MISS102
In-class Exercise for Week 12: Conflict Management at MediSys, Inc.

Objective: Understand the dynamics of conflict in a troubled project.

Learning Outcomes

• Weigh the pros-and-cons of different strategies for dealing with project conflict.
• Analyze the implications of a chosen strategy on the desired project outcome.
• Get “meta” and think about how you arrived at your group’s solution.

Instructions

In groups, you will develop a plan to decide the best course of action for Valerie Merz of MediSys, Inc. She needs to do something about her troubled IntensCare project, but has three relatively unattractive options:

• Go up and take the issue to senior management
• Go down and try to take over the project
• Go across and try to resolve the conflicts with the other team members

Once she chooses an option, she has to figure out how to do it.

This was the third question posed for this week’s analysis, so everyone should already at least have some notes about this issue.

Part 1: Review (Individual, 5 minutes)

Review your list of pros and cons for each course action. Narrow your individual list down to two to three pros and cons for each option.

If you feel strongly that one of the options is a particularly good, or bad, idea, make a note of that.

Part 2: Decide on a Course of Action (Group, 20 minutes)

In groups, decide on a course of action for Merz. Your plan should include the following:

1) A strategic recommendation selecting “go up,” “go down,” or “go across” as an option (you must choose one!). A clear rationale should accompany the recommendation.

2) A plan for restructuring the IntensCare team based on the option selected by your group. Who should provide direction for the IntensCare team? Who should be included on the steering committee?
Part 3: Group Reports and Discussion (Class, 30 minutes)

Each group will briefly report (maximum: 3 minutes) on their recommendation and the rationale for that recommendation.

Then we will discuss, as a class, the following:

1) Does your recommendation help resolve the conflict over the “modular design” issue? If so, how? If not, what additional measures are necessary to move the project forward?

2) Did there appear to be convergence within your group around the best solution? If there were disagreements, how did you resolve them?

1) Let’s say this activity was worth 15% of your final grade. How would this have changed the dynamics of your discussion? Would you (as an individual) have argued more forcefully for your point of view?