Demonstration Class: On Schedule

Starting point

1. In your experience, what are the key factors in managing a project (however big or small)?
2. What can go right with a project? What can go wrong?
3. What projects are you currently working on in or out of work?
4. What progress are you making? What problems have you had?

Read the following problems that can be part of a project and match the suggested solutions to the problems.

1. Not enough planning time

The planning stage may not be as exciting as the development stage, but it's just as important, if not more so. Lack of planning will always result in changes later on, eating up money and man-hours.
Solution:

2. Communication breakdowns

Anyone who runs a business knows that communication is absolutely vital to the success of any project. Breakdowns can occur between the project team and the end users (i.e. the clients or employers), and there can also be problems between the individual members inside the project team.
Solution:

3. Unrealistic budget

If your budget is unrealistic to start with, it will be impossible to stay within budget. As you run out of money, departments fall behind, resources are slow to arrive, and (because of budget constraints) the project, once again, goes out of control.
Solution:

4. Not checking progress

As the project goes along, the unexpected happens. Various different people use their own ideas to fix these challenges and, when you're on the point of finishing, you're suddenly faced with a huge list of problems that need to be addressed and you miss the deadline.
Solution:

5. Not reviewing existing standards

If most or all of your projects run behind schedule and over budget, ask yourself if you maintain the same standards time after time. Do they work? If you keep doing the same thing, you are likely to get the same results.
Solution:

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A. Never assume that everyone understands. Make sure that everyone can talk to each other and share information. Resolve any conflicts straight away or you will run into a lot of problems and complications later on.

B. Take time to review how projects have gone in the past. Keep a running list of what worked, what didn't, and how to do it better next time.

C. Spend longer on research and preparation. Make contingency plans, and don't just concentrate on making it to market before your competition. If you get there first but your product is faulty, you'll get nothing but complaints and a bad reputation.

D. Create an accurate forecast. Outline ways to develop better upfront planning of the resources. Make sure you allocate enough funds to each department and keep track of spending.

E. Define 'checkpoints' throughout the project so you stay on track. Monitor everyone's performance and prioritize tasks when there is a problem. Addressing problems quickly will save time later. You can still make the launch date you've set or even finish ahead of schedule.

Vocabulary

Do you associate these phrases from the texts with successful or unsuccessful projects?

Run out of money - Within budget - Behind schedule - Upfront planning - Over budget

Miss the deadline - Stay on track - Out of control - Budget constraints - Lack of planning

Make the launch date - Accurate forecast - Ahead of schedule - Unrealistic budget

Successful	Unsuccessful

Choose the correct answer.

1. Good communication will help you to _____ conflict quickly.
2. When time is short, you must _____ tasks and do the most important ones first.
3. Try to _____ track of spending so that you don't go over budget.
4. Make sure you _____ sufficient resources to the different departments.
5. Always expect the unexpected and _____ contingency plans.

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6. It is important to _____ progress at every stage of a project in case there are any problems.

Listening

Context

The Tech-Tariff project is a collaboration between MMT-Tec (service provider) and Anvikon (mobile phone manufacturer). The aim is to launch a high-tech phone with new advanced features from Anvikon in combination with MMT-Tec's new tariff which includes free videophoning and multimedia message services. Sarah and Michelle from MMT-Tec and Ian from Anvikon are meeting to discuss the progress of the project.

Listen to Part 1 of the meeting and make notes about the items on the agenda.

Tech-Tariff Update Meeting - 2 Sept

Agenda

1. Update on marketing activities (MMT-Tec):
   - Launch date _____
   - Advertising campaign _____
   - Launch party: Venue _____
     Catering _____
2. Update on Anvikon activities:
   - Handset _____
3. Project schedule _____

What phrases does Sarah use to ask for an update on the project?

What phrases do Sarah and Michelle use to clarify the problem with the battery?

Listen to Part 2 of the meeting and answer questions 1-3.

1. Why didn't Ian like the idea of finding another battery supplier?
2. Why didn't Sarah like the idea of not mentioning the battery life?
3. Which proposal did they finally decide on?

Ted Talk: Why good leaders make you feel safe

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_why_good_leaders_make_you_feel_safe

Source: Business Result 1st edition - Upper Intermediate Student's Book

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