

Module Title: Professional Issues

Exam Diet (Dec/April/Aug): April 2007

Brief notes on answers:

1. (a) There is no correct answer here as it will depend on the individuals and their secondary traits. Rather the question is an opportunity to discuss the various roles and how they work together. It is quite likely that one of the other roles with a strong 'people' element will step into the void - Resource Investigator perhaps. Possibly an Implementer would take over. In the latter case one might expect a more 'bottom-up' approach to the problem. It seems likely that some of the leadership traits might end up being distributed with e.g. teamworkers taking on more of a role of resolving conflicts. Clearly leadership will be missing so the group risks losing focus or motivation or taking on a direction determined by other factors.
 - (b) This is a combination of bookwork and material from the guest lecture on change management. The secret to success is understanding the change process and planning for it. Company B employees will feel threatened and will go through the stages of shock, denial, anger, acceptance and enthusiasm. They need to be involved early on to gain 'ownership' of the process, and be kept informed. Technically, project life cycles come into this, a clear understanding at the start of what is required, discipline on variations to the spec., contingency planning etc. etc.
 - (c) An opportunity to talk about the BCS code of conduct. I suppose I would go for: "due care and diligence", "not claiming competence you don't have", "keep informed", "avoid conflicts of interest" but I would accept most points that were argued and justified well.
 - (d) There may well have been clauses in the employee's contract that related to confidentiality and forbade stealing of IP (civil law). Certainly ICANN would instruct the parasite not to misuse your domain name. Passing off goods is a civil offence and trying to subvert your trademark is a criminal offence. Copying anything off your Web site is a breach of copyright (civil law) and you might have a go at him for counterfeiting. If the product was patented than there could be a patent infringement.
 - (e) Bookwork. A manager will generally look inwards and a leader outwards. Both need to communicate with people. The manager needs to motivate, the leader needs to inspire. The leader sets the objectives and the manager makes sure they happen. etc. etc.
2. Again no correct answer here. They will have been pointed at a collection of articles involving ethical issues of which this will have been one. The question is an opportunity to discuss these and marks will be awarded for points noticed, raised and well argued. There was not a lot of material in lectures about ethics. To achieve a really good mark students will need to demonstrate that they have in fact read around the subject, have thought about ethical principles in general and can apply what they have read, either from having read about this particular instance or by applying general principles. Some appreciation of real world issues will also help here and again some pointers were given in lectures.

3. Company A will clearly be party to a good deal of client information and its product will be critically dependent on statistical measures that it will want to keep secret. Company B will need to sign clauses that it will treat this information as confidential with heavy penalties in the event of breach. 'B' will also need to sign any IP that it generates as it does the work back to 'A'. The job can't afford to slip so B will need to accept some sort of penalties in the event of unacceptable slippage. A for its part will need to be clear about what it wants done and procedures for variation of the original spec. will need to be well spelled out and agreed. A will want to know who will be doing the work and may well want to specify the team that will do the work by name. Clauses will be included about confidentiality, possibly embargoing team members from working for rival organisations for a time.

The contract will be mostly boilerplate but with clauses relating to the above. Clauses will name the parties, name the regulatory framework/law, specify the work to be done (or more likely refer to another document), the timescale, outline the variation and reporting procedure, the process for handling contingencies and disputes etc. etc.