

The Challenge of Egypt: A Project Management Simulation

Introduction

"The Challenge of Egypt" is a project management simulation developed by Gaming Works. This interactive one-day workshop is designed to address persistent challenges in project management by bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Despite the existence of established frameworks such as PMI and Prince2, many projects fail to achieve their intended results due to ineffective application of these methodologies. Common issues encountered include poor sponsorship, weak user engagement, inadequate planning, and a lack of leadership and soft skills.

Workshop Overview

The simulation immerses participants in ancient Egypt, 4,000 years ago, where the Pharaoh, threatened by war, seeks to ensure his afterlife by commissioning the construction of a grand pyramid. As the project manager, participants are tasked with realizing the Pharaoh's vision, navigating changing requirements, environmental challenges, diseases, and other realistic obstacles that mirror those found in actual projects.

Key Roles in the Simulation

- The Pharaoh: Acts as the customer, represented by the game facilitator, and communicates the project's vision.
- The Priest: Serves as the intermediary, translating the Pharaoh's needs to the project team.
- The Project Manager & Team: Comprises participants who assume roles such as architects, risk managers, and specialized teams responsible for the Quarry, Nile transport, and Construction.

Simulation Structure

The simulation unfolds in a manner that closely resembles a real-world project lifecycle, consisting of several key phases:

- Initiation: The Pharaoh outlines his vision to the Priest, who collaborates with architects to design the pyramid complex. The design, along with expected costs and timelines, is then presented to the Pharaoh.
- Planning: The Project Manager works with all teams to develop a comprehensive project plan, incorporating realistic pricing and timing. A Risk Manager conducts a thorough analysis to identify and address potential threats.
- Execution: Once the Pharaoh approves the plan, the team proceeds through three distinct stages of execution. Throughout these stages, participants encounter various challenges, such as unexpected events, change requests, customer meetings, and escalations.
- Reflection & Improvement: After each stage, the team reflects on its performance and agrees on process improvements for the next phase. The simulation concludes with a "lessons learned" session, during which participants define actionable takeaways.

Learning Objectives

The primary aim of the simulation is to develop practical project management skills and enhance team dynamics. Participants will gain experience in:

- Translating project management theory into effective practice.
- Establishing a project organization with clear roles, tasks, and responsibilities.
- Conducting risk analyses and implementing appropriate countermeasures.
- Monitoring project tolerances, including budget, time, scope, and quality.
- Resolving project issues and adapting to changes as they arise.
- Engaging with and managing the project board.
- Understanding the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary for successful project management.

Who Should Attend?

This simulation is suitable for a wide range of participants, including:

- Students who have completed project management training and wish to put their knowledge into practice.
- Existing teams looking to assess and improve their current project workflows.
- New teams at the start of a project, seeking to establish effective collaboration.
- Organizations in search of an engaging and effective team-building exercise.

- Anyone aiming to develop soft skills such as communication and collaboration.

The Agile Variant

An Agile version of the simulation is available, tailored to support Agile PM or Prince2 Agile training. In this version, the Pharaoh provides a fixed budget and timeline. The team must conduct interviews to elicit user stories and create a product backlog. The project is then delivered in three time-boxed sprints, with sprint reviews for product acceptance and retrospectives to facilitate continuous learning.

Workshop Details

- Duration: Approximately 7 hours.
- Participants: 8 to 12 participants per team, with scalability for events involving 50 or more participants.

Dare to take the challenge and transform the way your team manages projects?