



# Clark Faucet Company Case Study Solutions

As a project manager at Clark Faucet Company, tasked with resolving the critical issues between marketing and engineering and implementing effective project management practices, I would approach the situation as follows:

## 1. What is the critical issue?

The critical issue at Clark Faucet Company is the severe lack of cooperation and communication between the marketing and engineering departments. This conflict has led to project management failures, with no one willing to take on project manager roles, functional team members avoiding meetings, and line managers showing little interest in supporting project management efforts. This lack of collaboration and alignment is severely impacting the company's ability to deliver new products on time and within budget.

## 2. What can be done about it?

To address this issue, several steps need to be taken:

### **Improve Communication and Collaboration:**

- **Mediation and Conflict Resolution:** Engage the external consultant to facilitate mediation sessions between marketing and engineering to address underlying issues and improve communication.
- **Cross-Departmental Workshops:** Conduct workshops that bring together marketing and engineering to foster understanding of each other's roles, challenges, and priorities.

### **Define Clear Processes and Responsibilities:**

- **Project Management Training:** Provide comprehensive project management training to employees, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and the roles and responsibilities of each department.
- **Clear Project Definitions:** Ensure that project requirements are clearly defined from the outset, with input from both marketing and engineering to minimize changes and misunderstandings later on.

#### **Establish a Unified Project Management Methodology:**

- **Single Methodology with Flexibility:** Develop a single project management methodology that includes guidelines allowing for flexibility to accommodate the specific needs of different types of projects.
- **Prioritization Process:** Implement a prioritization process within the methodology to ensure that projects are aligned with strategic goals and resources are allocated effectively.

### **3. Can excellence in project management still be achieved and, if so, how? What steps would you recommend?**

Yes, excellence in project management can still be achieved by taking the following steps:

#### **Step-by-Step Implementation:**

- **Start with Small Wins:** Begin with small, manageable projects to build confidence and demonstrate the benefits of effective project management.
- **Iterative Improvements:** Continuously improve the project management processes based on feedback and lessons learned from each project.

#### **Executive Support and Accountability:**

- **Leadership Commitment:** Ensure that senior management actively supports and participates in the project management initiatives.
- **Accountability Measures:** Implement accountability measures to ensure that both marketing and engineering adhere to the agreed-upon processes and contribute to project success.

#### **Foster a Cooperative Culture:**

- **Recognition and Rewards:** Recognize and reward collaborative behaviors and successful project outcomes.
- **Team-Building Activities:** Organize team-building activities to strengthen relationships and trust between marketing and engineering.

### **4. Given the current noncooperative culture, how long will it take to achieve a good cooperative project management culture and even excellence?**

Transforming the noncooperative culture into a cooperative one and achieving project management excellence is a gradual process that may take 1-2 years, depending on the commitment of leadership and the willingness of employees to

embrace change. Continuous efforts to improve communication, collaboration, and project management practices will be essential.

## 5. What obstacles exist in getting marketing and engineering to agree to a single methodology for project management?

**Resistance to Change:** Both departments may resist changing their established ways of working.

**Differing Priorities:** Marketing's focus on meeting trade show deadlines may conflict with engineering's need for detailed specifications and adequate development time.

**Lack of Trust:** Historical conflicts and misunderstandings have likely eroded trust between the departments.

## 6. What might happen if benchmarking studies indicate that either marketing or engineering are at fault?

If benchmarking studies indicate that one department is primarily at fault, it could exacerbate existing tensions and lead to further blame and conflict. It is important to approach the findings with sensitivity, focusing on constructive solutions rather than assigning blame.

### **Constructive Approach:**

- **Joint Accountability:** Emphasize joint accountability and the need for both departments to work together to address the issues.
- **Focus on Improvement:** Use the benchmarking results to identify specific areas for improvement and develop action plans collaboratively.

## 7. Should a single methodology for project management have a process for the prioritization of projects, or should some committee external to the methodology accomplish this?

A single methodology for project management should include a process for the prioritization of projects to ensure that resources are allocated effectively and strategic goals are met. However, establishing a committee external to the methodology to oversee the prioritization can provide an additional layer of objectivity and ensure that prioritization decisions are aligned with the overall business strategy.

### **Balanced Approach:**

- **Integrated Prioritization Process:** Incorporate a prioritization process within the methodology that is reviewed and approved by an external committee.
- **Regular Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews to ensure that the prioritization process remains aligned with business objectives and project outcomes.

By taking these steps, Clark Faucet Company can resolve the conflicts between marketing and engineering, implement effective project management practices,

and achieve excellence in project management, ultimately leading to better project outcomes and sustained business success.