



### Problem Solver – Stakeholder Management

#### Problem

A group of residents has lobbied for a café at a local healthcare centre. You have been asked to lead a group of staff in funding the project, designing the space, and contracting a vendor to oversee the retail project.

The project team has voiced opposition to the café. They feel it will bring noise, filth and disruption to the facility. They have asked the union to step in and support their cause.

What would you, as the project manager, do to prevent the situation from escalating and get staff on board with the project?

#### Solution

First and foremost I would hold a meeting with all staff to document all the reason for opposition to the café. No doubt there are more reasons than those you are already aware of. Now that staff have already involved the union, you may have no option but to have a union representative attend, even if it is only to observe that you have taken onboard all the issues raised by staff.

Secondly, I would sit down with the project team and work through each reason methodically to determine what features could be included in the design that would ameliorate or eliminate source of the concern. Some design features might be:

- ☞ separate goods entrance for the café to remove the need for deliveries to the café to be transported through the healthcare facility;
- ☞ separate cleaning area within the café so that there is no competition for existing cleaning areas/materials and remove the need for dirty plates etc need to be transported through the healthcare facility;
- ☞ include a public announcement speaker/system within the café' area so that calls for people to attend their healthcare appointments can be clearly heard. Nothing will annoy healthcare workers more than patients who do not attend their appointment because they did not hear a call;

- ☞ require the operator of the café to use percaline cups and plates, rather than disposable ones, so as to reduce or eliminate the build up of rubbish;
- ☞ provide a drop-off point near the exit of the café so that patrons can return their cups and plates as they leave to attend an appointment;
- ☞ require the operator to do regular circuits of the healthcare facility to ensure that unattended coffee cups and plates are removed promptly;
- ☞ require the operator to use 'hospital strength' cleaning fluids;
- ☞ limit the types of items sold by the café to ones that do not require on-site cooking;
- ☞ require that major works be conducted outside of peak business hours to reduce disruption to the healthcare facility; and
- ☞ require the vendor to erect a temporary dust-proof barrier between their works and the rest of the facility to reduce the likelihood of dust from the works entering the healthcare facility.

Thirdly I would document all the design requirements and have all major stakeholders (healthcare facility operator, residents group representative and union representative) sign-off on them.

With the agreed design requirements in hand I would approach a range of vendors for quotes to construct the café. I would also seek expressions of interest in operating the café. The latter would be asked to provide an indicative menu and pricing. It is very important to have this latter information at an early stage, before any physical work in done, to remove the risk of creating a 'white elephant' of a café that sends everyone to the wall.

From the quotes and expressions of interest I would work with the project team to create the business case for presentation to the Healthcare facility management for approval to commence

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This is P3 Management Solution's take on the Problem Solver published in the June/July 2011 edition of the *Project Manager* magazine