

1. Your elearning modules were successfully launched in your organization. It's time for you as the project manager to hold a lessons learned meeting. Prepare an agenda for this meeting. What questions will you ask those at the meeting?

The meeting will begin with a Welcome from the Project Manager followed by the goals of the session. After reviewing a few ground rules, the following questions will be asked:

- What worked well? What should be repeated in future projects?
- What didn't work well?
- What were the challenges to this project?
- How did learners react to the learning?
- Was blended learning a good option?
- Did the project remain in scope?
- What should be done differently in future projects?

Answers to these questions on what should be repeated and what should be changed will be prioritized. It will be decided who will be responsible for taking action to avoid challenges in future projects. The meeting will end with a review and summary of the answers to the questions.

Think carefully about who you will invite and list them here. There's no right or wrong answer but do justify your choices.

For this lessons learned meeting, I will invite the sponsor, SME, and IDs. The sponsor and SME had high power in this project, while the IDs had low power, and I think it would be a good exercise for them to exchange experiences and observations to ensure that any future working relationships and projects are just as successful. Additionally, there will be a neutral note taker at this meeting to record all decisions, suggestions, and feedback that will be taken into consideration in future meetings. I would also hold a separate meeting just for the production team of instructional

designers to talk specifically about the tools and assets used. These issues would not need to be raised in the larger meeting.

2. It's March 2017 and you're a week from the company-wide launch of the elearning modules. A system administrator in the IT department has sent you an email informing you that the LMS server needs to be upgraded with a series of patches so he has to take it down for a few days. He says if all goes well there shouldn't be a problem with launching the modules. But as a PM, "shouldn't be" isn't good enough. You have a collegial relationship with the IT person but he's never been very proactive in his communications. You're getting ready to meet with him. To prepare yourself for this meeting, you start jotting down some notes. What are those notes? Will you take anyone with you to this meeting? If so, who?

Instead of starting to panic that the launch will be a disaster, I start thinking of questions to ask the system administrator to better understand the issue with the server:

- Is this an essential update and must it be done right now?
- What is the backup plan in case the server is down during the launch?
- Will the IT staff be available during the launch to help with problems if they arise?

In order to better explain how important this launch is, I would bring the project sponsor with me to the meeting. I would also inquire about delaying launching the modules until it is certain that the server is working correctly after the update. We cannot sacrifice the quality or scope of the elearning modules, however, we may be able to move the constraint of time slightly by delaying the launch.

3. The launch of this blended learning new employee orientation has gone so well that senior managers in the organization are starting to pay more attention to your department. There were plenty of challenges but you and your team handled them with aplomb. This has apparently not gone unnoticed. Your manager wants you to do something special for your internal team to acknowledge your collective hard work. She's given you a budget of \$5,000. What will you do?

A few weeks after the launch, I will organize a catered party to celebrate the success of the launch. I will send the invitation to everyone involved in the project in recognition of their hard work, as well as the senior managers in other departments. Even if the senior managers decline the invitation, they will still become aware of the success of this project and the project team.

The party will provide a chance to acknowledge the individual achievements of the team members and to thank them for their hard work. This will increase motivation for future projects. Team members will also be given a small gift as sort of a project memento to remind them of the success of this project. With the rest of the money, I will give cash bonuses to each team member.

4. Thinking back to the PM knowledge areas covered in this class, reflect on and describe any new insights that you plan to use on the job or in your life.

I plan to focus more on the define and plan stages in future projects and be more thorough when describing why and how a project is being done. Starting with the end in mind - and what exactly the outcomes of the project should be - and working backwards from there will help me to visualize the scope of the project better. I will definitely think more extensively about all of the stakeholders involved as more people are affected by certain projects than I initially thought. Brainstorming the possible risks for each project will also be valuable in preventing problems, or at least dealing with them better, later on.

Stakeholder management competency will also be very useful to me in the future. I had not thought much about the soft skills needed to manage the people involved in the project, although I was aware of the need for effective communication. The sheer number of lines of communications depending on how many people are involved is almost overwhelming to think about, but I feel that I have a better grasp on how easy it can be for communication to break down and how important it is to prevent this.

Additionally, Daniel Goleman's emotional intelligence was an interesting topic to explore. I feel that people are not learning how to manage their emotions in a useful

way, which can lead to too much conflict. A lack of empathy is also a problem in that people are having difficulty seeing things from the perspective of someone else, and this prevents them from wanting to help others. Luckily, emotional intelligence continues to be learned throughout life, so this is an area that I will always be able to improve upon.

5. Your sponsor sends you an email and asks you to prepare a cost estimate for "round 2" of these elearning modules. This is the first time you've heard of a "round 2" but you're excited to hear he wants more. He wants the estimate for a meeting he's going to in 3 days. What's going on in your head initially? And what PM best practices will you cite when you are crafting your response?

The first thing that comes to mind is Lou Russell's "bad news early is good news" and that it's good news that the meeting is in three days instead of one day. Before crafting my response to the sponsor, I will notify the team members that there might be a round 2 of the elearning modules so that they can be as prepared as possible.

In my response, I will refrain from giving an "on the fly estimate" and explain that although we can try an analogous approach and look at the estimates from round 1, my team will need more information about what exactly round 2 entails (content, deadlines, etc.) before being able to determine an estimate. I will also offer industry standard estimates based on variables (units, duration, etc.), but remind him that each project is different. Although I will probably be pushed to provide a number, I would give a range instead.

I will explain that the bottom-up approach of estimating by task is usually the most accurate, but it is also more time-consuming than estimating by phases or deliverables. Determining estimates is not an exact science, and we should build in a contingency fund just in case to account for this.