

Case Study 2 – The Disagreement

Background

Susan and Marcus could not agree on what direction the project should go.

Both had their own idea of what the client wanted and in what direction the project should be moving. After all, they were both experienced engineers and worked on projects before, in fact, similar projects to the one they were about to begin.

Susan had been with the company for a few years and Marcus had just joined the company.

The two met in the corridor, before meeting the client that afternoon, to go over the client's requirements of the project.

Both left the meeting believing that they each fully understood the client's needs. So, they were rather surprised to discover that each had a different version of the events from the meeting.

Susan had not taken notes during the meeting, relying on her prior knowledge of the client and the type of project they were always involved with. She had a good relationship with the client and they met before in the initial project brief with the client. Marcus, on the other hand, being the "new engineer" in the company had little background of the client and had taken comprehensive notes during the meeting.

Susan thought that the client had given the authorisation to commence development of the detailed requirements. Marcus' version of events was that the client wanted further options presented and that their decision to proceed will be based on the costs of the new options.

After several minutes discussing and failing to convince each other of their respective argument, Susan and Marcus did not agree and left the office disappointed.

The Incident

Discussion

- a. Is it usual for two or more parties in a project to get different impressions and understanding of the client's needs?
- b. What steps could be taken to reduce the ambiguity between members of a project team in future dealings with the client?
- c. What is the next step Marcus and Susan could take to resolve the situation?
- d. If the project begins following Susan's recommendation, what may happen?
- e. If the meeting with the client can be organised again, what process should they follow and what type of documentation should they use?
- f. Why is the scoping of the project essential for subsequent phases of the project lifecycle?