

Final Exam Case Study

Please read ALL directions below before starting your final assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Read the entire case study carefully and then respond to all questions in each of the four scenarios.
- Develop each answer to the fullest extent possible, including citations from outside resources, where applicable, to support your arguments.
- Submit your assignment as a separate MS Word document in your assignments folder. **Do not type your answers into the case study document.**
- Include a Cover Page with Name, Date, and Title of Assignment.
- Do not include the original question. Use the following format: Scenario 1: question 1, etc.
- Each response should be written in *complete sentences*, double-spaced and spell-checked. Use 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Include page numbers according to APA formatting guidelines.
- Include citations in APA format at the end of each answer.
- You must submit to the assignment link by the due date (final day of class). A missing assignment will be assigned a grade of 0.



Introduction and Organization Overview

DRA Performance Solutions (DRA PS) was founded in 1992 with the goal to improve human performance using multiple technology avenues.

- ▣ To improve human performance, DRA PS makes recommendations about how to change work environments to improve employee performance, motivation and morale; and develops courseware for skill improvement.
- ▣ The Training Solutions Division of DRA PS develops the courseware products.
- ▣ Revenue for past year: \$25 million.
- ▣ Revenue for the Training Solutions Division for the past year: \$10 million.
- ▣ DRA PS total workforce: 650 employees, 260 of whom are employed in the Training Solutions Division.

Case Study Background

- ▣ The Training Solutions Division (TSD) of DRA PS was recently awarded a \$6 million contract to develop a training academy for BTA, a United States government

organization with highly educated personnel. The contract is for 36 months. The academy must be up and running in three months and the first classroom course offered at the start of the fourth month.

■ TSD must develop the following before the first classroom course is offered:

- a. A project plan and timeline for the academy's development, including web site design and launch, course development and repeat course cycles.
- b. Paper-based training and educational products.
- c. Web-based training and educational products.
- d. Digitized video training and educational products.
- e. Marketing brochures, posters and e-mail announcements.
- f. Event logistics plans.
- g. Delivery schedules for 15 courses.
- h. Training analyses for the first and second courses.
- i. Instructional design plans.
- j. An instructor's guide, participant manual and PowerPoint presentation with a variety of multimedia components such as graphics, animations and videos for the first course.
- k. An examination for the first course.

The training academy will be completely virtual. All academy marketing, courses and attendee registration will occur online. In addition, the academy web site will house course materials and records for attendee access, and an interactive forum for academy member collaboration.

The contract requires TSD to develop 15 classroom-based courses that are highly interactive and use innovative multimedia approaches. After all the courses are developed and delivered one time, they will be repeated during the last year of the three-year project.

Project Phases

Project development will occur in two phases:

Phase 1: Create the training academy (3 months).

- ▣ Implement organizational structure.
- ▣ Develop and launch web site.
- ▣ Develop and implement branding for the academy.
- ▣ Develop and distribute marketing materials.
- ▣ Develop the first course.
- ▣ Deliver the first course.
- ▣ Begin development of the second course through the analysis phase.

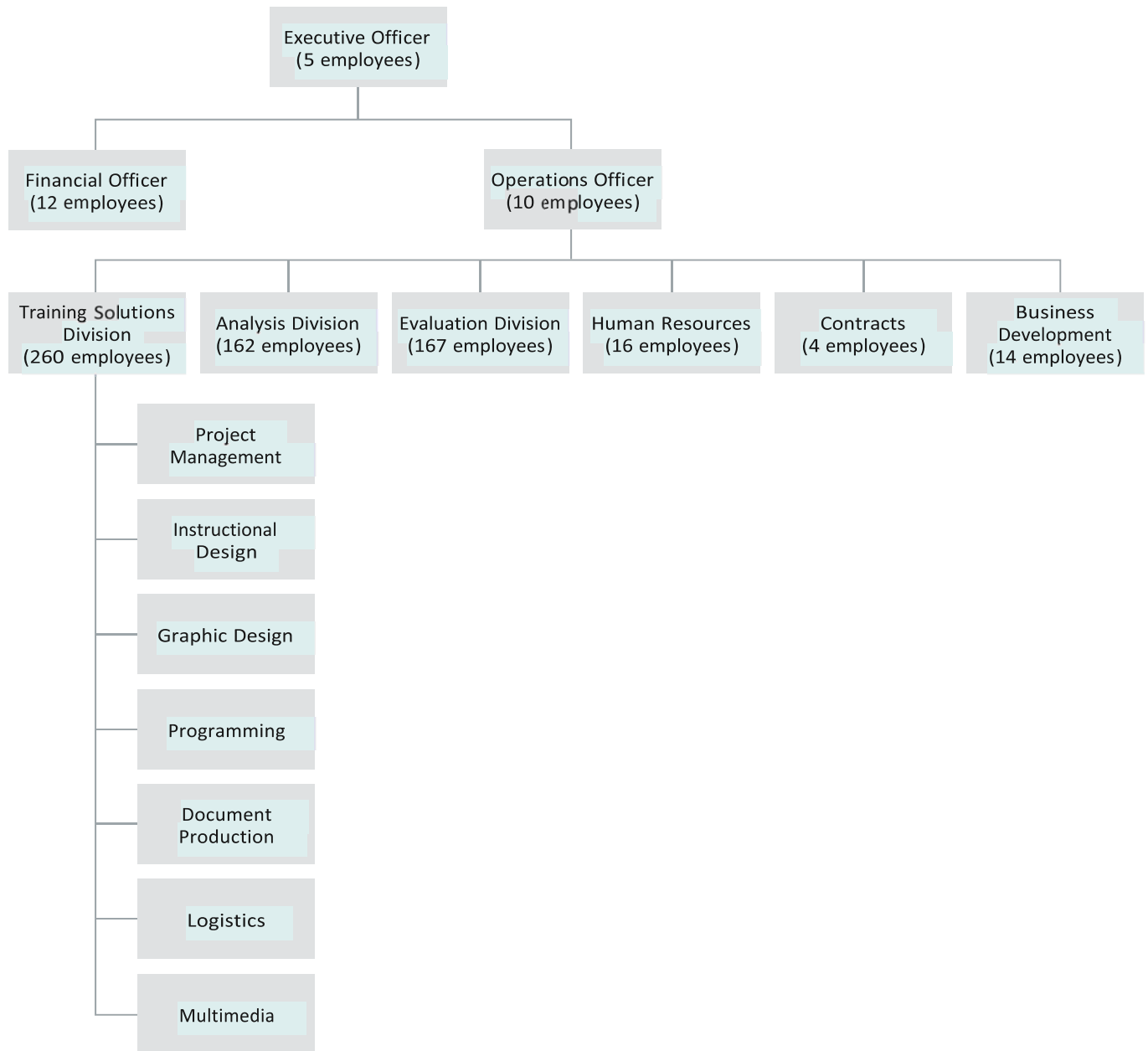
Phase 2: Maintain academy operations, develop and implement remaining courses, and offer repeat sessions (2 years and 9 months).

- ▣ Complete development of the second course.
- ▣ Deliver the second course.
- ▣ Implement development schedule for the next 13 courses.
- ▣ Offer repeat courses during last year of the contract.
- ▣ Continue to manage the academy, maintain the web site and market the courses.



Organizational Structure

DRA PS's current organizational structure:



The Training Solutions Division is a matrix organization* divided into the following branches:

- ▣ Project Management
- ▣ Instructional Design
- ▣ Graphic Design
- ▣ Programming
- ▣ Document Production
- ▣ Logistics
- ▣ Multimedia

* A matrix organization uses a multiple chain-of-command system. In a matrix organization, employees typically report to a manager with profit or overall project responsibility and to their functional manager who is responsible for maintaining product quality and functional performance.

Current TSD Staffing

All 260 employees in the Training Solutions Division are already assigned to projects. The new contract will require TSD to determine how many employees they will need for each division branch and for each project. They will need to take into account when current projects are ending; who can be moved from those projects to the new project; and how many new employees will be needed.

Scenario 1: Increasing Staff to Complete the First Phase



Read the Introduction of DRA PS.

Additional Scenario Information

MRG HPI Policies and Guidelines for Assigning Employees to Projects

DRA PS is committed to maintaining a highly qualified talent pool. Therefore, all DRA PS employees must be considered for new work opportunities before being terminated due to lack of an available, relevant assignment.

New employees must be hired to support existing workloads. Full-time position requests must include verification of the project assignment; a budget to support the position; and the duration of the assignment. If project will be short in duration, term hires must be considered or even the use of a consultant or subcontractor.

The addition of a new position requires written approval from the project manager, branch chief, the vice president of the Training Solutions Division, the chief operating officer, the chief financial officer and the vice president of Human Resources.

Subcontractor hiring requires written approval from the project manager, branch chief, of the vice president of the Training Solutions Division, the vice president of Contracts, the chief operating officer, the chief financial officer and the vice president of Human Resources.

Staff reassignments require written approval from the branch chief, the vice president of the Training Solutions Division, the chief operating officer, the chief financial officer, the vice president of Human Resources and the chief executive officer.

Answer the following:

1. What are some of the positions you may need to recruit? Why?
2. What are the existing recruitment policies and guidelines and what challenges may they cause? How will you meet those challenges?
3. What is your recruitment strategy? How will you communicate it?

Scenario 2: The Effect of Firing the Program Manager on Staffing for the Second Phase of the Project



Read the Introduction of DRA PS.

Additional Scenario Information

Work is well underway. A *Task Management Educational Plan* is being written to articulate the scope, work breakdown, processes, schedules and assignments at each project phase. This plan must be done within the first month of the project start date. DRA PS hired a new program manager from outside the organization to oversee the new project. DRA PS hired her based on her college degree and years of experience in the field and needs her to get up to speed quickly. An existing program manager who worked on the project proposal and who has met the client is assigned the project's principal instructional designer.

Client's Requirements

The client expects the program manager to conduct weekly status meetings with them; communicate with them on a daily basis through e-mails and telephone calls; and to meet established deadlines for product delivery. The client will conduct quality assurance reviews immediately to keep the schedule on time.

Schedule and Workload Requirements

The team is organized into three divisions: course development, marketing, and web site development. Each division has a lead team member. The program manager has oversight of the entire project.

- The web site must be designed and launched two months after the project start date.
- A marketing plan and branding campaign must be designed before the web site can launch.
- Marketing products must be ready for distribution at the same time as the web site launch.
- The first course must be delivered at the start of the fourth month from the project start date.

- The course review and rehearsal must be ready two months after the project start date.
- Analysis work for the second course must start two months after the project start date.

Program Manager's Actions

The program manager seems friendly but does not seem to be leading the team. She holds weekly status meetings with the client but doesn't say anything during those meetings. She responds only by e-mail to client communications and calls only to confirm meetings.

The client is not impressed with the program manager's performance and notices that the lead instructional designer is actually filling both the program manager and instructional designer roles. One month into the project, the client mentions the program manager's performance to the vice president of the division. The vice president promises to talk to the program manager and help her improve her performance.

By the end of the second month, the analysis for the second course has started. The first course is ready for review and rehearsal, which means all materials have been developed and are ready for instructor review. The preliminary branding campaign was completed, marketing materials are ready for approval, and the first version of the web site has launched.

The vice president of the division phones the client and asks for feedback on the project accomplishments to date and the program manager's performance.

The client praises the progress made in such a short time but thinks it has happened in spite of the program manager. The client informs the vice president that the program manager missed the deadline for delivery of the *Task Management Educational Plan*. When it was finally delivered, the client sent it back as unsatisfactory. Also, the client feels that the program manager has been uncommunicative; she has not said a dozen words in the past eight weekly progress meetings. The client is not pleased with the program manager's performance. At the end of the third month, DRA PS decides to replace the program manager.

In spite of this, team leaders have made sure that the first course is ready, the web site is launched, and the marketing plan is developed and implemented on schedule.

A new program manager is needed right away. **Answer the following:**

1. How would you have handled the program manager's performance issues? Was the right decision made to replace her? Why or why not?
2. What options exist to find a new program manager?
3. Discuss the recruitment and retention challenges you face in filling the position quickly.
4. How will you ensure that the new hire will be approved and hired as expediently as possible? Who must you communicate with to implement your strategy?

Scenario 3: The Effect of Losing Staff Members during a Staff Reduction



Read the Introduction of DRA PS.

Additional Scenario Information

Six months into the project, the client reviews the progress and issues a stop-work order. The main issues identified during their review:

- ▣ There were different expectations about the complexity of graphics in course development and course materials.
- ▣ There were different opinions about the level of marketing required (marketing a course versus the entire academy, no post-course promos, etc.).
- ▣ There were issues with instructors. There were instances where instructors had rescheduled on multiple occasions or cancelled.
- ▣ There were concerns about the subject matter experts (SMEs). SMEs had been hired outside of the budgeted amount. There were also concerns about the SMEs not providing the level of technical writing expertise required, which resulted in having to hire additional technical writers.

DRA PS addressed some of these concerns by removing the videotaping requirement during the analysis phase and removing the repeat courses that were going to be offered during the final contract year.

By eliminating videotaping and repeat courses, the remaining courses to be developed and presented were stretched over the rest of the contract (2 ½ years).

This means that instead of developing and offering the 15 courses using two teams in a staggered fashion over two years, DRA PS must reduce staff. Currently there are three senior instructional designers, six graphic artists, three document specialists, six technical writers, three subject matter experts, and two editors assigned to the teams. Your subject matter experts are consultants under contract.

You don't want to lose your staff, but you may have no choice but to let some go.

Some of the employees resign when they hear the news. Three instructional designers quit and the remaining three are searching for new jobs. All your technical writers have résumés out to potential employers. Your senior graphics lead, a person you count on, has a job offer with another organization.

What will you do to maintain a staff to meet the contractual changes and ensure a quality product? What can you do to retain your employees and instill confidence that the program is stable? **Answer the following:**

1. What are your primary retention issues? What challenges do the existing recruitment and retention policies and guidelines create?
2. What can be done to retain existing employees? How will you motivate the current team?
3. How will you go about replacing the ones who have left (positions that are still needed)?
4. Create a communication plan to alleviate any further issues regarding retention and recruitment. How will you implement your strategy?

Scenario 4: The Effect of Additional Workload on Continuing Operations



Read the Introduction of DRA PS.

Additional Scenario Information

The issues that caused the work-stop order were satisfactorily addressed and work on the project resumed. The client is impressed with DRA PS's work products and with how they addressed some difficult issues during the development and delivery of the last six or seven courses. The client wants to add repeat courses back into the schedule and add four new courses. The client wants to start the new courses immediately and wants them completed within the next 12 months. The current work must continue and not be affected by the additional work.

Current Schedule and Workload Requirements

One course is scheduled to be completed this year. Three more courses are to be developed next year. It takes 6 months to develop each course. The three-year contract ends September 30 next year. All of the additional work must be completed by that date.

Current staffing consists of:

- ▣ One senior instructional designer
- ▣ Three graphic artists
- ▣ One director/videographer
- ▣ One subcontracted sound technician
- ▣ One media specialist
- ▣ One logistics coordinator
- ▣ One web programmer
- ▣ Two technical writers
- ▣ One subcontracted subject matter expert
- ▣ One editor
- ▣ One document specialist

Current Organizational Structure

The training academy is now two years old. DRA PS has developed seven courses; the last one was the most challenging to develop and yet one of the most successful. The success rejuvenated the team, which was struggling after the termination of the program manager, the three-month work stoppage, a change to the workload and schedule requirements, and the loss of co-workers. Development and delivery schedules were tight and required a great deal of commitment and hard work. The teams' moods have run the gamut from devastation to euphoria. The current mood is somewhere in between.

Retention and Recruitment Issues

In the previous scenario, some staff members were looking for employment elsewhere. Motivation issues still persist.

Additional staffing is needed because of the new work. A staffing analysis concluded that seven teams will be necessary to accomplish the additional work. Staff additions include:

- Three graphic artists
- Two logistics staff
- Three document specialists
- Two editors
- Fourteen technical writers
- Seven instructional designers (these will be negotiated with the subcontractor)

Answer the following:

1. What steps would you take to hire employees for seven new teams? What methods could be used to recruit and staff quality teams?
2. What challenges will you face in obtaining the required approvals for new employees?
3. How will you ensure a fair, equitable, and market competitive compensation and reward strategy?
4. What will you do to quickly integrate the new teams into the existing workforce without losing staff or product quality? How will you proactively manage any potential performance issues?



SOCIETY FOR HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1800 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3499