

Global Project Strategy (011) (603) 862-3374

Pull-the-Plug or escalate commitment. McCain's decision is not unlike the decisions that project managers must make when their projects are in crisis.

Boeing's Dreamliner is behind schedule. Bringing in strategic partners distributes some risks but increases others.

McCain's Project Dilemma

Republican presidential candidate John McCain announced his choice for a running mate, Sara Palin, and unleashed a media storm that refused to go away. Within hours it was disclosed that her 17 year old daughter was pregnant, that she was under investigation for her role in the firing of her sister's husband, that she was a member of a group known to favor withdrawing Alaska from the United States, and that her husband was arrested years before on drunk driving charges.

Some conjectured that McCain failed to vet his running mate and would take her off the ticket. Others saw the selection as an endorsement of the more conservative wing of the party.

What to do? Pull-the-plug and drop her from the ticket or escalate the commitment to her as a VP candidate?

The Republicans chose to escalate their commitment and unleashed a media barrage that responded directly to concerns

expressed about her qualifications. They made it clear that Palin was the right person for the job, one whose life experiences reflected those of most people in the country.

What is interesting is that prior to the Palin announcement, political pundits said that the Republican chances for maintaining control of the White house were slipping away. Choosing Palin was seen as a bold move to reverse the slide. Continued

Boeing Dreamliner Project Falls Behind

Boeing's new project, the 787 Dreamliner, is about 15 months behind schedule, and the airlines who have already committed to purchasing 1,000 planes are not very pleased.

The new aircraft promises 20 to 30 percent more fuel efficiency than its predecessors, and as a result customers are quite anxious to receive delivery

The fuel saving are attributed to a much lighter aircraft that uses

space age composites and more efficient engines.

What Happened? Why the delay?

According to an interview with CEO Jim McNerney in Business Week "... on the supply-chain side we ran into some issues. We overestimated the ability of our partners to get things done with the timing we had hoped for. Our oversight of that environment was not as

good as it could have been."

Outsourcing is, of course, critical in complex projects. No one company can do it alone. But the danger, as we all know, is the loss of control. Unless close tabs can be kept on suppliers, and unless a real strategic alliance can be established with suppliers along the critical path, a few suppliers can hold up progress,

91 South Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801
USA

PHONE:
(603) 862-3374

MOBILE:
(603) 767-0480

E-MAIL:
bshore@globalprojectstrategy.
com

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.globalprojectstrategy.com

McCain's Project Dilemma ... Continued

The decisions that had to be made that first weekend were familiar to project managers facing a crisis. Should the plug be pulled or should the commitment to the project be redoubled?

Pulling the plug is difficult because it admits failure. In many cases it can even be a career killer. In the case of McCain, pulling-

the -plug (Eagleton was pulled as a VP candidate after it was learned he suffered from depression) would raise questions about his ability to make decisions. It could cost him the election. (McGovern lost after Eagleton was pulled from the ticket).

The other choice was to

escalate commitment. This can be an equally risky course of action when a project is headed in the wrong direction.

McCain chose escalation of commitment and the evidence from Palin's convention speech made it clear that he made the right decision. But, the real test is the outcome of the project in November.

Project Success at the Olympics: Would Agile Work?

There was considerable concern about China's ability to host the Olympics.

As it turns out it was a huge success and like the Olympics in South Korea, many years before, Beijing proved to be a showcase for the new China. It was an elaborate TV commercial that China was ready to join the developed nations of the world.

In achieving this success, at least two project management issues are worth noting. The first is that an autocratic and centralized government

can achieve results that are very difficult to obtain in more democratic and decentralized countries. In China they obtained land by eminent domain, lavished the Olympics with extraordinary architecture and building projects, cleaned up the city, put new cabs on the street, restricted auto traffic driving to eliminate congestion and improve air quality, and ordered factories to close.

The second issue is that China created high-performance teams by building national spirit and supporting years of training. In a country that

never had a rowing sport, they won the gold medal. And they won more medals than any other country including the US.

What is very interesting is how these two issues contrast our project culture from their project culture.

Their project culture reflects centralized authority, control, and discipline. Ours reflects collaboration, shared responsibility and innovation.

Would "Agile" work in China?

Team Members Choose Their Own Projects

How do you reorganize a company to take advantage of young people who want more control over their work, including the freedom to choose their own projects?

Meetup Inc is a company that has created a web

site that allows users to set up local groups for a wide range of social and political interests. When workers became disgruntled at the way the company and their jobs had changed over time, the president decided to throw out the organization chart and put its 52

employees in charge.

Sounds radical, but it seems to be working. New products and new members .. they now have 5 million ... suggest it was a risk worth taking.