

## Transcription - January 2023 - Case Study - Resourcing A Project Team member Outside Your Organisation

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we're going to look at a case study. We haven't done a case study for a while and this one is about team dynamics, I guess in the broadest sense.

What we have is a situation where there is a project for organization A, they have determined the members of the project team. They have one vacancy which, in terms of compliance and transparency for the project, they have determined should be filled by someone from organisation B, a completely unrelated organisation. Organisation B is an organization that specializes in the skills for that particular role.

They've gone back to their management and said this is the team we've put together, this is how it will work. The management feeling is that whilst choice of the representative from organisation B is appropriate, they shouldn't be on the project team but there should be a liaison person on the project team whose sole responsibility, sole activity, is to liaise with this external person.

My concern, first of all with that, is that everyone else on the project team has a job to do that's related to the outcome of this project. The single person is simply there as the post office box, if you want to put it into those terms, to relate information to this external person. That's where we sit the moment. I'm not happy.

The first thing that comes to mind is to say, why? I mean, obviously they need someone who is impartial, independent and they agreed they need that organization B person. Why can't that person be part of the team? What's the threat? What's the perceived problem with that?

Let me tell you the reason they gave. It was that people in the organization might want to know information and it will be better for them to ask someone from within the organization than this person.....you people can't see the face that she's making, I have to lift her jaw off the table! (Yes). That was the reason - that people in the organisation will be more comfortable asking someone from their own organisation about the information that they wanted, rather than someone who was on the team but was from another organization.

Well, I see it lots of problems with that. I think they need the help, that's why they're going externally. I think now they're putting so many obstacles and

denying the opportunity to get the results they're looking for, which is independent advice, contribution. The biggest danger in doing that and if say, I hope nobody approves this liaison person idea or that process because that is creating a lot of opportunities for error, breakdown in communication, personality, all sorts of trouble and no advantages. Let's say if that happens, the person from company B who's trying to do that job as best as they want to for you guys, that would be an issue because they don't get all the information, they're kept out. If they see the whole picture, if they have transparency and inclusivity, they still keep their independence because they are not answerable (they can't be told what to do) but they will do their job based on absolutely wider information and facts. Being part of the group, the project group will give them that and will give them the opportunity to have a dialogue and not work in isolation.

It's a bit like if I come to you to ask your opinion, you say no, no, don't ask me directly, we go through this other thing. This way it's going to a "lost in translation" situation. I think being part of the group is a bigger benefit than not. Otherwise, if they have concerns, that means they don't like the concept and they shouldn't have anyone externally because they're wasting people's time and money.

My biggest concern with the whole scene is that it seems to reflect a culture in the organization that anyone can ask anyone anything and I think if you're the leader of this project team, you have a responsibility to put your foot down and say anyone in the organisation who wants information about this project comes to me or comes through the liaison, the secretary of the group or whatever role it is that is the communication portal, that's where enquiries go. It's not open for everyone in an organization to ask anyone who's on the project, what are you up to now? That's poor management, it's lazy management (it is) my husband leaves, two, missing, and it only leads to misinformation and problems.

Agree because what happens is, if you ask just anyone, they will give how they see it and not necessarily all the facts, they might have missed something themselves. So, the most important thing is leadership as you said and to have a process for communication and update an inclusivity. This way everybody agrees that this is where we're at. If they need information outside the project team, then you'll get it from the authority of that information. Don't just say, I used to work in that section and they blah blah. That's not good enough. Go and find out what it is now so that you can have facts.

I think too, in these times where we are really facing skills shortages, that organisations are going to have to think a little more broadly about having teams

like this. The decision is not just to have a team like that, but it's to look back at the culture of the organization and the processes that are there and see whether that's going to support this kind of a team because going forward, teams are going to be made up of all sorts of mixtures of people and organisations. You have to have some infrastructure that supports that model because it's very different to the model we have used up to this point in time. (Agree).

You've heard our views. Neither of us are happy about this situation so don't take it on. It is fraught with danger because you are muddying the waters about communication, about structure, about hierarchy and those things are important, in terms of getting the right information from the right people, to the right people about anything that you're doing.

So if you're in that situation and that has helped you or you need more information, you can always drop us a line. For now I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.