

Issues – The Problems That Just Won't go Away

Question:

Help! I have a project with lots of issues. There are schedule issues, budget issues, morale issues and more. I think I may need to have a person that spends full time managing issues. All of these issues are causing havoc on my project. How can I get rid of all of these issues?

Jerry

Answer:

Jerry,

It sounds like the biggest issue is with you! Since you did not include your last name I will call you Jerry the Whiner. Remember that issues are really big problems with three characteristics.

- Formally defined. In other words you can document the nature of the issue. If you cannot document the issue you cannot resolve it. Also if you cannot document the issue you cannot blame someone else for it.
- Impedes project progress. Issues are more than normal problems. They are the big problems. So, when someone says “Jerry I have an issue with you.” It might not be an issue because it may not be impeding the progress of your project.
- Resolution is not in your control. In other words you need help from outside your team to resolve an issue. Probably with you every problem has this nature.

Let's now look at your situation Jerry. You say that you have schedule issues, budget issues and more. I think the biggest issue is probably with your lack of project management creativity. What type of schedule issues do you have? I suspect you are at risk of going past your end date. This is easily solved by changing the deadline date on your schedule, as well as the deadline date in your Project Charter. Push the date out in every place where it appears. Then there is no more issue – only a new end date.

Budget issues? See prior paragraph.

Morale issues? You should see some of my prior writings on morale. The key is to get a common enemy and blame this person for your trouble. Team members love to have someone to hate and it will be a rallying point.

It sounds like you have other issues as well. Hopefully you can start to see a pattern here. Issues should not be something that causes big disruptions on your project. Issues are simply short-term hurdles to overcome. My colleague Jerzzy always says “issues are just solutions that you have not uncovered yet”. I think this gets at the essence don't you think?

Jerry, I think the only true issue on the project is your lack of project management skills and creativity. If you want to move into the ranks of the world-class project managers with me, you need to stop whining about issues and just solve them. Really no one else cares.

Please contact me if I can be of additional assistance. Make sure you have a credit card handy since my consulting rate is \$250 per hour. My services come with a guarantee. I guarantee that I will charge you for at least four hours of my time.

If you cannot afford this rate you should seriously consider a new career – perhaps with your whiney attitude you would make a good wine taster at the local circus.