

# *SYNERGIZER* - REVIVING A FAILED IS PROJECT. A TEACHING CASE

Abayomi Baiyere, TUCS – Turku Centre for Computer Studies, University of Turku, Turku,  
Finland, abayomi.baiyere@utu.fi

Hongxiu Li, Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland,  
hongxiu.li@utu.fi

## Abstract

*MidasSource has grown so fast that their traditional basic IS tools are just not sufficient to deal with the increasing complexity that comes along with the current growth trajectory of the company. After trying out several third party systems to coordinate and manage their internal activities without success, they have decided to embark on developing a very customized and encompassing IS system in-house. Despite the top managements readiness to provide all the funds required to achieve the project, the eventual output is considered a failure. This case describes the aftermath of the completion of the project and the burden of proof that lies on the shoulder of the project manager.*

*Keywords: Project Management, Information System (IS) tools, Change Management, Project Manager Challenges.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Prelude

Alex, the project manager of MidasSource<sup>1</sup>, paused outside the door to the conference room as a million thoughts flashed in his mind. He knew he would be facing a lot of questions from the company's top executives once he opens the door. He has been invited to this important meeting where a project considered to be critical to the company is to be discussed. This was not an ordinary meeting and rarely does he get to attend these high level meetings in MidasSource.

## 1.2 About MidasSource

MidasSource is an international company involved in the measurement and evaluation of market and media communications. Their products are aimed at developing their clients' business and creating a favourable and efficient company-public relationship. Some of the types of services offered by MidasSource range from – analytical projects, monitoring projects, media relations, media studies, consulting, public opinion and expert surveys. Their business activities comprise of all types of media – print, television, radio, digital media, information agencies and social media.

The company was founded in 2004 and it currently has about 200 staff members globally. It currently operates in 50 cities in countries spanning different geographical regions and different time zones. With its fast pace of growth and expansion, extending its workforce into new geographical regions has introduced an increasingly important dimension of challenges - stemming from cultural issues to synchronizing operational activities across the organization with widening time differences.

The company has recently strengthened its relevance and importance in its industry. It is considered by its clients as a highly qualified partner in the assessment and development of communication strategy and has benefitted largely from its good contacts with the leading representatives of the international public relations community. It is worth noting that MidasSource has attained these achievements while keeping its internal operations uniquely lean albeit with basic traditional information technology tools and techniques.

From the client side, there has recently been an increase in the number of Fortune 500 companies requiring their service among many other important clients. Their clients range from companies to governments from different countries, hence they need to have presence in multiple countries and collect intelligence from different sources. One of the elements attributed to their success story is their ability to understand the needs of their clients and effectively innovate and adapt their solutions accordingly.

The company is structured such that it has its key innovation research and development department in the head office, while majority of the other staff members are virtual analysts and researchers working remotely for the company on specific targets and projects from different locations worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> Although this is a real case, the names and instances have been modified to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the company and individuals involved. (Cappel and Schwagger 2002)

## 2 INTRODUCING THE SYNERGIZER PROJECT

### 2.1 Project Motivation

Since the inception of the company, they have relied mostly on traditional information technology (IT) tools (like MS Excel and Skype and other third party/legacy software) for their internal operations and multi-site project collaboration. These basic IT tools have been comprehensively customized to serve the needs of the company.

Despite the fact that they rely on these highly integrated and proven traditional IT systems for their operations, they have a strong knowledge of emerging advancement in the IT field like - Big Data analytics, social media and cloud computing among many other trending IT skills. However, as the company continues to grow, the limitations of their present IT tools are beginning to have impact on the effectiveness and productivity of the business.

It has thus become necessary to rethink their existing IT system setup viz-a-viz their internal operational process. This is a step that was generally considered to have both operational and strategic implication for the business. Hence, coming up with an appropriate solution was considered an important and urgent priority for the company.

### 2.2 To Develop or to Buy?

After deciding that it is essential to replace their current IT systems, MidasSource had a new decision to make – *should a fitting 'best-practice' system be bought from a vendor or should they opt to have a 'completely customized' system designed and developed to fit their current processes?*

For the buy decision, the overarching question was about how well an existing solution will fit with their peculiar operational procedures and how effectively the new system can interface with certain IT systems that have been specifically designed to meet their needs?

Despite these and other concerns the management seem to appreciate the structure and standardized procedures that the existing systems offer. To facilitate the final develop-or-buy decision, several likely vendors were identified and invited for a demonstration with different MidasSource managers and key stakeholders in attendance.

After a number of sampling tests and trial runs of different software vendor offerings had been considered, it was concluded that none completely satisfied the unique and idiosyncratic needs of the company. Although the software systems sampled offered better services in certain areas than the present MidasSource systems, none comprehensively catered for the integrated approach with which the company has designed its operating processes around these tools. Besides it was argued that it would probably not be in their advantage to be sacrificing and adjusting their processes and methods to accommodate a new system, rather the system should be such that it reflects the established procedures that have been developed and adopted by the company.

The alternative to buying an existing software system was to choose to build the system completely. This however brings in a new decision element into the mix. *If the system is to be completely built, should it be done in-house or should it be outsourced?*

Outsourcing offers the advantage that MidasSource can concentrate on its core business and leave the design and development of the system to reliable experts. The management however considered it to be a potential risk and could be strategically detrimental to the unique advantage they have in their mode of operation in comparison to their competitors.

Considering the software development expertise possessed in-house and the in-depth knowledge of the internal processes of the organisation, building the system in house appeared to be a good option. On

the other hand, the software development teams and most of MidasSource employee activities are majorly aimed at serving specific client needs and rarely in making internal applications.

With so many merits and demerits to be weighed in the develop-buy decision, MidasSource finally decided in favour of building the system entirely in-house. This has led to the initiation of an important organisation-wide project with the goal to create a customized and unified system that integrates both the physical and virtual teams plus the operational activities of the company - and this is where Alex comes in.

### **2.3 Choosing a Project Manager**

Alex is an experienced project manager who has worked with the company since its early days. Although he has no formal training as a project manager, he has managed a number of projects successfully for MidasSource. During the course of his role as a project manager over the years, he has developed an effective approach to managing and executing his projects and subsequently attaining the objectives of the projects.

Most of the projects handled by MidasSource project managers are usually client projects and seldom do they have to work on internal projects. With his track record as a project manager in MidasSource, Alex is considered outstanding in this role among his peers and it was an easy choice assigning him as the project manager for the development of this essential project tagged – *Synergizer*.

### **2.4 Synergizer Goals**

Synergizer project was aimed to help the company solve a number of issues as highlighted above. Additional drivers for the need to embark on the project include the following - firstly, it was detected that the company was losing a lot of money because of lack of accountability to track the working hours of virtual teams – hence some virtual employees are paid much more than they worked for.

Also, the current system is burdened by redundancy and lacks the provision to efficiently access and reuse knowledge gathered from previous projects. Since this is a knowledge driven organisation, it is becoming increasingly necessary to be able to more efficiently manage the knowledge generated in the organisation. This has recently become challenging especially as the volume of data and knowledge created within the organization is exponentially increasing. Resolving this is one of the goals of Synergizer and it is expected that implementing a system that handles this will reduce unnecessary expenses and will reduce present duplication of efforts.

Furthermore, since the company has a substantial number of its employees working remotely, there was a need to have a system that supports virtual team work, such as - enhancing project/research collaboration, enabling coordinating time zone differences, mapping virtual resource to project needs, logging virtual team actual working hours and eliminating computation discrepancy among many other critical business specific needs.

Besides these highlighted objectives of the project, Alex and the project team were provided with a specification of what the system to be developed should be able to do and what the organisational challenges the project is aimed at resolving.

## **3 THE BIRTH AND DEATH OF SYNERGIZER**

### **3.1 Project Initiation & Structure**

In MidasSource, project teams are usually constituted for each individual project. This implies that an employee can be part of several ongoing project teams. Therefore employees can be deployed to a project based on availability and employee ability or knowledge domain.

Consequently for Synergizer, Alex had to map the availability and required skills to create the project schedule, project resources, project budget and the corresponding project plan for carrying out the project.

In collecting the project requirement one of the essential steps that were peculiar to this project was a systematic one-to-one mapping of the existing tools and operational processes to the newly designed system prior to actual system development.

### **3.2 Project Implementation & Closing**

With all the preliminary setup completed, the project execution went largely according to plan with manageable incidences. The main element that positioned the project in the risk quadrant was the case of an employee who was a key resource in the project execution who changed jobs during the course of the project. This became an important issue when it was discovered that there was no suitable substitute available for his role in the project at the required time. With the pressure of meeting the project timing and with the earnest anticipation of the project results by the management, Alex opted to resolve this by requesting for two additional resources to be rapidly deployed to replace the missing employee. This however implied additional cost.

Although the project ran 20% over budget, the Synergizer software was completed within the stipulated project time. Every item on the project checklist was duly ticked as completed and every aspect of the system was considered to be working according to project specifications. The project team members were pleased with the project and the leadership of the project.

However, getting the software ready appeared to be the easy part but getting the users to actually use the system was more of a challenge. This challenge marked the beginning of the end of the just launched Synergizer. While the software provided means of achieving each of the points listed as its intended deliverables, the virtual employees, department managers, project managers and even the executives that outlined what the Synergizer should be like, all had complains about the usability and other aspects of the newly developed system.

The system was considered to be radically different from what the company was used to. After two months of persistent complains from the employees and the loss of a key client, the executives decided it was imperative to quickly revert back to the old approach of doing things.

## **4 THE AFTERMATH**

The company's management could not understand what went wrong. One thing was clear, the company cannot continue to do things with the current systems they have in place. The competition is growing and they need to evolve to keep up with the pace of change in the industry. An emergency meeting was called to discuss the failure of the Synergizer project and decide on a way forward.

An executive pointed out that the project was badly managed. He pointed out that they needed a trained project manager to handle such a critical and significant project. A trained project manager that understands the basic principles of project management is required and not an experienced project manager that has gained most of his knowledge through trial and errors.

Another executive indicates that she was informally informed that some of the virtual employees intentionally kicked against the project as it would enable their actual working hours to be tracked and reduce their bloated pay. Yet another executive pointed out the company's core strength is not in developing such systems as Synergizer and suggested they outsource the development of the software. The idea of outsourcing was considered very risky to the business considering the unique approaches and methods that they have developed which has kept them ahead of the competition.

With different alternative options considered, it was decided to invite Alex to present what went wrong and what could be done to salvage the situation.

## 5 WHAT NEXT...?<sup>2</sup>

Alex had prepared extensively for this meeting. He has tried to consider all the possible reasons why the project failed and has carefully mapped out recommendations on what needs to be done. As he stood by the door, several thoughts flashed through his mind - the key resource of the project who left the company for another job, the cover of the PMBOK<sup>3</sup> book he has been trying to read for years, the project manager who would not release a designer on another project, the splash screen of the Synergizer, the quizzed look on the executives face and ...

As he turned the knob of the door, he took a deep breath.

### 5.1 Discussion Points

#### 5.1.1 *Analyzing the Past*

In your opinion, highlight all that was possibly wrong.  
What could the project manager have done differently?

#### 5.1.2 *From Lessons Learnt*

How does this relate to what you have learnt from the articles and your group discussions?  
Which points were followed and which were violated?

#### 5.1.3 *Future Plans*

How would you advise them to proceed?  
What should be considered to be done to ensure the next project is a success?

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<sup>2</sup> See Case 2 of the Synergizer Project for what MidasSource eventually did.

<sup>3</sup> Project Management Body of Knowledge (dos Santos & Cabral, 2008)

# TEACHING NOTES: SYNERGIZER - REVIVING A FAILED IS PROJECT. THE CASE OF MIDASSOURCE.

Abayomi Baiyere, TUCS – Turku Centre for Computer Studies, University of Turku, Turku, Finland, abayomi.baiyere@utu.fi

Hongxiu Li, Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland, hongxiu.li@utu.fi

## Abstract

*This teaching note provides the motivation and objectives of the MidasSource case (Synergizer Information System Project). The adopted methodology for the case development and the underlying theory for the teaching process are also presented. Based on lessons from a pilot delivery of the case, this note provides teaching suggestions and discusses possible answers drawn from the actual case and student's response. The case should be suitable for teaching project management, change management and other related courses.*

*Keywords: Project Management, Information System (IS), Change Management, Teaching case*

## 6 CASE OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATION

The MidasSource case was embarked upon primarily because none of the selected cases sought from Harvard Business Review cases among other teaching case repertoire, met the desired objectives of the course. The course which motivated this case is a university level Information System based project management course and the underlying objective of the course includes: 1. *How do we do project management?*; 2. *What factors can determine IS project success?*; 3. *What factors can result in IS project failure?*; 4. *What are necessary skills for a successful IS project manager?* and 5. *What are the peculiar challenges of IS project management?*

In addition, the course gets a registration rate of close to a hundred students. However, the attendance rate of students in attending traditional lectures is dwindling. Hence it was necessary to devise an innovative and interactive way to engage the students while still passing relevant knowledge across. Project management by its nature requires both soft and hard skills (Skulmoski and Hartman 2010). Hard skills like use of tools and processes can be easily acquired, while soft skills are not easily transferred. It was therefore considered of importance to creatively structure the course and the resulting case such that it evokes critical thinking and reflection as a learning process for the students. This case is a result of this implementation and this teaching note serves as a guide to adapting the lessons learnt from the case in other educational environments.

## 7 CASE DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY

### 7.1 Developing the MidasSource (Synergizer Project) Case

The MidasSource case is an actual case involving an existing company. The names and Identity of the individuals mentioned in the case have however been anonymized to observe confidentiality requirements for the case. The collection of data and information for the building of the case has been largely done through employee interviews and archival data that were provided. The case has nonetheless been largely adapted and written with the target of driving the intended learning outcomes of the case. The background knowledge of the authors in project management in practice was drawn upon to relate the case to the course objectives. Furthermore the case was reviewed by two practitioners and two researchers to bring both a theoretical and practical balanced perspective to the case.

### 2.2 Teaching Approach

In order to facilitate the effective use of the case by other teachers, we would provide a brief description of how the pilot case was designed and implemented for this case. Based on a quick review of existing teaching approaches, we decided to adopt a team based learning and a virtual learning environment as the teaching approach. In developing this teaching approach, which we used in conducting the pilot implementation of the case, we have adopted the activity theory as the driving model. In this context, activity theory has been found relevant considering its focus not only on the individual learner but also on the role of the social environment (Jones, 2006; Engeström, 1987). Activity theory can be perceived generally as a set of principles that serves as a guide and foundation in understanding the factors that can affect learning in an environment and in a team-based (community-based) setting. The components of an activity system are modelled in figure 1.

Firstly it has been identified that learning in groups/teams can elicit better responses from the students in comparison to the traditional classroom individual discussion (Leidner & Fuller, 1997 and Gear & Read, 1993). We therefore divided the students into *communities* of between six to eight members.



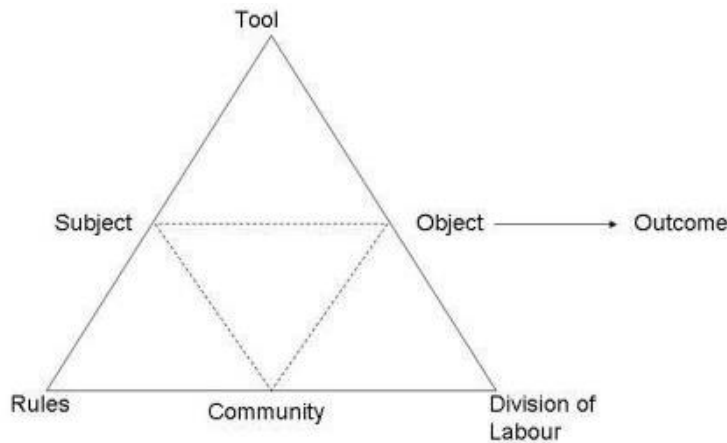


Figure 1: The elements of the Activity Theory

Secondly, we adopted a virtual learning environment (Moodle2 – Rice, 2011) *tool* in the case discussion because of its effectiveness in promoting communication and interaction as well as in facilitating collaborative learning activities (Piccoli, Ahmad, and Ives, 2001). Hence the approach was to provide students with materials to be read and discussed during a week period. The students read the materials and then go to the Moodle2 forum to discuss what they have learnt from reading the material. The students then engage in an interactive discussion explaining their views and learning the possible alternative views shared by members of their group.

Additionally, the case has been condensed with many different possible options which gives flexible room for the students to engage in a dialogue to see each other's perspective. To make the students dig deep into the case, the case has been kept short with all the relevant details needed to point the students towards the learning outcome subtly highlighted. The students have a minimum number of interactions required to pass each weeks discussion. This makes the student's read and re-read the case trying to search for more quality contributions they can bring to the discussion from within the few pages of the case. This process involves more than a shabby quick look but a deep thinking which evokes the cognitive aspect of the brain which adds to the learning experience of the student.

To prepare the students (*subjects*) for the case discussion, the students were provided with 4-5 IS project management articles per week for two weeks. The articles were carefully and consciously selected to reflect the learning objectives and also as preparation knowledge for the case discussion (Levina, 2005; Lai 1997; Kirsch et al., 2002; Tohidi 2011; Zhang and Xu 2008; Brill and Walker 2006; Keil, Tiwana and Bush 2002; Thomas and Menguel 2008 and Skulmoski and Hartman 2010). The objective is specifically that the students should use the IS project management theoretical framework they learned from the articles to do the case analysis with focus on items such as IS success factors, IS project management checklist, the role of IS project manager among others. During the week of the case discussion, the students are expected to reflect and draw from their experience and from the knowledge gathered from the articles and their group discussion in the previous weeks. After the case discussion the students are then required to write an individual essay which is a project proposal on how the Synergizer should be approached in order to attain success.

During each week long discussion the students are bound by the following *rules*:

- Each week every student should make at least 8 posts on a minimum of 3 different days in a week, then and only then can you pass the assignment for that week. The quality and quantity of each student's contribution will be evaluated each week.
- Each student should participate in the group discussion (articles/case) assignment in each week. If you cannot do the group discussion assignment in one week, it means you have not passed the group discussion and cannot move to the next week.

- Each student must pass both the group discussion part and also the essay part, then and only then can you pass the course. If you do not pass either of the two parts, you have not passed the course.

For the *division of labour*, the role of the teachers (authors) in the course was to moderate the discussions and direct the discussions towards the learning *objective* of the course. To bring a practical perspective to the discussions, we invited two guest practitioners from the industry to join in moderation and contributing to the discussions. One of the practitioner is a consultant with project management roles and experience from one of the leading global consultancy firms. While the other invited practitioner is a certified project management team member with several experience with different IS project management activities.

## 8 TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Following the approach that has been adopted for the pilot implementation of the case and the lessons learnt from it, we would propose some teaching suggestions for teachers to follow in using the Synergizer case in teaching their students. Firstly, we would encourage the use of team based groupings in conducting the case discussion. This can be adopted for either a traditional teaching setting or a virtual learning environment.

If a virtual environment is used, time should be dedicated for the students to try the tool before the actual course commencement. This will save a lot of repetitive and basic questions during the course. One of the advantages of the virtual environment is that the students have better control of their time and they can decide when they are sufficiently prepared to make a contribution. It gives room for the students to learn at their own pace within a defined period of time.

If feasible, using external practitioners to have input in the discussion can introduce a unique richness into the learning experience of the students. Having a tutor or auxiliary teacher in a supporting role can help focus the division of labour in the course and allow for more efficient use of time. Also since there are three question themes for discussion at the end of the case, each group can create three forum discussion one for each question theme. This helps to avoid clutter.

The pre-case articles should be carefully selected to reflect the learning goals expected of the course. The students would use those articles as a lens in understanding what should be done or what possibly went wrong when analysing the case. While the articles are valuable knowledge sources, it is important to also emphasise that the articles are not perfect formulas but guides. The students should be given the freedom to challenge conventional knowledge and taken for granted ideas. The case should spur them in this direction but it is important that they are aware of alternative solutions.

Since this is a first part of two cases, it is recommended that each phase (article discussion phase, case discussion phase and Individual essay phase) be carried out in a defined order. This is so that the students first learn the principles and the foundational knowledge through the articles and the discussion of those articles within the group. Secondly, the students then have the opportunity to apply all they have learnt during the case discussion by carrying out a critical analysis of the case and a reflection of the earlier discussions. In addition, new and external resources should be encouraged. This usually adds an interesting opportunity opening to the case, particularly when the students discover new knowledge and share it in their groups.

The evaluation should be done systematically. A scale can be developed – one for quality and the second for quantity. A minimum requirement for qualifying for the following week has been noticed to be a strong motivation to get the students started and consistently engaged. However, concluding all the discussion on a specific forum into summarized bullet points work very fine in some groups while in other groups no one volunteered to do the summary. For those that did, it helped consolidate the learning and they could very easily refer back to their summary in responding to the case 2 questions. It is thus recommended that teachers adopting the case may want to experiment with best approach to get the students to summarize their discussion.

## 9 DISCUSSION

The Synergizer case illustrates a typical IS project management situation where an IS project faces the challenge of user acceptance and the barrier of change management. Among other things the case illustrates some faces of the challenges inherent in management of IT projects. The case has been structured to challenge some one-way notions held by students after reading an article or listening to a lecture. It is intended that students would pause and critically examine what they know, read or hear in light of the scenario depicted in the case. Some of the polar issues brought to the surface by the case would be discussed in this section and quotes from the student's discussions would be used to illustrate their response to these specific points.

From the discussion points in the case, the first group of question to be addressed by the students is to give an analysis of what went wrong with the project and what the project manager could have done differently to avoid this. The aim of this analysis of the past theme is hinged mostly on what the students can identify in the case which does not align to the knowledge and perceptions the student has gathered prior to that point. The case has been sprinkled with different identifiable issues as leads to what may have been wrong in the case without explicitly declaring it. For example, how can a project meet the stated specifications and still be a failure? Also, the case indicates that the project manager is well experienced in handling client projects but not internal projects. This brings to the attention of the student that there are differences between external projects and internal projects. These among other issues are identified during the dialogue that goes on in the group discussion. Here are quotes from the discussions in the forum of one group on this question theme:

**Student A:** *"First approach towards the project was inappropriate. Alex is outstanding with client projects, but those are external. He needed to have an architecture or plan for handling the internal project. Usability testing was not done at all. Since it's an internal project, in fact usability testing should have been easier as Alex is also part of the company."*

**Student B:** *"Could it be that in this case when it is an internal project the accountable management has not taken the project serious enough?"*

**Student C:** *"It could be the fact, since Alex is known to be an outstanding project manager with the customers' project, when it came to internal, he was over-confident?"*

**Student D:** *"...you will notice that it was said there that the system was completed according to specifications and within time stipulated only that it exceeded budget. 'However, getting the software ready appeared to be the easy part but getting the users to actually use the system was more of a challenge' Another point is this, 'Another executive indicates that she was informally informed that some of the virtual employees intentionally kicked against the project as it would enable their actual working hours to be tracked and reduce their bloated pay' For these reasons the users could make the system look frustrating as they are not in the same location to monitor what [each] individual does."*

**Student B:** *"I do agree with you on the point that in these kind of cases where the new technology or system affects directly on employees' work, there will be a lot of resistance to change. I also acknowledge that this is one of the biggest reasons for the project to be scrapped"*

On the second question about lessons learnt, the case is setup such that the students can relate the articles read earlier as a lens to now evaluate the case. For example, Skulmoski and Hartman (2010) wrote positively about the importance of having soft skills like communication, leadership among others. The case however shows that having soft skills is not enough for an IS project to be labelled successful. Furthermore, the article by Thomas and Mengel (2008) advocates for the value of experienced over trained project managers with the valid reasoning that certain skills cannot be taught but can only be acquired via practice and experience. The case however sheds light on the alternate possibility were training skills are valuable without diminishing the value of experience, thereby providing the students with an open perspective on the issue of training versus experience. Some quotes of another groups discussion on this questions theme is highlighted –

**Student A:** *“Lai (1997) states that project suggest that project failures might be avoided if the combination of performance, time and cost is achieved. This week’s case study does not support the idea that controlling performance-time-cost combination is enough to make project successful. All in all, I feel that most of the ideas in the article of Lai would've not made this case project successful. More user-oriented and change-management approach would've been needed... This case is a good example of conflicting risk perceptions of users and project managers researched by Keil et al. (2002). In ... Keil et al. (2002) the risk ‘Lack of co-operation from users’ was not recognized by project managers but only by users.”*

**Student B:** *“I also learnt from the article "Human resources management main role in information technology project management", Hamid Tohidi (2010), that selecting the person to involve and run the project ,especially the project manager who is the leader of the project, is necessary and need to be done correctly. Because as stated in the article most of project managers ... often lack communication skills. Communication has been considered as the core part of this case study because the challenge is how to communicate to the users and motivate them to use the system.”*

**Student C:** *“I somewhat disagree that the reason of failure is the need of appropriate training of project manager. Thomas & Mengel state in their article that "Project management education in a world that takes complexity and complex adaptive or responsive systems seriously requires much more than the transfer of know what or know how through traditional educational/training methods" I think Alex did not have enough experience of this kind of complex internal projects. Maybe a senior advisor or a mentor could have been used to fill in this lack of experience.”*

Lastly, the third question theme is aimed at gearing the students to activate their reasoning and problem solving abilities to propose a possible future path for reviving the synergize project. Quotes from one of the groups will be used to demonstrate the kind of interaction and proposition that ensues.

**Student A:** *“...outsourcing this project can be costly, so I would advise them to work again on this IS project because that concerns directly the running of the organization. However, it is not necessary to work again on Synergizer if the cost to reassess it is too costly. An evaluation and analyses of the assets of this system have to be done.... The project manager has to deal with the problems/conflicts and new risks that occurred in the implementation, to see what was wrong. Also, it is judicious and highly recommended that the project manager deepens his basic knowledge, develops them and acquires deep technical and management skills (soft skills) because that can help the smooth running of the IS project management... (Gregory J. Skulmoski and Francis T. Hartman [2010]).*

*...The users have to be more present during the process of the IS project in order to ensure the finished project answers to the initial expectations... The power of the negotiation takes place during all the phases of the IS project.*

**Student B:** *“In this case of project Synergizer I earlier proposed to change the PM, because: 1. There seems to be some load between users and Alex... we need a fresh face to continue. 2. In Synergizer there is [no] time for training the PM. Work has to be done and quickly.*

*For outsourcing I would not prefer outsourcing of this project because it's a key asset for the company and there is no time for arranging bidding process and selection of a new vendor. A big project like this will take months for vendor to reach the same spot as the internal team has now. .... But in the future it is considerable to think more carefully, which projects should be done internal and which outsourced.*

## **10 EPILOGUE**

The Synergizer project was eventually abandoned and a new project was instituted with a new name *Synergize!* Alex retained the position as the lead project manager however he was mandated to undergo an executive project management training. In addition a young, little-experienced and ambitious project manager who is already PRINCEII and PMP certified has been assigned to support

Alex in the project. He however battles within himself whether he should abandon some techniques that he has used over several years and has proven to work in favor of the new techniques he is now learning. The company decided to partly outsource and partly develop the information system in house. The outsourcing was done with an experienced foreign company based in Russia. Alex has insisted to have a dedicated steering committee and a driving business case which has been instituted. He has also made a user engagement plan for this new project knowing fully well he has been entrusted with a second chance on a very critical project and he cannot afford to have any loose ends. He is however uncomfortable with the outsourcing idea. While pondering on all these issues he exclaimed aloud – why is this called project management? *It should be stakeholder management!*

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