



FROM THE BRINK OF CRISIS TO SUCCESS

BY

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FEB 2010

It was Monday Morning yet Simran Mathur, got up with a palpable sense of excitement; she was called as the last resort to fix the problem at the client site at Tokyo.

The project was one of the most prestigious, sort after project, which her company had won after two months of rigorous bidding against six other competitors.

Everything was on track till a few months back, when all of sudden six key male members were poached away by a competitor company, at a salary hike of 125%. The whole project was slowly off-tracked and the new programmers and project manager were bringing were working very hard but all efforts were in vain.

Hence an alert message was sounded off at the H.O in Bangalore and once again the unsung lady programmer was selected to fix the bugs in the code. This was something only she could do, because she had worked some years back along with the same team members, who had now left the company for greener pastures. She was well aware of the logic and flow used by those members; rated as the most intelligent programmers, for whom writing complex programs within a few lines of code was as simple as talking a walk in the park.

It was a difficult time for Simran. Her old boy friend of eight years, Vikram Thakral, to whom she had got engaged eight weeks back, had died in a car accident four weeks back and now she was off to Tokyo to solve the issue. The flight to Tokyo was a 22 hr flight with three breaks.

From the moment she landed at the client office, she knew her target was to decode and understand the code written in C++, along with the logical data flows, which were scattered across some 100+ programs and some 25 calling programs.

The new project team did try their best in explaining their understanding to Simran, but she knew that she was walking in the line of fire. To understand the whole flow and logic was important, because changing the old source code meant 20000 hrs of man days required (250 days), whereas the team that had left was so capable, that it had done it in only 100 days.

Within the first week, Simran was working for about 10 hours just trying to get the feel of logic, but soon these hours increased to 12, and then to 16 hrs by the end of the third week. All eyes of the team were focused on her.

She had made it clear to the project manager that all the existing team members may continue doing their assigned tasks and she will only speak to them , when she needed them, so that unwanted tasks don't eat up her valuable time. Her approach was that she would understand all the programs and then fix errors and replace these programs in the evening along with a small crack team of 4 members and project manager, so that they could be well aware of the whole process and change programs.

This approach worked well since she got the time to explain the existing logic and process flow of all the programs. Simran wrote the code of another fifty programs across eight modules, to complete the whole project. After some six weeks the project was back in running and two weeks later, the success of the project was just around the corner.

But the problem with people like Simran, is that they are always looking for perfection. So she worked for about ten days, all along by herself in silence and developed a solution, which would

provide the economies of scale with the optimization level at par excellence level for the client business.

She did then explain this to the onsite project manager, as well the offsite project manager, so that they could question the ability of her solution and she would be dead sure that it was perfect.

After four days, all the queries and suggestions raised by the team added to the solution and then for the first time, after landing at the client side, she spoke to the project sponsor, seeking time to present a new solution.

Few things about the Japanese decision making are as follows

- 1. Decisions, as such, tend to be big ones, that is they have to do with matters of far reaching importance;*
- 2. An inordinate time is taken in making decisions*
- 3. Once made, they rapidly translate into a course of action*

The project sponsor Fijuwara –san asked Simran to submit a high level executive summary, so that he could read and give his opinion on the same.

She did submit the same, along with a high level process flow, giving an explanation of the same.

Fijurawa –san did like the solution. He asked Simran to prepare a detailed solution note and presentation, which could be presented to the executive committee since the cost approval for this would have to be taken from the committee.

It took her seven days to get the presentation ready, while she also solicited the go ahead from all her Project Managers.

On D-day, she presented the whole solution with the business case and technical design to the executive committee. She was grilled by the committee members on all the issues and timelines. The presentation took about four hours at the end of which there no indication of approval or rejection.

After a few days, she handed over the project and flew back to Bangalore and resumed her duties as off site specialist.

A few weeks later, she received a congratulatory mail for all her efforts at site from the CEO and within two hours another mail from the Vice President. Apart from congratulating hers, it carried a message that she was selected to work as technical Solution Architect on request of the Client raised by Fijuwara-san.

Looking back on that day, she thought to herself, you have definitely arrived.

