

What project management tools & techniques should be used?

#1. Unavailable customer

The project manager completed the design specifications process for a new application and received approval from the client to begin development on the project. During the first stages of the development the project manager discovers that some elements of the design are not compatible with the existing infrastructure and must discontinue development until she can review the design issues with the customer.

The project manager has attempted to contact the customer numerous times but has been unsuccessful in scheduling a meeting. The customer has multiple other projects in progress and travels to other sites frequently. To make matters worse, he does not return phone calls until late in the evening.

His last message to the project manager stated that she should be able to figure out a solution because that is what he is paying her for and he doesn't have time for these "trivial matters". The project manager has a penalty clause in her contract that provides for a substantial penalty for missed milestones. What actions can be taken to manage this situation?

#1 Instructor Notes

Project management tools that could help include the following:

1. RAM - Who has approval rights?
2. SME list – Who else could advise? Can you move forward after getting their best judgment?
3. Network diagram for showing the schedule effect of this communication delay

Other recommendations:

1. Leave voice mails that progress the conversation. Instead of just saying “call me” – be sure to state what your question is as specifically as possible. Maybe they could just leave you an answer voice mail back.
2. Pay attention to the fact that the client called this a trivial matter. If it is, maybe he knows something you don't. Maybe it truly is not worthy of stalling the project.
3. Know your escalation path.
4. Document the concern, the effect on the schedule, and why you decided to handle it the way you did. Figure out who the appropriate people are to send this to.