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The Failed Apple Lisa Project

The Lisa project's origins can be traced back to Jobs' 1979 trip to Xerox PARC. Apple had intended to create a commercial machine as a significant competitor to the Apple II. According to Gapinski (2019), Apple designers began working on the Lisa desktop, the firm's first to include a user interface and controller, but things did not go as planned. Ken Rothmuller was named project manager for Lisa by Apple. In addition, Rothmuller expressed his dissatisfaction with the recommendations for new functionality, claiming that they would drive the computer's price tag much beyond its intended cost. Apple planned for a pricing of $2,000, which would be the amount of $7,000 currently. Surprisingly, when Rothmuller expressed his dissatisfaction with the idea, Apple fired him.

As a result, Steve Jobs decided to oversee the implementation of the project and led to its failure because he came up with modifications that were not similar to the original design specifications. The project manager altered the traditional user interface upon his visit to Xerox, and the name “Lisa” was his daughter’s name, making the project personal. In my view, this project started well, with Rothmuller as the initial project manager. He was tasked with laying the foundation for the project, ensuring it was implemented as suggested, and the end product was what was expected. Mr. Jobs took over the implementation, and as a project manager, he was responsible for the project's execution and delivery. However, as a manager, he failed by changing technical specifications, over-promised and under-delivered, which is unfortunate.

References

Gapinski, A. J. (2019). Engineering Disasters: The Role of Engineering versus Management Cumulative Failure Risk Factor. *Journal of Management & Engineering Integration*, *12*(1), 35-48.

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