April 17, 2006- "Projects" class notes

Reports are all graded. They were very good.
I want to talk about projects tonight.
Laslo’s partner took this class about 3 years ago as a distance learner.
Having projects within a program – in each of the projects, you make a case. Every team needs to do an action plan.
Financial is the first language of any manager. They love to crunch numbers. This is the way that business is done. Environmental manager always want to change the accounting system, but there is nothing to change. Accountants will let you change projects.
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• If you change the projects they still need to be expresses in dollars and employees understand money more than anybody.
• They spend what they make and they are very good at making the business case, but they do not know accounting.
• An action plan is more than a checklist. Who is going to do what, when.
• What is the purpose of this project? What are the benefits? What have we learned and how can we use that knowledge?
• There should be between 8 and 11 projects and if you are managing more than 12, managers get overwhelmed.
• Leadership is very important, but employees still need to be able to think for themselves.
• In some cultures, females cannot write action plans. But they can write a draft action plan that gets approved by managers.
• This works out well because employees can take part and management gets more good ideas.
• Student – do the employees get credit for the action plans
• Bob – No, but they get more respect by the management.
• They need to do projects for three years for it to take shape

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• People in these meeting do not argue with each other because they are interested in what is on the paper.
• The arguments are over what is on the paper and no one is blamed.
• Student – you are writing it down so that no one can change the wording.
• Bob – Employees do not crave recognition. They want a secure job and want to be happy.
• Employees do not want to be plant managers. It is a thankless job.
• When you go home at night, do you think of work? We do not.
• Employees who are working on projects are more productive.
When an employee is asked why he/she never mentioned an idea before, they give one of two answers. No one ever asked me – I thought it was a dumb idea.

Sustainability is very complex. Employees want to feel good about the project, not credit. Instead of giving a bonus, companies can give an extra day of with pay.

You can measure intangibles. If an employee feels good about a project, you can measure that financially.

Activity based cost – how much does it cost to do overhead inventory. You can do activity based costs on projects, but not across the board.

A good way to implement a project is to look at what others are doing and take what works to use on the project. Different people implement these projects in different ways. Anything that goes to the top of the list you have to do. Within the second or third year, they understand more about the process. In some cases I know that a project will not be successful. You can change the action plan at any time. You just need to give three weeks notice and the managers have to approve the change. Management can make suggestions as well.

Everyone has their own way of measuring things. GRI has to come to 50. You have to explain if you can't measure one aspect of GRI.

Most people will read the foot notes of an annual report. People who read Enron's footnotes knew that something was wrong.

Student – which method is used most?

Bob – GRI is used the most. It was developed by Tellus.

Every one of the measurements is bad. So it is a measurement of doing less of a bad thing.
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Wouldn’t it be nice to measure doing more of a good thing?
You live a good life by not sinning – doing less of a bad thing.
Environmental people are fatalists.
We have to be critical thinkers.
People in public health spend most of their time putting out fires. There should be more predicting of certain things.
I don’t believe that there is a lot of prevention in public health. Most of it seems reactionary.
Student- what kind of framework do you recommend for Universities.
Bob – Schools are businesses. Schools are opportunistic. They see other schools doing something so they want to do it too. They do not involve the employees with decisions.
This is where bubble-sorting comes in. You have a pile of ideas.
Which should we do?
Which is easier to do?
Need to look at cost.
You do not want the people who run the programs to do the projects. The employees need to run the projects while management oversees.

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At Harvard the schools do not talk to each other. At Cornell there is more competition. At Harvard Business School, they call themselves “the business school”.

There are businesses that are the same way.
All you have to do recognize inovation. You do not need to be inovative yourself.
It is very hard to transplant an idea from one place to another.

End Hour one.
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• Make sure that for your paper you have an idea of what you want to do. They are due May 8th. The paper is something we look a lot at. Make sure it has structure, but is also contained.
• Next week is the business case week. You will need find a way to make a case that people in the business world will want to hear.
• The case this week is that one of the board members is getting nervous with the program. Nancy is coming back to defend the program.
• The city of Cambridge is a business as is a university.
• At home you’re a business to. People can go bankrupt.

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• A fee is a tax. Everyone has these. Cities, towns & people at home. In many companies, the most injuries happen at home. Companies want employees to be safe at home. There is another side to this. Employees need to be sent home not tired. If they are tired at the end of the day, they will not be safe at home.
Workers are now more social with there families. They are not in bad moods. Molly – People who stock shelves move about two tons of material, three pounds at a time.
Worker wellbeing is 5.3 in Baldridge. It is interesting to have a third party come in and observe this.
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- Student – People often times do not know how to sell themselves.
- Bob – I don’t know that it is just marketing. Marketing appeals to our emotional side, but we also need to appeal to our rational side as well.
- People buy things emotionally. This is what marketing is based on.
- If people take an extra couple of minutes on break, they may actually get more work done.
- Managers deal with fact, not emotion.
- Student – Separate fact from emotion.
- Critical thinking is very important.

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- 20% of the paper that are sited 1000 times are more are either wrong or grossly exaggerated. In sustainable development, everything is different.
- It is hard not to act emotionally to marketing. To some extent social marketing also appeals to the emotional side.
- Student – at the Business school they are focusing on things that are way different than what we cover in this class.
- Harvard Green Campus Initiative conference is free to all Harvard students. This is April 27 – 29th.
- Architects think that sustainability applies to just the building. Just because you have a green roof does not mean you are sustainable.
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- Everything you do in school comes down to a single number. This is your GPA. All your tests and grade get reduced down to this number. This is what Baldrige does. It breaks everything down to a single number.
- The major purpose of voluntary programs is to get people to go beyond what is expected of them.
- Interface tells the public nothing about how they get their information. This is why they do not do well.