-upon design. The PM will have to address the QA issue by either assigning a senior to work with the new hire directly or introducing quality reviews before delivering the final storyboards.

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2. What is the first thing you should do from a project perspective?

The first step (as an Instructional Designer) is to communicate the issue to the Project Manager immediately (Module 12, Slide 12), as they will be responsible for conducting the impact analysis and resolution (Module 12, Slides 7 and 33). The Project Manager will identify the risks associated with the storyboard issue and assess whether the storyboards can be resolved within the agreed-upon deadline. They would also be responsible for communicating with the client if an extension is necessary or for reallocating personnel if the original deadline remains in place. Finally, the PM will implement additional plans to mitigate future quality issues. For example, if it is determined that the error is due to the new designer's lack of experience, they may suggest additional QA training or pair them with someone with more experience. If the PM determines that the error was in the quality assurance plan, they might revise it so the team can identify quality issues sooner. As an instructional designer, refer to the design plan and quality assurance guidelines in place to determine the next steps for addressing the storyboards.

3. How can this situation be resolved?

- **Impact Analysis:** The PM will conduct an impact analysis to determine the effect of the storyboard redevelopment change. (Module 12, Slide 32)
- **Communicate with Client:** The PM should communicate with the client and be honest about any setbacks. (Module 10, Slide 11-13; Module 12, Slide 15)
- **Develop a risk mitigation plan:** Once it is determined whether the deadline will be extended, an internal schedule and action plan must be created to address the issue and prevent future quality assurance issues. (Module 11, Slide 9; Module 12, Slides 13 and 14)
- **Communicate with the design team:** The PM should ensure that all team members understand the expectations for correcting and continuing the storyboard design. (Module 12, Slide 29)
- **Complete the Deliverables:** The team revises and completes the storyboards according to the new action plan and schedule.

Most of the resolution will be undertaken by the Project Manager. The instructional designers will resolve the issue based on the impact analysis and action plan. As part of the impact analysis, the PM will meet with the entire team to assess the extent of the issue. This meeting will determine how many storyboards need to be reworked, what personnel will be required, and under what time constraints. The PM will determine if more time is required according to the impact analysis. Here, the PM can under-promise and over-deliver by informing the client that more time may be needed to rework the storyboards, but still attempt to meet the original deadline. The PM should ensure that if more time is necessary, it's because the team wants to deliver a quality product. Aligning the client's expectations with the realities of the project, as well as the PM taking ownership of the error, will help to alleviate pressure on the ID team. The PM will then develop an action plan and a new internal schedule. The new schedule should include peer review, both for the current storyboards and future deliverables,

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to avoid recurring issues. The PM may decide to re-allocate tasks or personnel to meet the agreed-upon deadline. A plan should be implemented that adds additional QA checks to the storyboard before the final peer review, to mitigate last-minute fixes. There may also be further training for new hires, as well as updates to the QA/QC communication protocols for all future projects.