

Project Management Case

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Due date

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Part 1

The Deepwater Horizon project was a joint venture between British Petroleum (BP) and Transocean, the world's largest offshore drilling contractor. The project's goal was to drill an oil well in the Macondo Prospect, located approximately 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico (James, 2016). The drilling started in 2009, expecting to extract up to 50 million barrels of oil over the project's lifespan (James, 2016).

The Deepwater Horizon rig was located in waters over 1,500 meters deep, and the well was planned to reach a depth of around 7,000 meters. The project was expected to generate significant revenue for both BP and Transocean, as well as create jobs and stimulate the economy in the Gulf of Mexico region (James, 2016). To achieve its goals, the project relied on a team of more than 100 workers, including engineers, geologists, and drill operators. The project was equipped with state-of-the-art drilling technology, including a blowout preventer designed to prevent oil spills in the event of an accident.

The Deepwater Horizon project fits the definition and description of a project due to its unique goals, specific timeline, and defined budget. The project had a well-defined scope, with specific objectives and milestones to be achieved. The objective of the Deepwater Horizon project was to extract oil and gas from deep beneath the ocean floor safely, efficiently, and environmentally responsibly while generating significant revenue for BP and its partners (White et al., 2012). It was a complex undertaking involving a large number of stakeholders, with a significant financial investment required to complete the project.

The Deepwater Horizon project was considered a failure due to the catastrophic explosion that occurred on April 20, 2010, resulting in the death of 11 workers and the largest

marine oil spill in history (Robert, 2010). The explosion was caused by a series of technical failures and human errors, including a flawed well design, inadequate safety measures, and poor communication between BP and Transocean (Robert, 2010). The project failed to achieve its goals due to the environmental and economic impact of the oil spill, totaling over \$62 billion in damages (Ritchie et al., 2018). The triple constraint of time, cost, and scope was unmet, as the project exceeded its timeline and budget while failing to achieve its objectives.

In conclusion, the Deepwater Horizon project was a significant initiative that resulted in a catastrophic failure due to a combination of technical and human factors. The project's failure highlights the importance of proper risk management, safety measures, and communication in large-scale projects. It serves as a cautionary tale of the potential consequences of ignoring risks and failing to manage complex projects properly.

Part 2

Several steps would be taken to help the Deepwater Horizon project team do things differently to avoid a similar catastrophic explosion incident that rendered the project a failure. Firstly, the project leadership need to prioritize safety measures and implement a robust risk management plan. This would involve conducting thorough risk assessments and identifying potential hazards and consequences. It would also ensure that all project team members communicate correctly and follow safety protocols and procedures. As Richtie et al. (2018) note, the failure to have robust communication and system inspections led to the failure of the project and more casualties than expected.

Secondly, the project leadership can establish clear lines of communication between all stakeholders, including BP, Transocean, and the regulatory agencies responsible for overseeing the project. This would involve ensuring that all parties have access to up-to-date information

and are aware of any changes or developments in the project's status. This would ensure that any issues or concerns can be addressed quickly and effectively, minimizing the risk of delays or costly mistakes.

Thirdly, the project leaders must invest in additional training and development programs for project team members, particularly in safety and risk management areas. This would ensure that all team members are adequately prepared and equipped to handle any challenges or emergencies during the project. This way, in case of an emergency, all workers know what they need to do to ensure little to no damage.

In measuring project success, using a combination of metrics to assess the project's progress and impact could prove effective. These would include measures of safety performance, such as the number of incidents or accidents that occur during the project, as well as measures of environmental impact, such as the volume of oil spills or other pollutants released. Additionally, I would use financial metrics, such as the project's cost and revenue generation, to assess its overall performance and success. The success or failure of the project would be determined by its ability to achieve its goals while minimizing risks and negative impacts. This would require a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved in the project and a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in project management practices.

References

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