

*What project management tools & techniques should be used?*

### *#3. Abrasive team member*

Mary comes into the project manager's office very upset and insists that one of the other project team members, Sam, is creating very bad chemistry on the team and must be taken off this project. Sam knows his stuff and his work quality is very good. However, the abrasive way he delivers his frequent unsolicited technical input and feedback to others is creating friction on the team and distracting them from what they have to do.

"He's gotta go", Mary insists, "immediately!" As the project manager listens to Mary's complaint, it occurs to him that he has absolutely no other work for Sam to do if he is taken off this project. However, Sam's project deliverables have been highly praised by the project's sponsor. What should the project manager do?

### *#3 Instructor Notes*

Good leaders learn that everybody has to work with team members that they don't like and they figure out how to respect them and also to create a workable situation. Ask Mary to keep contact to a minimum and keep discussions limited to the tasks at hand. Tell her that she should talk to Sam and also tell her that you will talk to Sam. Determine who should have their conversation first. And explain that unless the conversations with Sam go very wrong, he will likely be staying with this project through to the end of it and make sure that Mary understands the benefits of managing this way.

There is a rule in project management, that those who start on the ship stay on the ship until the project is over.

Talk to Sam and try to convince him to be less abrasive and more respectful. Get him to understand that his abrasive treatment is interfering with the morale of the project team. However, in the case of personality conflicts, realize that you can modify behavior but you can't change a person's core personality. Ask him to route his technical suggestions for other peoples work through you. And if he wants his suggestions to go "on the record" that you will document and communicate his suggestions appropriately. They may become a part of the quality management plan, communication plan, and risk plan, and change control.

Through doing this you will be establishing ground rules, clarifying roles, responsibilities and objectives and also using your project management tools and techniques appropriately.