

Case Study: Leading a Business Critical Capital Project for API Production

The Ask:

Primecore was approached by one of its main clients to review the status of a ‘business critical’ capital project which was in the early stages of execution (detailed design and early construction). Following the review, the client requested that Primecore take over the leadership and client management of the capital project.

The Approach:

Primecore as a company is committed to the implementation of project management best practice, which places a heavy emphasis on the quality of the front-end scope development and planning phases of a project.

- In line with the principles set out above, Primecore did a detailed review the project’s planning phases to verify that the solution being proposed was appropriate to the business need, that the End User requirements were understood, and that the scope had been sufficiently defined to support a quality schedule and estimate.
- Primecore did agree that the project was required to enable the commercial production of three launch products. Primecore worked with the End User team to establish a comprehensive set of requirements to meet the needs of the three products and found that there were significant gaps even at the level of basic technical requirements.
- Primecore then developed a simpler scope for the project which was aligned with the requirements of the three products and dealt with commercial demand forecast for the following five years. Areas that went beyond the needs of the End User which were not within the scope of the project charter were eliminated.
- Once the revised scope schedule and estimate had been developed and approved, a Monte Carlo risk assessment was carried out on the project schedule to ensure that the business timelines would be met at the appropriate confidence level.

Outcomes:

This project demonstrated the importance of the planning phases to the success of a project. With business-critical projects which are under time pressure, there is a strong temptation to minimize project planning and to start executing at the earliest possible date. It is recognized in the industry at large (and has been Primecore’s experience) that shortening of planning phases adds to overall schedule and cost due to rework of inappropriate solutions.

Despite giving the appearance of slowing the project down to allow time to revisit the planning steps and design, the ultimate impact was to reduce the scope and cost, which also brought the end date of the project forward by three months.

