



EPICENTRAL

A Newsletter from Epicenter Development Group highlighting ideas that improve organizations

Welcome to Epicenter Development Group's newsletter, EPICentral. The purpose of this newsletter is to highlight fundamental ideas that have helped organizations develop and maintain great manufacturing and service operations. We hope that you find our EPICentral newsletter helpful, and we would welcome your comments on its content.

The Contingency Planning Game

Regardless of your position within your organization, there is usually an element of planning involved in every job. Projects or assignments need to be completed on-time, stay within an established budget and meet the desired objectives. If you're familiar with Murphy's Law, however, you also know that outside forces often come into play which make it difficult to meet deadlines, stay within budgets and sleep well at night. One tool that we have used in the past to alleviate this situation is called the Contingency Planning Game.

How the Game is Played:

The purpose of the Contingency Planning Game is to identify potential issues that might occur during a project or assignment and identify solutions to either reduce the possibility of the issue occurring (the best option) or determine a "work-around" for handling the issue if it does occur. The steps for playing the "game" are as follows:

1. Create a project plan that identifies the activities required to complete the project or task. As part of this plan, also identify who needs to be involved in completing the individual activities and the expected activity durations.
2. Once the plan has been completed, identify those activities that would be mostly likely to "derail" the project schedule or budget - **people or other required resources that are limited, people that you do not have direct control over**, and/or **activities with a lot of uncertainty**.
3. For each of the defined activities, create a series of "game cards" that identify what

Contingency Planning – Game Card

You have a problem. The customer calls and needs you to start shipping the product a month early.

What do you do? What contingencies could you put in place now to handle this potential issue?

might happen. An example "game card" is shown to the right.

4. Once you have completed the "game cards," gather the appropriate people and do a brainstorming session to identify and select potential solutions. Each person reads the potential issue off of a card and the group brainstorms and then ranks contingency plans that could be put in place to eliminate or alleviate the potential issue.

Considerations:

- This is a great way for organizations to evaluate the "robustness" of a project plan. Good project plans will have been designed in consideration of potential issues before they begin.
- The tool is scalable whether one person is doing an assignment or it is a project that involves many people. For smaller projects, consider using a simple checklist or a standard set of "game cards" that list typical potential issues.
- One typical countermeasure for handling potential project issues is to add "slack time" into the schedule (additional time that might be needed) and add contingency funds to a budget to cover potential cost overruns.
- Simulation modeling of a project plan is another tool that is available to prioritize where contingency plans need to be established and predicts how successful a project will be.

Next Steps

If you would like more information on this topic or other similar types of tools, please contact Bill Proctor with your request at wproctor@epicentergroup.com or 216-702-0952. You can also find previous issues of EPICentral at [Newsletters](#).

Mr. Proctor also speaks on a variety of problem-solving and system design topics that can help companies significantly increase the success and profitability of their businesses. If you are interested in having Bill speak at one of your upcoming meetings/events or would like more information on any of the speaking topics, please visit [Speaker Services](#) or you can email sales@epicentergroup.com.

Epicenter Development Group is a unique consulting firm that seamlessly integrates the disciplines of Systems Engineering and Organizational Analysis & Development to create practical design solutions to your toughest challenges. It is on the cutting edge of problem-solving solutions and the creator of a unique process called GreenRoom Engineering. This process adds greater value and cost savings for clients as compared to traditional engineering methods.

William Proctor, Epicenter's founder and president, has provided services around the country to more than 100 companies

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