Staying Out of the CEO’s Line of Fire: Reducing Employee Benefits Project Risks

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Context
Five Immortal Words

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“_________’, ___ ______ __ __________”
Our Agenda

- Define
- Detail
- Deepen
- Dive
- Discuss
Postmortem versus Premortem
Three Classic Reads


Project Premortem Cycle

- Assemble team—“a problem has occurred”
- Develop list of reasons for failure and risks
- Categorize risks—develop strategies for action
- Strengthen project plan
Seven Steps to a Successful Project Premortem
Step 1: Understand . . . What a Project Premortem is . . . and isn’t!
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A project plan + A risk analysis  = **Less** project risk
Step 2:
Start... From the beginning
Step 3:
Fire . . . It starts with “SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG”
“Johari Window” of Risk

- **Shared**
  - What both I and the team know
  - What I know, but the team doesn’t know

- **Blind**
  - What the team knows but I don’t
  - What none of us know

Adapted from “The Decision Book – 50 Models for Strategic Thinking”, Mikael Krogerus, WW Norton, 2012
Step 4:
Insurance . . . Obtain Senior Leadership Buy-in
Step 5:
Invite . . . Non-project Team Members
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team “Cognitive Biases”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Assumption</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor Bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All factors have been considered”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Reality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting initial inputs first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Solution</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t trust first impressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from “The Decision Book—50 Models for Strategic Thinking”, Mikael Krogerus, WW Norton, 2012
Step 6:
Focus . . . On all the Details . . . and the Solutions
“Rumsfeld Matrix” of Risk

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Don’t Assume You Know It ALL
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“Risk is what remains after we think we’ve thought of everything”

Step 7:
Repeat . . . Mid-project
Swiss Cheese ("human error") Model
James Reason (1990)

Common Examples

- Data Breach
- New technology
- "Simple" plan changes
- New Vendors
- New Plan Offering
- Mailings to Homes
- Eligibility and Data Files
- ID Cards
- Fine print in contracts
- “Rate/Contribution Calculations”
- Training
- "Buy-out offers"
Going from Theory to Reality
Seven Steps Recap
Remember the “Project Management Triangle”

Thank You!

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Thank You

Questions?