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Assignment 3

1. There are multiple potential reasons for why team members would be assigned to more than one project at the same time. One reason would be that there are simply not enough resources to allocate different people to different projects. In this case, a company may not be able to get more resources in time for a project and people working on other projects will be assigned to new projects. Another reason would be that someone is specialized in one area that other workers do not know enough about. If this is the case, their expertise will be needed on multiple projects, because no one else is capable of doing the work, which could be mission critical. Also a core team may be assigned to multiple projects together if it is proven that they work well together and can deliver what is needed efficiently. Despite these reasons for allocating team members across multiple projects, there are potential drawbacks. The big issue is potential scheduling conflicts. When planning, a project manager can account for the fact that worker is working on multiple projects and only account for them completing so many hours towards the project, but they cannot consider potential conflicts in the multiple projects, especially since the schedules might change. If the a team member has critical path work to complete on both projects, and those tasks fall during the same time for both projects, the team member can only complete one at a time. This could cause a delay in one of the projects. Another drawback may be that if there are different project managers on the different projects, they both may be asking for extra work out of a team member. If deadlines are approaching and the managers expect extra work to be completed, this will put a team member in a situation where they have more work than they are able to complete, which will delay the projects.

I believe that if the project managers of the projects that a team member is on are all communicating about their shared team members, it can be as efficient as only having members on one project at a time. Though it would be ideal to have a core team work on one project at a time and focus all their energy on it, since they would not waste time switching back and forth from projects and dealing with conflicting schedules, it may not be realistic in a real world setting where resources, talent and time are limited.

2. When deciding on what is in the scope of a project, taking a consultative approach would be helpful. The reason for not having a full participative approach is because the client of the project will always have the final say in the scope of the project. They are the people funding the project and the ones that can benefit of experience loss from the project. Though a directive approach would not be beneficial to anyone, because consulting team members and the project leader when deciding on scope is necessary to determine the potential cost and resources needed for a specific tasks. If the client wants something in scope, but they consult the team and find that it will be extremely costly, they will be more inclined to leave it out of scope for the benefit of the project.

3. For weekly status reports, there should be two main portions. One portion of the report should resemble a current period report. This will report on progress of the activities and tasks that were planned for the past week. This would allow a project manager to assess what got finished and went according to schedule. If something did not go according to schedule, they can decide how to approach it next week, or in the future, by looking at what went wrong this week. The next part of the report should be focused on the long term of the project. This would more closely resemble a cumulative status report. Although for a long project, this section may not change much from week to week(maybe even enough that it does not need to be included every week, but only on some) it would allow a project manager to assess the long term goals of the project and determine whether or not they are being achieved efficiently and whether or not the project is on schedule. They would be able to track trends in progress and trajectory. Some variance numbers in this section would help with this assessment.