

CASE STUDY “SHAPE UP OR SHIP OUT”

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ABSTRACT

The case is about an IT professional , employed with one of the India’s top telecom software companies. It highlights , how the irrational behavior of an important team member, deputed onsite , for an important project , can lead to problems for other team-members, project manager as well as the timely delivery of project. Now , the problem is that the project has to be completed on time otherwise it would involve heavy penalty . Project Manager has to carefully deal with this person who is neither performing nor behaving properly that too when getting the proper resource may pose problem.

Keywords: team , behavior , team members

“Oh no , not again” , this was for the third time in the week Rohit was receiving a complaint about Manoj’s misbehavior from latter’s colleagues .

Rohit was a Project Manager with one of the leading Indian IT firms. He was recently deputed for an Onsite project to one of the African countries. The project was to be completed in different phases from different African countries/locations. Though the locations were not as attractive as what an average IT professional would look forward to , because of the security and other reasons, there was little choice . The non-acceptance of this project would lead to the billability issues of the team members. And the company was already facing the problems in getting new Projects.

The resources were carefully picked up from the company’s pan India offices .

“This project seems to be a problem child right from the beginning,” thought Rohit to himself.

First , there was a lack of information regarding the details like paper-work and other procedures that the members had to comply with , as this was for the first time the company was delving into business in that continent.

Secondly , the allowances and other benefits were not clear to the resources who were to join the project.

Thirdly, the project did required certain crucial resources with rare skills in a short period of time , which indeed was a major problem.

Despite these difficulties , many apt resources were identified and a lot of convincing had to be done for them to take up this project. The selection of the resources was also done promptly so as to meet the deadlines. Even Manoj was selected as per the requirements in terms of qualification , skills, experience etc.

Project was to be completed in different stages , at different locations and Rohit was made responsible in the capacity of Project Manager for the team-members of all the locations.

Finally the resources reached their respective destinations and the project started. Initially ,despite the teething troubles ,things seemed to be gradually falling in place. All the resources started performing to the best of their capacities till the time the complaints started pouring in from Manoj’s team members.

Manoj was initially with Rohit at the base location of the project . Thereafter, as per the project demands he was asked to go to another location. His stay at base location was also not very helpful for the project. But that time Rohit was able to manage his behavior to certain extent.

The trouble started , when he shifted to another location, where he started absenting himself from the knowledge transfer sessions. These sessions were a kind of training sessions where all members were expected to be present . Though he was warned but then , at that point of time this issue was neither seriously taken by the Project Manager nor Manoj himself.

The work assigned to Manoj was never completed on time , which affected the tasks and jobs of others , that were dependent on his job. He never took the accountability of job ownerships assigned to him . On being questioned by his team-mates , he used to ask the person “who are you to ask me ?”. Even Rohit got the same reply many a times.

This unprofessional behaviour of his , started getting reflected in personal life as well. Manoj and his team-mates were given accommodation in a hotel on a sharing basis. He was never accommodative in his behavior even with his room-partner . At one of the weekend outings , his irresponsible behavior had caused a lot of trouble to his team-members till midnight.

One such argument prove to be the last nail in the coffin. The argument which he had with one of the team-members ended up in a small fight amongst them and the team-member got physically hurt. Now , the other team-members pleaded with Rohit to get Manoj out of that location.

Though Rohit had tried to handle the situation amicably, right from the beginning , but this was getting difficult. He spoke to Manoj, even discussed an improvement plan , involving his seniors. But situation only got worse.

All the opportunities provided to Manoj for improving his behavior prove fruitless. Now Rohit decided to get his Senior involved in the matter. Of course , Manoj was skill-wise an important resource but neither he behaved himself , nor he performed. Hence Rohit sent a detailed email to his senior and to HR of the Company , to decide whether Manoj should continue with the project or not , as his presence may affect the other team-members.

QUESTIONS:

Q.1. If you were Rohit , what decision would have you taken in such situation ?

Q.2. What steps would you take if you were the HR Manager of the company ?

Q.3. Why do you think Manoj behaved in this manner ?
