

ARC 555
MANAGEMENT ASSIGNMENT 2

THE LIVE PROJECT: LESSONS LEARNT

Live Project 01: Scarborough to Whitby Old Railway Line

Group Members:

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0.0 Methodology

Group members individually prepared answers. A collective meeting was held at which each member tabled 3 answers to each of the below headings. The group then democratically decided upon the chosen 9 and the answers were written up in smaller groups before collective collation.

1.0 ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT THAT WERE SUCCESSFUL

1.1 Brief management and Client Communication

The brief we were given at the start of the project was fairly broad; to masterplan the old railway line. Upon our first meeting with the client it became even broader with just a call for an injection of ideas. After learning more about the project we took a range of ideas to an open meeting with the client, various stakeholder groups. From this meeting we judged which aspects were more of a concern than others and so formulate a tighter brief for ourselves. Regular meetings with the client were not feasible. We did however have a meeting at least every other week, and in addition were in contact via email and telephone. What was important therefore was the level of preparation we made for each meeting, often making mini presentations of the work each time, displaying lots of progress and providing the client with lots to comment on. This way it helped to keep momentum in the project.

1.2 Providing A Product

We split the brief into three areas, masterplanning, prototyping and marketing and allocated a group to each, plus a dedicated team producing a book. Through the division of labour each group was able to make faster decisions and improve productivity. As such at the end of the project we have produced a masterplan for the 23 mile line, site specific proposals, a modular furniture system with construction manual, a brand, an online website with downloadable material and finally a book which encompasses all this information. Since the end of the project the client has used our work as leverage to fund fruit tree planting, which is a fantastic re-enforcement of the value of the work we have done.

1.3 Workshops

We had a number of workshops during the project with a variety of stakeholders, including clients, local focus groups, general public and local school children. The purpose of these varied from a tool to generate ideas, to research expectations and aspirations for the line, we also used the workshops as a forum to make our design proposals and receive feedback. All in all, these workshops/events were hugely successful and real highlights.

2.0 ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT WE WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

2.1 Budgeting

We did not have a potential budget from the client and in hindsight asking for one would have been helpful. An outline cost would have made it possible for us to propose more financially realistic schemes for the client to use for future funding applications. The outline cost would also have helped us refine the scope of the brief.

2.2 Cut-off Point

We failed to rigidly define the limits of our involvement in the project. As a result our final presentation /document handover was delayed. This caused difficulty in communication within the group as work on other projects reduced the amount of time available. With a second chance we would more assertively arrange our programme to fit within our timetable.

2.3 Single Point of Contact to Client

Initially we arranged a single point of contact within our group, and a single point of contact with the client. However, while this was a good idea, this was probably not the best method as our contact was overwhelmed with the volume of communications and our client contact departed for holiday.

3.0 ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT THAT DIDN'T WORK

3.1 Group Management

One aspect of poor group management was the failure to establish a leader at an early stage in the project, this led to there being a poor clarity of direction in the early stages and resulted in a slow start. An additional problem caused by the need for leadership came about when the live project team divided into smaller groups. There was a lack of communication between the sub-groups that resulted in some repetition of work but more significantly an ignorance of other groups' progress. More regular internal 'show and tell' meetings along with a more active blog would have improved this area.

3.2 Handling the Whole Site

In the context of the six-week project the team failed to address the full twenty-two mile length of the track to the level of detail one might have hoped. Both the distance and the varying contexts along the line were a problem. In particular the rural sections and the smaller villages were overlooked. While a masterplan was produced, it would have been better to focus on detailed work at a couple of sites.

3.3 Poor First Impression

Confusion about the start time of the initial meeting led to the group being late and consequently the client developed an image of the group as having a non-professional attitude to the project. This did however improve and develop into an excellent working relationship... although sharper initial timekeeping could have avoided the early blip!