

PupPortal Project Risk Management Plan

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BMAL 714

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April 4, 2021

Authors Note

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Abstract

Risk management is an area of project management that addresses uncertain events or conditions. As risk develops it has a positive or negative effect on one or more project objectives, such as scope, schedule cost, or quality. A single risk, if left alone, can derail a project. The risk management process is a proactive and reactive exercise that is ongoing and does not stop because the project has reached its completion.

This assignment will evaluate an organization's project environmental factors that contribute to the project's risk and provide an outline on how to navigate these risks with the internal and external stakeholders. The organizational project being evaluated is a digital transformation plan for Dog Works Training Company. The reasoning for this transformation is that the company needed to find a way to offer their services when meeting with their clients in person was not an option. Voluntary precautions against COVID-19, as well as mandatory government restrictions, have forced companies to offer their clients the opportunity of meeting with them online or virtually, and thus many have attempted to integrate existing technologies into their daily work routines. The student will develop a risk management plan addressing the risks associated with the project and provide conclusions and recommendations based on the plan and the best way to mitigate the risks using the available remedies.

Keywords: risk management, risk management plan, digital transformation, dog training, virtual dog training

Introduction

A business owner faces risk every day. The success and failure of an organization will depend on how risk is handled. Risk management is a common and widely adopted practice, and practitioners use risk management based on the common assumption that risk management adds value to projects (Willumsen, Oehmen, Stingl, & Geraldi, 2019). Risk cannot be avoided, but it can be mitigated by transferring or mitigating the variables. A proper risk management analysis can shed insight into how successful a project may be. To achieve a measurable amount of success, an organization must determine its risk and utilize its allowances for the said risks.

Dog Works Training Company is undergoing a time of immense transformation and change, partly brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the inability to meet with clients in person regularly. Before the pandemic, it was rather uncommon to meet with clients virtually and online-only. Still, the organization was forced to adopt a digital platform overnight when the states began enforcing lockdowns and shelter-in-place ordinances in March 2020. This change will occur primarily in the digital platforms they use to work with their dog training clients for this project. By its very nature, a dog training business is successful because of its ability to meet with clients in person, demonstrate proper techniques in handling dogs, and coach the pet owner through hands-on exercises. Other changes have already taken place as part of the transformation, including job titles and descriptions, hiring new staff, and corporate leadership, but the digital offerings for virtual classes require the most scrutiny. There are many risks with implementing this type of massive change; there is no way that they can all be identified. We will attempt to address the most pertinent risks involved in this project.

When an organization identifies risks; it must first, determine its probability and the degree to which it will impact the project. Second, the firm must establish mitigating steps to

minimize the likelihood and then have a contingency plan in place that can be implemented before or after an event occurs (Shad, Lai, Fatt, Klemeš, & Bokhari, 2019). An effective risk management adoption has significant positive impacts on a businesses' overall performance (Shad et al., 2019). Muriana & Vizzini (2017) defines risk management as an area of project management that addresses uncertain events or conditions. As risk develops it has a positive or negative effect on one or more project objectives, such as scope, schedule cost, or quality. A single risk, if left alone, can derail a project. The risk management process is a proactive and reactive exercise that is ongoing and does not stop because the project has reached its completion.

Dog Works Training Company is developing a new digital platform called PupPortal for its dog training clients to offer its courses to dog owners locally and nationwide. This software will not replace the company's in-person offerings but will replace digital offerings on social media platforms and other platforms like Zoom and Skype. The most inherent risk is the ease of use. Most dog owners think of a dog program as a hands-on affair where they meet with a trainer or coach for some time and learn the skills and techniques to better communicate with their pet. This brings up the second risk, resistance. Suppose there is resistance from the digital platform's end-users to what the firm can do to meet the clients' expectations that sign up for the program. The third risk is access. It is difficult to surmise if the end-users will have the tools to access the program (e.g., high-speed Internet, proper hardware, an area to work with their pet) and in turn, use a digital platform.

When we consider the environmental factors that impact risk, especially in the dog training industry, we must remember the relationship that owners have with their pets. The pet industry is a multi-billion-dollar industry annually, and many pet owners treat their pets as a

member of their family. Training is just one part of the industry, and it faces environmental factors such as canine learning and welfare and is significantly influenced by husbandry practices and training methodology (Arnott, Early, Wade, & McGreevy 2014). Individual handling characteristics and the dog owner's relationship with their dog may affect the performance outcome (Arnott et al., 2014). Other factors associated with success and failure with dog training will be the impact cost of the program, the employment status of the end-user, and the knowledge of the existence of the digital platform.

The PupPortal Project

As mentioned herein, Dog Works Training Company is initiating a digital platform for their dog training organization. This transformation was brought on due to the business's restrictions because of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. While other organizations have changed over the past year, this digital aspect was the most significant piece of that change. By making these changes, the company is removing obstacles between clients and the business, among other things. This change will allow for new programs, services, and products to be created and the expansion of innovative thinking.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented global crisis that hit service industries hard (Suneson, 2020; as cited in Bartsch, Weber, Büttgen, & Huber, 2020). Notably, this global pandemic has disrupted service ecosystems, impacting the service sector (McKinney, 2020; as cited in Bartsch et al., 2020) and how service businesses operate in different ways (Finsterwalder & Kuppelwieser, 2020; as cited in Bartsch et al., 2020). Many service providers could no longer provide their services due to the lockdown measures or had to find creative adaptations and start operating in new ways (Tuzovic & Kabadayi, 2020; as cited in Bartsch et al., 2020). According to Schwertner (2017), this digital technology is affecting businesses and

people. Companies like Dog Works Training Company need to integrate digital technologies to transform their policies and practices. This change will lead to new strategies and plans to gain a competitive advantage and sustainability in the ever-changing digital world (Bartsch et al., 2020).

It is important to note that there is a difference between change and transformation. Ismail, Khater, & Zaki (2017) defines transformation as a fundamental change in organizational logic, which resulted in or was caused by a fundamental shift in behavior. Definitions often become blurry and misunderstood over time, and the term business transformation is not without exception. This term is not only misunderstood, but it is often misused. Often the term is used to explain simple changes in an organization, which is inaccurate, whereas they should be labeled as changes only. This misuse of the term causes stakeholders to underestimate the complexity and risk that come with transformation. This transformation can be complicated and comes with laborious undertakings.

Transformation is a process. For a transformation to be effective, the firm must incorporate the entire workforce and the end-users or it fails due to resistance. In today's ever-changing, fast-paced world, organizations need to take advantage of new opportunities as they present themselves. The firm must create an atmosphere of innovation and stay on a path of continuous improvement to prevent the need to go through massive transformations repeatedly and create a more robust customer-centric focus. Enhancing the ability to change will minimize the need for transformation as well. This is especially true in a post-Covid-19 pandemic business environment where it is unknown how next year's business climate will differ from the present. The goal of any transformation is to put the firm on track with its competitors and, by doing so, will allow for change without future transformations.

Transformation is also an adaptive process that comes about through thorough planning. This adaptive process allows for a more in-depth transformation process and provides a proactive approach when necessary, with more minor changes down the line. Having a process in place will enable the firm to improve established programs with future upgrades and changes quickly.

From a digital technology perspective, it is essential to note that one of the essential factors of transformation is to remember that it is about technology and process and the people involved. These people include both the workforce of the organization as well as the end-users or clients. If this barrier is not met, the transformation will fail due to resistance. When done correctly, there is a significant competitive advantage that can be realized through transformation. According to Smith and Reece (1990; as cited in Udriyah, Tham, & Azam, 2019), business performance and operational ability can satisfy the company's desires, stakeholders, and clients when they have a well thought out plan to transform the company. When done correctly, this can lead to sustainability and future growth and a significant positive relationship between innovation and business performance (Najib & Kiminami, 2011; Saunila, 2014; Vazquez-avila, 2014; Herman et al., 2018; as cited in Udriyah et al., 2019). According to Li (2020), digital technologies can facilitate pervasive changes in business models, and significant trends have emerged, including the adoption of multiple business models as a portfolio within one firm. This adaptation happens in organizations of all sizes when one firm uses various business models to serve different market segments, sell additional products, or use other models over time (Li, 2020). This practice is refined and extended through a recursive learning process and can be obtained through proper planning. During this planning process, an organization must address communication concerns with its stakeholders and take advantage of critical

opportunities. This comes down to a continual and open communication line, one of the vital elements of any business.

Gaining a competitive advantage is one of the cornerstones of business development and can be seen as a challenge. This competitive advantage is often the reason for implementing changes or going through a transformation. When done correctly, there can be a significant competitive advantage realized through transformation. Of course, there is a right way and a wrong way to approach achieving this advantage. A business manager must understand the process of what they are doing, how they are doing it, why they are doing it, and the full impact of what they are doing to all of those involved in the transformation process. This not only includes the workforce of the firm but all stakeholders, including the end-users and clients.

Lastly, forecasting transformation is an important step in the risk management process. It should follow a systematic approach. The organization must be considerate of their own environment and the environmental factors at the time in which they launch the transformation. In the case of Dog Works Training Company, this transformation is being implemented because the organization is at a turning point with its current offerings and the limitations brought on because of the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions on meeting with their clients in person. By making this change and transforming its offerings, the firm will remain competitive in its market. Anton (2018) argues that business transformation is filled with risks and challenges. Technology, resource allocation, and business models all play a pivotal role in positioning a company undergoing a transformational process.

Risk Management PupPortal Project Plan

The following risk management matrix was developed for the project of developing a digital platform for Dog Works Training Company to offer their dog training services to their

clients. The platform is called PupPortal. This matrix will look at three risks associated with the development of the program: ease of use, resistance, and access. There are three departments that each have their own roles and responsibilities in this project. The project manager is tasked with the overall coordination of the program and risk management. The project manager maintains the risk management policies and procedures, communicates the updates to each of the departments, tracks activities, minimizes moderate and high-risk activities, and provides training to the project team. The project team has the reasonability to identify, monitor, and manage risks associated with the project as well as reporting any new risks to the project manager right away. The project team works with the end-users of the platform and provides training to them on the workings of the program. The project team communicates with the end-user. The end-users (the firm's clients) use the platform, identify any issues with the program and complete all tasks assigned by the project team.

For the purpose of this risk assessment, this is a large-sized project with a budget of \$10,000 and of high complexity. Most of this budget will be spent on the equipment to film the live sessions with the clients, the development of the new website, and marketing the new digital program. The project involves all divisions of the company and external stakeholders and works with complex technology. This is a high-priority project for the business, and it has high visibility in that it is public-facing and provides crucial information to the firm's clients.

1. Pre-Mitigation Risk: Ease of use

Risk Severity: Tolerable

Risk Likelihood: Probable

Risk Level: Medium

Location: Project Manager

Mitigation/Warnings/ Remedies: The end-user (clients) usually expect a dog trainer to fix their dog. They want a plug-and-play solution to their problems. Most trainers add a fee for travel expenses when they come to a client's home, so the price for a digital program would be less expensive. A digital program allows the end-user (client) to create a connection with their pet that is vital to a trusting and respectful relationship. Most behavior issues can be solved over the phone in 45 minutes or less.

Post Mitigation Risk Severity: Acceptable

Risk Likelihood: Possible

Risk Level: Low

Acceptable to Proceed? Yes

2. Pre-Mitigation Risk: Resistance

Risk Severity: Undesirable

Risk Likelihood: Probable

Risk Level: High

Location: Project Team

Mitigation/Warnings/ Remedies: No vaccinations, no breed restrictions, no quarantine. A digital program can address “emergency” issues in real-time. End-users build a relationship with their dog that is one-on-one versus in a group setting. Less “scary” than working with trainer in an unfamiliar facility. The project team can develop exercises that owners can do with their dog to establish trust, communication, authority, and connection. If the digital/virtual program does not work out, the project team and (company) can pick up the dog for in-kennel training following proper Covid-19

protocols, or if the end-users are not local, the company can find a local trainer in their network.

The digital platform will provide quick sessions of less than 30 minutes. Easy to use technology. The end-users can have another person film the client and their dog during demonstrations. The project team can send the end-users a Bluetooth headset.

Post Mitigation Risk Severity: Acceptable

Risk Likelihood: Possible

Risk Level: Medium

Acceptable to Proceed? Yes

3. Pre-Mitigation Risk: Access

Risk Severity: Acceptable

Risk Likelihood: Improbable

Risk Level: Low

Location: End-users

Mitigation/Warnings/ Remedies: If Internet access or speed is an issue, the project team (company) can provide pre-recorded videos or offer the sessions on social media platforms like Facebook or phone-call-only sessions to the end-users.

Post Mitigation Risk Severity: Acceptable

Risk Likelihood: Improbable

Risk Level: Low

Acceptable to Proceed? Yes

Conclusions and Recommendations

Taking on additional risks can help an organization gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The world has faced several global economic crises in recent decades, but the current situation has affected the introduction of digital technologies in all areas of human activity more profoundly than any before (Shkalenko & Fadeeva, 2020). Dog Works Training Company has decided to take on a high-risk transformation project that will allow them to offer their dog training services to their clients on a digital platform. This service was not provided before the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns. The company needed to find a way to offer their services in a time where meeting with their clients was not an option. Voluntary precautions against COVID-19, as well as mandatory government restrictions, have forced companies to offer their clients the opportunity of meeting with them online or virtually, and thus many have attempted to integrate existing technologies into their daily work routines (Béland *et al.*, 2020; Spurk and Straub, 2020; Stürz *et al.*, 2020; as cited in Nagel, 2020).

Although no one can foresee how the rapid change to digital work will affect the work situation and spread of digital work forms in the future, the use of digital technologies has clearly increased, at least temporarily, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Nagel, 2020). Therefore, the question arises: Has the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation for Dog Works Training Company? By developing this digital offering, it will allow the company to adapt in the future without the need for another massive transformation. Recommendations would be to assume the risk that supports and moves forward the core business vision and strategy. The risks should align with the company's values. The firm needs to balance the negative impact with the positive result.

Transformation on any scale is a huge undertaking, but it can be a biblical process. Romans 12:2 (NIV) tells us that we do not need to be conformed to this world but be transformed by renewing our minds so that we can prove what the will of God is, that which is good and perfect. We are also reminded of how Peter suggested that we are supposed to be transformed through repentance and baptism. In Acts 2:38 (NIV), Peter tells us that by doing so, Jesus Christ will forgive us for all of our sins, and we will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Lastly, 2 Corinthians 13:5-6 (NIV) guides us in that there will be times in any business when our faith in people and the process will be tested. We cannot grow our business by ourselves. We will need to trust others with key roles to build the business that we desire, and with that desire comes risk. Finding an acceptable form of risk and how to mitigate it will allow us to test ourselves and succeed.

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