

**Dog Works Training Company and Risk**

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**Authors Note**

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### **Abstract**

Risk management is an area of project management that addresses uncertain events or conditions. A business owner faces risk every day. A risk may have more than one cause, and if it does occur, it may have more than one impact. Risk management is an ongoing process for an organization. It includes procedures for risk management planning, identification, analysis, monitoring, and control. Many of these processes are continually updated throughout the lifecycle of projects that the business takes on, and new risks can be identified at any time. This paper will allow Dog Works Training Company to understand better the relationship between risk, people, spirituality, security.

Furthermore, to develop a risk management plan for the organization that recognizes internal and external threats or events, the impacts of these risk events, and a mitigation and contingency plan to address the risk events. The organization must understand what risk they face and how to minimize their impact. Risk management is a fluid process, and it continues throughout the life of a project and a business's operation. A risk management plan was developed for the organization utilizing theories of leadership, scholarly literature, and New Testament scripture. It is recommended that Dog Works Training Company continue to use the tools and insight gained through the development of this risk management protocol as it continues to navigate through operational hurdles. It is recommended that the organization assumes the risk that supports its growth and moves forward with the core business vision and strategy.

*Keywords:* risk management, risk management plan, dog training, virtual dog training, spiritual risk, risk mitigation

## **Introduction**

Risk is defined as an event that has the probability of occurring and could have either a positive or a negative impact on a project should that risk occur (Shad et al., 2019). A business owner faces risk every day. A risk may have more than one cause, and if it does occur, it may have more than one impact (Wright, 2017). For example, a business may require hiring contractors for the first time. The risk event is inadequate training and awareness for contractors on client privacy for the small, family-run firm. The contractors do not know the process of securing information, thus creating a weakness. If one of these events occurs, there may be an impact on the project, the business, or its performance. Every project that a company partakes in assumes some element of risk, and a risk management plan allows a firm to develop the tools and techniques applied to monitor and track those events that can potentially impact the outcome of a project.

Risk management is an ongoing process for an organization. It includes procedures for risk management planning, identification, analysis, monitoring, and control. Many of these processes are continually updated throughout the lifecycle of projects that the business takes on, and new risks can be identified at any time. The objective of risk management is to decrease the probability and impact of events that are averse to the business. Before a project is initiated, the identification of risk occurs, and the number of risks may increase as a project matures. When a risk is identified, it is assessed to ascertain the probability of occurring, the degree of impact, and prioritization. Risks in a project may impact only one aspect of a business, while others may have multiple impact categories. The probability of the risk's occurrence and the degree to which the risk impacts a project will be the basis for assigning a risk priority.

As part of documenting risk, mitigation steps should be included to reduce the event's probability. A contingency plan should take place either before or when the risk event occurs. Typically, mitigation actions have a cost. An organization needs to weigh the cost of these mitigation plans and determine if the price of assuming the risk is justifiable. A contingency plan should be implemented before any risk occurs or as preemptive actions intended to reduce the impact of the risk.

### **The Organization**

For this paper, a family-owned dog training business, Dog Works Training Company, is in the position for significant expansion. For more than twenty years, the firm was operated by a husband-and-wife team, with the occasional help of their adult children and other trainers hired as contractors when the business was hectic. The company has developed its proprietary training programs in-house. The owners have invested time and effort in developing a dog training system that is much different than others in the industry. The business considers its training protocols, including the client on-boarding process, as one of the organization's most valuable assets as a form of intellectual property.

Interestingly, while most organizations struggled with lay-offs and other adverse impacts because of the worldwide pandemic over the last year, dog training and other pet-related services experienced a high growth rate because pet owners were at home more and had time on their hands to explore new activities with their pets. Not only were animal shelters cleared out, but many dog owners turned to dog trainers to help with problem behaviors and obedience for their pets. This posed two problems for Dog Works Training Company and conceivable risk events that have the potential to develop—hiring of multiple trainers for the first time in their history

and the development of an online or virtual training program, virtually overnight because they were not allowed to meet with their clients during the earliest days of the pandemic.

This paper will allow Dog Works Training Company to understand better the relationship between risk, people, spirituality, security and to develop a risk management plan for the organization that recognizes internal and external threats or events, the impacts of these risk events, and a mitigation and contingency plan to address the risk events. The organization must understand what risk they face and how to minimize their impact. Petterson Gould (2021) postulates that organizations risk damage to their established reputation, leading to vast repercussions for the company that may take years to recover from. In the dog training industry, reputation with their clients is paramount. Understanding how best to integrate risk management into an organization's operational plan will provide the business with the best possible outcome.

### **People and Risk**

A company must consider many things when building a risk management plan requiring people and information technology. As noted, with Dog Works Training Company's recent growth, the hiring of people and developing an information technology aspect through their business offerings are two highlighted improvements to the organization. The misuse of intellectual property, proprietary information, and policy and procedures for employees are just a few potential risks for the firm. Park (2018) submits, people are the ones who often commit acts against an organization, and even though Dog Works Training Company is small, they must take steps to protect their intellectual property and proprietary information in just the same way as a more prominent firm. Elifoglu et al. (2018) argue that while trusted employees, business partners, and insiders are trusted to do what is in the best interest of an organization, risk aversion and mitigation are paramount to the outcome of any potential projects and their success.

According to Elifoglu et al. (2018), a risk management process and effective system of controls must be developed by organizational leadership. When it comes to informational security, consideration must be given to known risks regarding the organization's assets. All information must be identified and a control system put in place to protect them. The conception, implementation, and operation of an integrated risk management system (RMS) must ensure ongoing monitoring of risk and integrate the risk response measures in a coherent risk strategy (Vasile and Croitoru, 2012; as cited in Rebelo et al., 2017).

With people and risk in mind, the organization must consider how to mitigate the risk events, and this must remain at the forefront of organizational planning. There will be a constant need to educate trusted employees, business partners, and other insiders. One method is a group accountability model, suggested by Kou and Stewart (2018), to educate staff and get new employees on board to follow any new policies and procedures and alert leadership to any suspicious activity. In this process, a group of collective individuals can be brought together to perform organizational tasks and allow a workflow that values interdependency rather than a top-down management approach while also relying on accountability (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003; as cited in Kou & Stewart, 2018).

### **Spiritual Risk**

Spiritual risks are the challenges and obstacles that the church faces in keeping up with the word of God or being in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. As Christians, we tend to think that God has a future for us and everything is under his control. Knowing the future and putting trust in Him allows the faithful to build a set of expectations around our beliefs. Armed with the premise that our future is destined, we can take risks, launch businesses and churches with a good deal of confidence that we are safely within the will of God, and nothing can go wrong.

This author struggles with spirituality and spiritual risk daily. In fact, before starting the Doctor of Strategic Leadership program at Liberty University, he was not a practicing Christian, and he struggles today with the best way to implement spirituality into his business. In the research for this project, this author found that spirituality is not necessarily linked to religion, and it is possible to practice a deep spirituality without necessarily being religious (Kourie, 2006). In developing a risk management plan for Dog Works Training Company, it is essential to include spiritual risk related to gratitude, hope, courage, energy, love, friendliness, and how the business interacts with its trusted employees, business partners, and clients. The company can use spirituality in the broader understanding and develop mitigations and contingencies to risk events before, during, and after they occur. This deeper understanding will allow the firm to subscribe to giving meaning and orientation to their business and the lives of their employees and clients. This understanding of spiritual risk will provide a path for the firm to allow growth in areas that they have never seen before.

### **Risk Management Plan for Dog Works Training Company**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this plan will be used to understand and integrate tools and procedures that will be used to manage and control the events that could harm Dog Works Training Company. This risk management plan can be used as a controlling document for managing and controlling project risks. This plan will address risk identification and assessment, risk responsibility, response, mitigation, risk contingency planning, and risk tracking reporting.

#### **Risk Identification and Assessment**

A risk is any event that can prevent a project from progressing as planned or from successful completion. Risks can be identified from many sources; some may be obvious, while

others will be identified before the project's kick-off. Other risks will be determined during a project's lifecycle and can potentially be recognized by anyone involved or associated with the project. Risks can also be the result of external influences that are entirely outside the project team's control. For Dog Works Training Company, the project manager has the overall responsibility for managing project risk. Project members and other stakeholders may be assigned specific areas of responsibility for reporting to the project manager. Every project team member must be aware of what constitutes a risk to a project and be selective to specific events that could positively or negatively impact the project. Simply, risk identification consists of determining what risks are likely to affect a project and documenting the characteristics of each, and allow communication between the project manager and the project team to bring the attention of the potential risks so that measures can be put in place to mitigate the risks.

A risk assessment is used to determine the probability that a risk will occur and the impact that it will have if it does have a cause-and-effect analysis. The cause is that the event might occur, while the effect is the potential impact to a project or the organization, should the event happen.

### **Risk Responsibilities and Response**

The responsibility of managing risk is shared amongst all the stakeholders in the organization. The project manager should have the decision authority for selecting whether to proceed with any mitigation strategies. The implementation of contingency actions lies with the project manager significantly when the process has associated costs or resource requirements.

For each risk identified, a response must be identified. It is the responsibility of the organization to select a reply for each risk. The business will need the best possible assessment of the risk and a description of the response to choose the correct response for each risk. The



probability and impact of each risk will be the basis for determining each occurrence's mitigation strategy.

### **Risk Mitigation and Contingency Planning**

Risk mitigation involves two steps: identifying the activities or actions to reduce the probability and impact of an adverse risk and creating a contingency plan to deal with the risk, should it occur. Recognizing the early steps to reduce the likelihood of a negative risk may be more effective than repairing the damage after a risk has occurred. Contingency planning is the act of preparing a plan or series of activities should an adverse risk appear and allows management to address uncertain events or conditions (Muriana, & Vizzini, 2017). Dog Works Training Company should have a plan in place that forces the business to think in advance about the course of action if a risk event occurs.

### **Tracking and Reporting**

As projects and activities are conducted and completed, risk factors and events will be monitored to determine if trigger events have occurred, indicating that risk is now a reality. Based on these events documented during the risk analysis and mitigation processes, the stakeholders will have the authority to enact contingency plans, if appropriate. Risk management is an ongoing activity that will continue through the life of a project, and planning provides an organization the ability to assess the likelihood and consequences of each risk correctly. (Pagach, & Wieczorek-Kosmala, (2020). This process will continue as activities and projects are developed within the organization. The firm will plan for newly identified risks, monitor triggers, contingency plans, and regular reporting. Some risk attributes such as probability and impact can change during the lifecycle of a project and should be reported.

**Risk Management Plan for Dog Works Training Company**

<b>Pre-Mitigation Risk</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Post-Mitigation Severity</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Acceptable to Proceed?</b>
<b>Technical:</b> Ease of Use	Tolerable	Probable	Medium	Project manager	Easy to use client portal, digital platform, phone support	Acceptable	Possible	Low	Yes
<b>Technical:</b> Resistance	Undesirable	Probable	High	Project team	No vaccinations, emergency issues in real-time, easy to follow lesson plans	Acceptable	Possible	Medium	Yes
<b>Technical:</b> Access	Acceptable	Improbable	Low	End-users	Pre-recorded videos, social media, phone support	Acceptable	Improbable	Low	Yes
<b>Technical:</b> System crash	Unacceptable	Improbable	High	Project manager	Frequent system back-ups, cloud-based access	Undesirable	Improbable	Low	Yes
<b>Technical:</b> Software virus	Unacceptable	Improbable	High	Project manager	Malware detection, frequent back-ups, cloud-based programs, third-party programs, and support	Tolerable	Improbable	Low	Yes
<b>Staff:</b>	Unacceptable	Improbable	Medium	Project manager	Develop a training plan for everyone involved that results in	Tolerable	Improbable	Low	Yes

Inadequate training awareness					group accountability at all company levels. Perpetually re-train employees and contractors				
<b>Staff:</b> Inadequate security policy	Unacceptable	Improbable	Medium	Project manager	Security policies that appropriately encompass all facets of creating a secure environment	Intolerable	Unlikely	Low	Yes
<b>Staff:</b> Inadequate privacy policy	Unacceptable	Improbable	Medium	Project manger	Privacy policy that adequately encompasses all facets of safeguarding access to private, sensitive, and proprietary information.	Intolerable	Unlikely	Low	Yes
<b>Spiritual Risk</b>	Undesirable	Probable	Medium	Project manager	Implement a more holistic approach to business operation, focusing on gratitude, hope, courage, energy, and friendliness with how the business interacts with its trusted	Tolerable	Possible	Medium	Yes

					employees, business partners, and clients				
<b>Time:</b> Scheduling Overruns	Undesirable	Improbable	Medium	Project team	Online-only bookings	Undesirable	Possible	Medium	Yes
<b>Time: Client</b> Changes Appointments	Acceptable	Probable	Low	Project team	Cancellation fee, rescheduling, missed appointments	Acceptable	Probable	Low	Yes
<b>Cost:</b> Unexpected Expenditures	Tolerable	Probable	Medium	Project team	Budget for overages	Tolerable	Improbable	Medium	Yes
<b>Cost: Budget</b> Exceeded	Unacceptable	Improbable	Low	Project team	Financing options, loans, shareholder capital	Improbable	Improbable	Low	Yes
<b>Resources:</b> Running out of resources	Unacceptable	Improbable	Low	Project manager	Budgeting, Cost-cutting measures, removal of programs or services	Improbable	Improbable	Low	Yes
<b>Resources:</b> Contractors quit unexpectedly	Undesirable	Probable	Medium	Project manager	Contractual commitments, always have contractors in training	Tolerable	Undesirable	Low	Yes
<b>Environmental:</b>	Undesirable	Improbable	High	Project manager	Lockdown protocols, alternative programming	Tolerable	Undesirable	Medium	Yes



### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Taking on additional risks can help an organization gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The world is a much different place than it was just a year ago. The global pandemic has caused many organizations to adapt and make changes that they may or may not have been ready for. With little understanding of what was to come, many businesses were forced to evaluate risk and develop a strategy for integrating a risk management protocol that many business owners have never faced before. This quick and urgent situation thrust many firms to take risks without thoroughly evaluating the mitigating circumstances to help that business move forward. Dog Works Training Company was no different. Before March 2020, a small, family-run firm operated with just a husband-and-wife team making all of the operational decisions. Almost overnight, the firm implemented a digital platform to offer dog training to their clients. The business owners had never thoroughly explored the risks of providing this type of digital technology. They are still in the initial stages of understanding the perplexities regarding ease of use, resistance to the technology, software, and other technical issues and have begun to develop mitigating factors to lower the severity and likelihood of risk events relating to this technology.

Another risky endeavor for Dog Works Training Company was hiring and training contractors, trusted employees, and other trusted insiders for the first time in their history. Being a small firm for more than two decades, the business closely held its proprietary training programs in-house. Now that they are building up their team, they are evaluating the risk associated with new resources and cost demands, training of these new contractors, and how to mitigate any shortfalls in training protocol best. A risk assessment was used to determine the probability that a risk will occur and the impact that an event will have if it does happen, a cause-

and-effect analysis will be implemented. This was done for the organization regarding risks related to time constraints, cost and budget issues, and other resources. One unknown variable at this time is the environmental impact of what a future holds in the post-pandemic business landscape, and the firm has taken steps to assess and evaluate what a future lockdown could look like and how to mitigate the risk best now that the business has been through the process before. Spiritual risk has always been an unknown for the small family business. Before this author enrolled in the Doctor of Strategic Leadership program at Liberty University, he was not a practicing Christian. He had little understanding of what spirituality looked like and how best to integrate that into a business's operational plan. Through proper analysis, the firm now understands the importance of establishing a caring, more holistic approach to business operations, focusing on gratitude, hope, courage, energy, and friendliness with how the business interacts with its trusted employees, business partners, and clients.

Regarding this spiritual risk, the Bible and even scholarly literature are replete with examples of how spiritual risk can be defined. Scholars have found that spiritual risk is built into our culture and its ever-changing need to change (Fitchett, 1999). The Bible expounds on Moses, Abraham, Job, Jesus, Solomon, and others in how they utilized risk in their endeavors. The story of Solomon is an example of if people wait for life to be perfect, opportunities will be missed (Merida, 2015). A business owner cannot wait for their ideal customer. A farmer cannot wait for ideal weather before he sows his seeds, and a father cannot shield his children from the inequities of today's society. Christians understand that faith glorifies God. Romans 4:20 (NIV) suggests that faithless acts are sin because they do not glorify God as trustworthy. In Corinthians 10:31 (NIV), Paul said, "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Hebrews 11:6 (NIV) says,

"without faith, it is impossible to please Him." This implies that there is no faith without risk and the inability to follow God's word in all its glory.

Risk management is a fluid process, and it continues throughout the life of a project and a business's operation. It is recommended that Dog Works Training Company continue to use the tools and insight gained through the development of this risk management protocol as it continues to navigate through operational hurdles. It is recommended that the organization assumes the risk that supports its growth and moves forward with 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 results. Lastly, Proverbs 21:15 (NIV) emphasizes that once an organization recognizes the threats, they must be diligent in planning for them. Otherwise, they may find themselves in a compromising position. Proverbs 22:3 shows clearly that the foolish fail to recognize risk, and the wise take adequate precautions to deal with the risk as they unfold proactively.



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