

Cerberus Corporation Case Study

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Overview

The Cerberus Corporation case study involves the transition of Cerberus' old office furniture to furniture that meets the new corporate standard. In consideration for a large number of department moves, and to save cost, the Facilities group has decided only to move office equipment that meets the new standard, rather than paying to move furniture that is scheduled to be replaced. As a result, an emotional conflict has developed between the Facilities Group Project Manager, Susan Steele, and one of her stakeholders, Jon Wood, the planning manager for the Photographic Chemicals Division (PCD), with regards to the relocation of dated file cabinets within the PCD department. With an atmosphere of tension surrounding the upcoming move of the PCD department, Susan is faced with a dilemma. She now has a stakeholder not willing to work with her and her team, and the project success is in Jeopardy. Based on the tense situation, what should Susan do to restore the project objective? Could this tension between her and Jon have been avoided? Should management at Cerberus involve themselves to resolve these types of situations?

Susan Steele

Susan has let the situation between her and Jon escalate to one in which emotion is driving the project, instead of the project objective leading the way. Susan had many options at her disposal. If I were Susan, I would:

1. Create a list of departments with outdated furniture and correlate that list with a list of departments scheduled for upcoming moves.
2. Schedule replacement furniture to arrive in coordination with any scheduled moves to help ensure any lack of utility would not occur.

3. Meet with department managers to explain the change in office furniture policy and standard, identify their needs and concerns, coordinate a timeline for any changes needed, and win their cooperation for the project objectives. Treating other managers with respect and being responsive to their needs will create an air of cooperation between the department and project team (Larson & Gray, 2014, p. 355).
4. Research used office furniture outlets to see if they would be interested in purchasing the older furniture. Any monies received would help offset the cost of the newer more ergonomic office standard.

Tension

The tension that exists between Jon and Susan is situational rather than personal in nature. Since this was the first meeting between Jon and Susan, it can only be assumed that Jon is unaware of the change in office furniture standard agreed to by management. Before the confrontation between her and Jon, Susan should have identified to which offices Jon and his team would be relocated. This factor is critical for two reasons: one, to establish whether or not those offices had already been upgraded, and two if those offices could even accommodate Jon's older cabinets. Also, Susan should have applied a little more emotional and social intelligence. Understanding Jon's emotional situation would have aided Susan in dealing with the issue and made it more likely that she and Jon could have arrived at an amicable arrangement. Either way, this conflict could have been avoided completely.

Cerberus Management

Cerberus management could have involved themselves to resolve this matter, but that would do little more than undermine Susan, the rest of the management team. As managers,

each should understand the bigger picture, when it comes to the organization, and promote a culture of respect and understanding for all to follow. If this had been the case, I don't believe Jon and Susan would have had an issue. Susan could have worked to help remove one more stressful item from Jon's plate by having her team help set the stage for the departmental move, thus freeing up Jon to concentrate on production issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Susan's first attempt at Project Management was not unlike many others in the fact that she was excited and wanted to do a good job. Where she failed was not creating a support network among other department managers. It's nice to be the project manager, but not at the expense of stakeholders. Since the stakeholders are to be the beneficiary of the project objective, they should have been informed and involved, especially since so many of them were currently involved in department moves. Had the project been explained and understood by all, I don't believe Susan would have received pushback from Jon.

References

Larson, E. W., & Gray, C. F. (2014). *Project Management: The Managerial Process* (6th ed.).

New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.