

PROJECT: RISKY DECISION

Project: Risky Decision is a fast-paced game of probabilities and eventualities.

Players take on the roles of Software Project Managers trying to release their projects successfully. Your company will rise or fall upon the success or failure of your risky decisions.

Players must complete the game without exceeding the Impact Limit from realized risks that their project can absorb and still be considered a success.



Players mitigate the Likelihood and Impact values of their project risks with project events.

- A lower Likelihood means a better chance of discarding the risk.
- A lower Impact means fewer points accumulating towards the Impact Limit.



Ages 12+



2-4 players



10-15 min.

What You Need to Play

This game requires:

- **(1) Six-sided die:** Rolled to determine whether a Risk card is discarded.
- **(40) Risk cards:** Each card has Likelihood value and an Impact value. These values can be modified by Event cards.
- **(28) Event cards:** Each card describes a modifier to one or both of the Likelihood and Impact values on a Risk card. There are two types:
 - a. **(16) Event Benefit cards** – the event has a positive effect on the project.
 - b. **(12) Event Setback cards** – the event has a negative effect on the project.

If you don't have a six-sided die, you can make your own paper dice using our templates: <http://playgames2learn.com/activities/game-dice-polyhedrons/>

Getting Started

Take the following steps to prepare for playing this game:

- 1) Choose the difficulty level by setting the Impact Limit to be: **Easy** (20), **Normal** (15), or **Hard** (10).
- 2) Sort the Risk cards and the Event cards into two decks.
- 3) Deal **4 Risk cards** to each player.
- 4) Give **1 Event Benefit card** to each player.
- 5) Shuffle the remaining Risk cards together with the remaining Event cards. This combined deck will be the Draw Deck.
- 6) Each player organizes their initial Risk cards by Project Phase in front of them, face up.
- 7) Each player applies their initial Event Benefit card to one of their Risk cards (wherever they think they will do the most good).

This is a great point to review the strategy of mitigating Risks, as best you can, by modifying their Likelihood and/or Impact with Event cards.

Taking Turns

Each of the four Project Phases has two steps:

Step 1 – Draw: All players take 3 cards from the Draw Deck and add them to their existing hand:

- Discard Risk cards for any Project Phase that has already completed.
- Apply new Event Benefit cards to **any** Risk card still in your hand. (eg: you can reduce the Impact value of any Risk, realized or not)
- Apply new Event Setback cards **only** to current or future Project Phases.



Likelihood & Impact Scales

Likelihood:	Impact:
(1-2) Unlikely	(1-2) Inconvenient
(3-4) Expected	(3-4) Significant
(5) Very Likely	(5) Severe
(6) Virtually Guaranteed	(6) Critical

Roll higher!

Step 2 – Roll: One at a time, each player rolls the die against the adjusted Likelihood value of each of their Risk cards for the current Project Phase (making a new roll for each card):

- If the roll is less than or equal to the adjusted Likelihood, you must keep that Risk card. That Risk just became a reality and its adjusted Impact value counts against your Impact Limit.

- If the roll is greater than the adjusted Likelihood, you can discard that Risk card (and any modifying Event cards). Whew! That risk will never become a reality!
- If you rolled a "1", you must keep that Risk card. Sometimes, no matter what you do, a risk becomes reality – the adjusted Impact value now counts against your Impact Limit.

Turns continue until all four Project Phases have been completed.

Winning

Each player focuses on the needs of their own project. The players whose remaining Risk cards do not exceed the Impact Limit win. Win five games and you can call yourself a “**Project Ace**”.

There is no winner if all players exceed the Impact Limit.

Optional Rules

A combination of optional rules can provide the means for co-operation or competition between the players, for good or bad.

- **Get Me Off This Project:** Don't like what you were dealt? Buy a new starting hand using your initial Event Benefit card.
- **Pay It Forward:** Don't think you need all your Event Benefit cards or feel that someone else needs them more? Players can give one of their unapplied Project Event Benefit cards to another player each turn.
- **Too Much Impact:** A player may not have a Risk card with a total Impact value of 6 or more. If the Impact value is not modified (by any player) before it is time to roll the die for that risk, the player is considered to have exceeded the Impact Limit for the game.
- **Who's Helping Who:** Instead of keeping the 3 new cards for yourself each turn, you can, without looking at the cards, choose to give them to one or more players, who then must apply them to their own hands.
- **Mitigation Mobility:** Players are able to move any one of their already applied Event Benefit cards to any one of their remaining Risk cards.
- **Positively No Negativity:** Players are not allowed to have negative total values for Likelihood and Impact on any of their Risk cards.

You may also choose to play with your own “house rules” to help players experience the special challenges you encounter on your real-life projects, or to just make their decisions riskier!

Up the Challenge

Play in co-operative mode using a selection of the Optional Rules. The company's management team needs the company to succeed as a whole. To win, no one must not exceed the Impact Limit. When you win, shout "**All For One! One For All!**"

Blank Cards

Want to add more of your own flavour to the game? Use our blank cards to include your own custom risks and events! Download at <http://playgames2learn.com/printables/>

Thanks for Playing!

Game designed by Trevor Atkins
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Send Us Your Feedback

Did you like the game?
Did it help your team with real projects?
We would love to hear about how it worked for you.

Visit <http://playgames2learn.com> and send us your feedback!

PHASE

1

Risk

The 3rd party component that links to the payment gateway will not be ready in time for system integration testing.

LIKELIHOOD

2

IMPACT

2

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PHASE

1

Risk

With only a single decision-maker, escalated issues will not be resolved in a timely manner.

LIKELIHOOD

6

IMPACT

5

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PHASE

1

Risk

Higher than average turnover in staff will cause delays for replacement hiring and training.

LIKELIHOOD

4

IMPACT

1

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PHASE

1

Risk

The new architect will not have the necessary depth of insight to redesign the core modules, leading to errors and delays from rework.

LIKELIHOOD

4

IMPACT

5

PHASE

1

Risk

New equipment for the test environment will be set-up late, delaying the ability to execute performance testing.

LIKELIHOOD

5

IMPACT

2

PHASE

1

Risk

The business users are unaccustomed to performing user acceptance testing and will be unable to provide useful feedback.

LIKELIHOOD

6

IMPACT

2

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PHASE

1

Risk

The over allocation of resources will be for a greater period than currently estimated resulting in downstream schedule delays.

LIKELIHOOD

2

IMPACT

1

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PHASE

1

Risk

Given past experience, the schedule will be overly optimistic, assuming the best case rather than a realistic or a conservative case.

LIKELIHOOD

4

IMPACT

2

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PHASE

1

Risk

The incoming product sponsor will significantly revise the scope of the project in terms of new and changed requirements.

LIKELIHOOD

5

IMPACT

3

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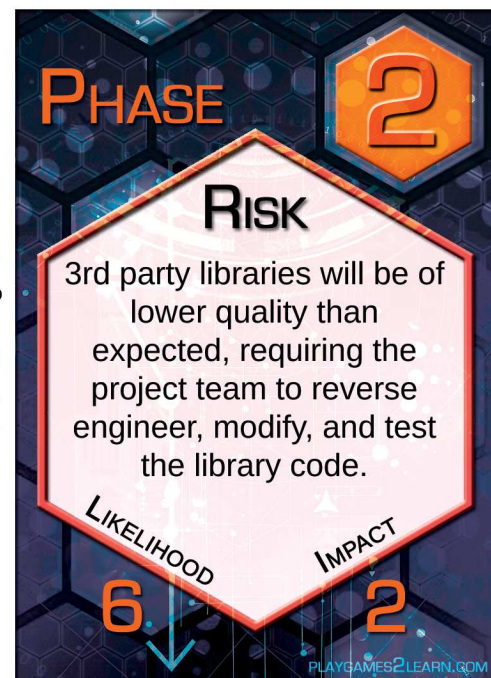
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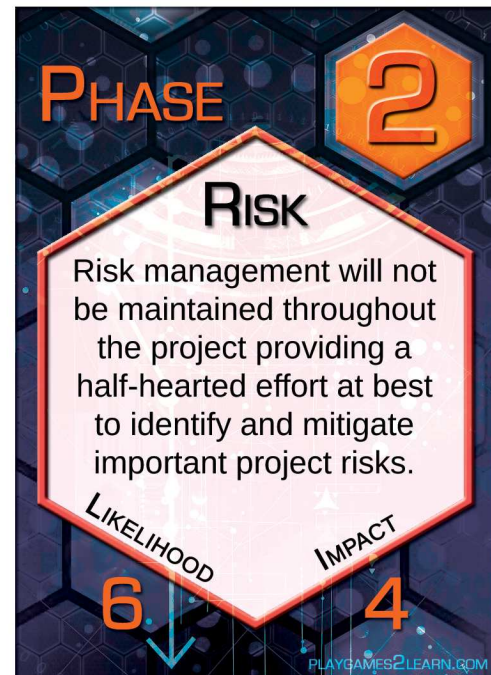


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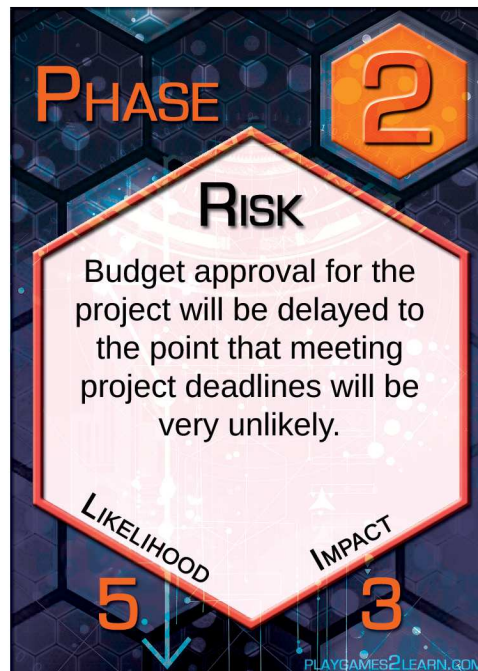


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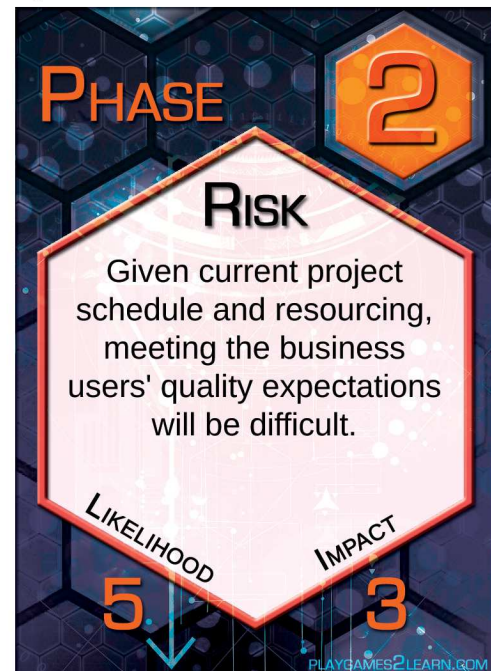
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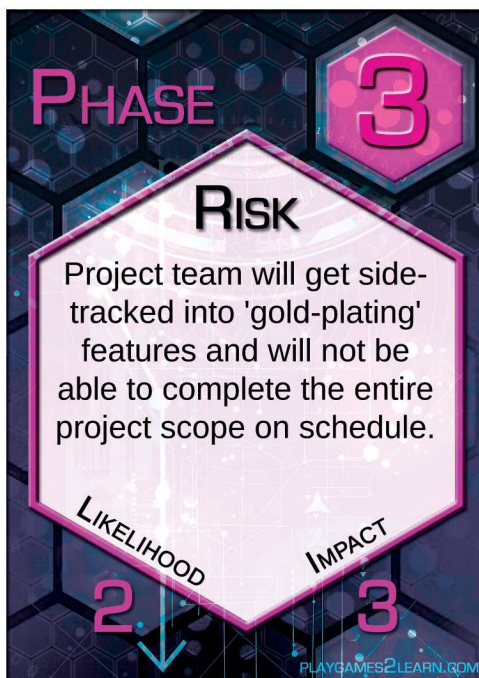
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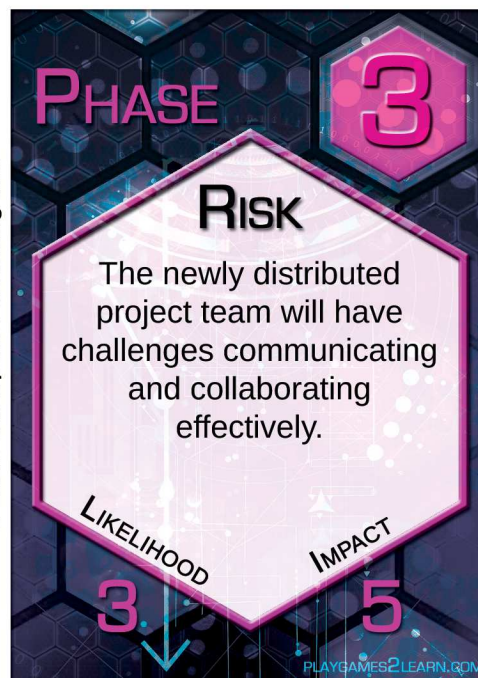
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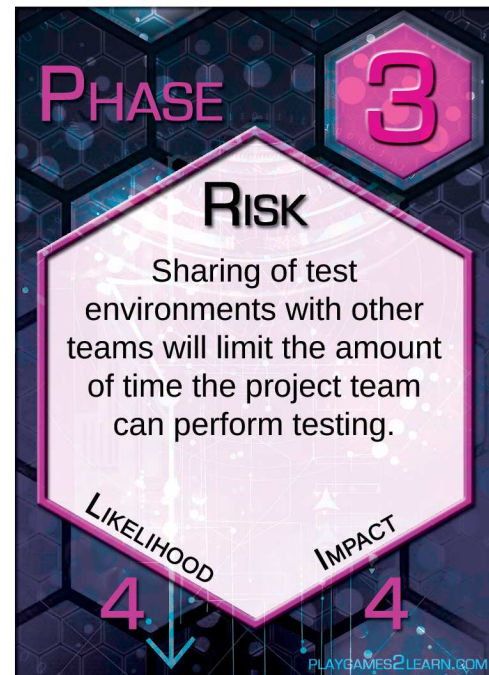
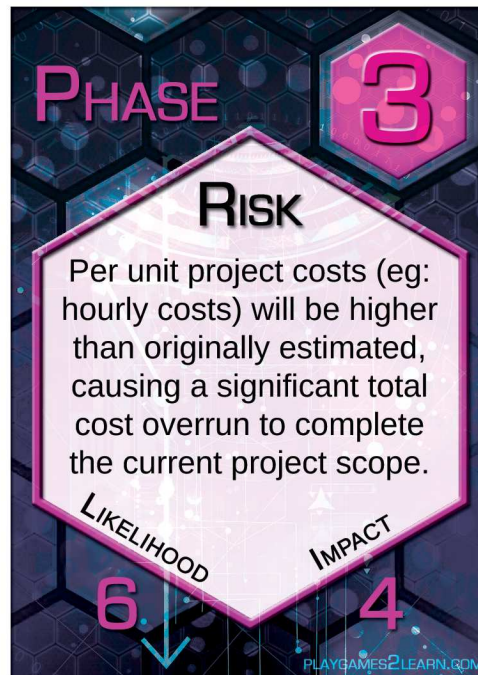


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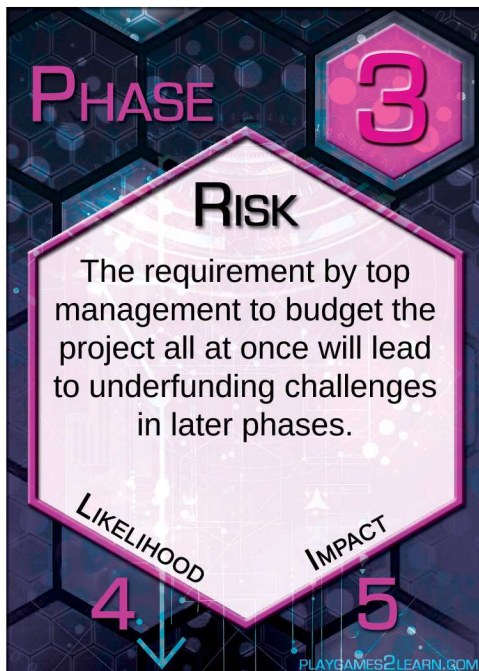
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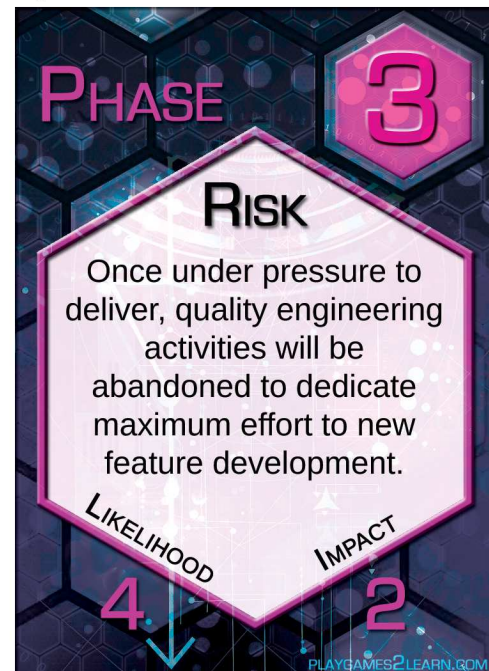
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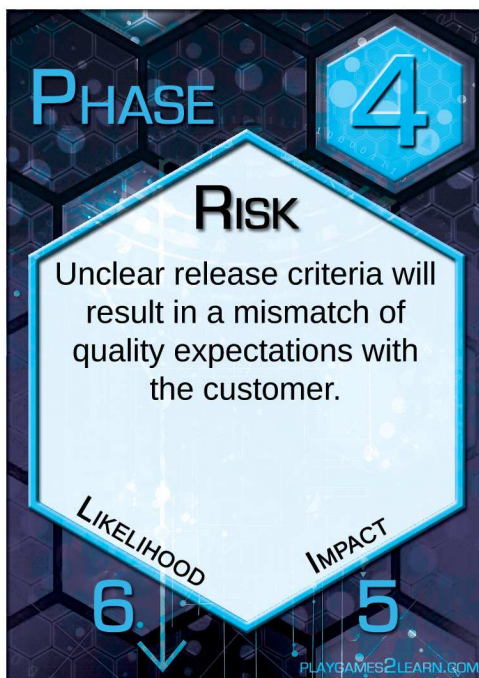
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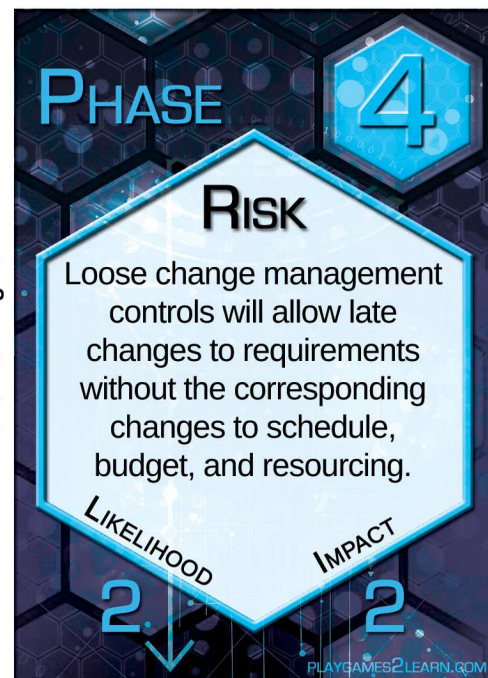
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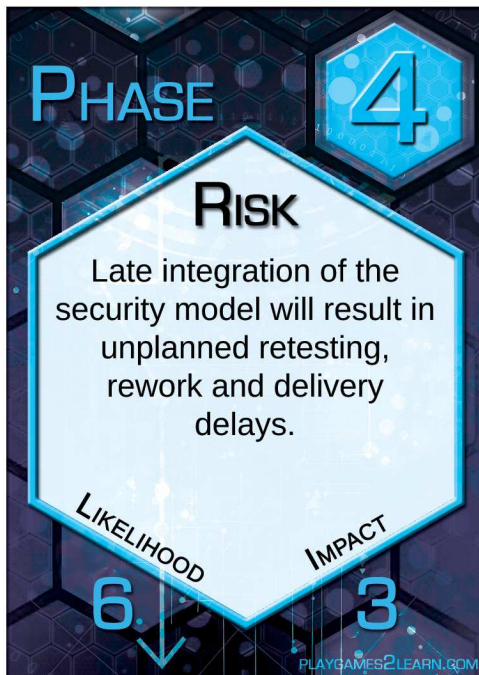


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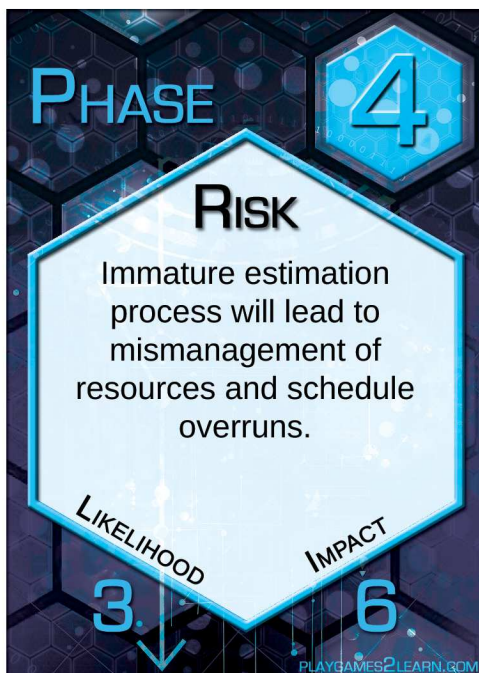
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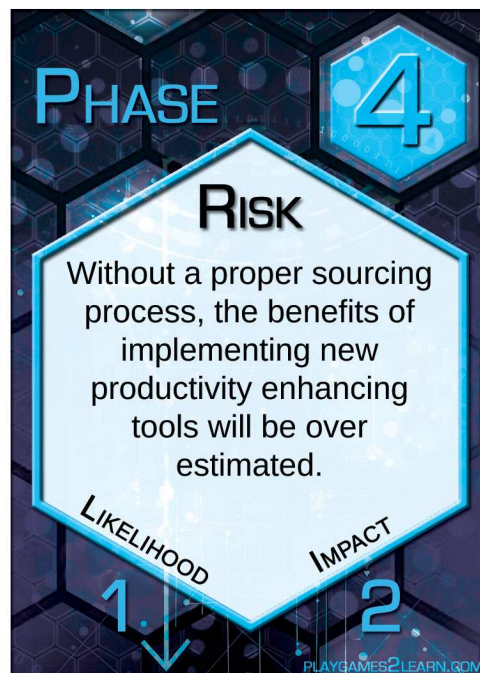


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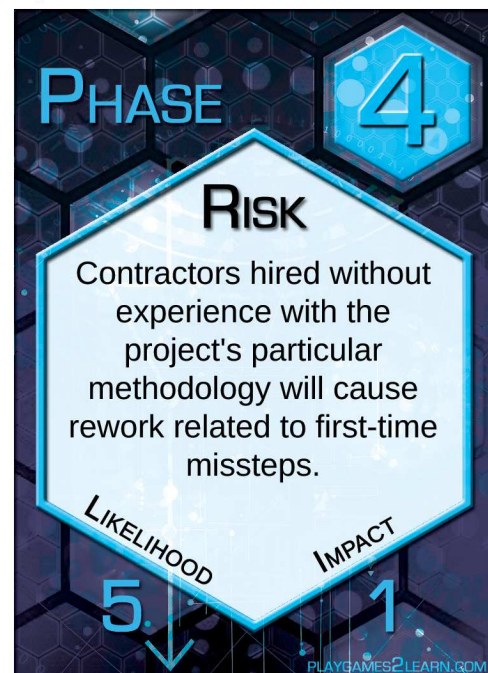
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BENEFIT

EVENT

An update to the development management suite delivered unexpected integration features that improved process automation.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

-1

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BENEFIT

EVENT

The new requirements elicitation process has reduced ambiguities in a traditionally troublesome area of the system.

LIKELIHOOD

-1

IMPACT

-1

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BENEFIT

EVENT

Licenses for a new tool on the project came with free training from the vendor, improving ramp-up time.

LIKELIHOOD

-3

IMPACT

-2

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BENEFIT

EVENT

Early involvement of testing has mitigated the impact of rework delays and reduced the final testing effort at the end of the project.

LIKELIHOOD

0

IMPACT

-2

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BENEFIT

EVENT

The recent group of contractors went through a business domain "boot camp" and were able to ramp up faster than prior hires.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

-2

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BENEFIT

EVENT

Team members have been working together extremely well, so morale and productivity is high.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

-2

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BENEFIT

EVENT

The test automation framework has allowed rapid retesting of functionality with minimal maintenance.

LIKELIHOOD

-1

IMPACT

-2

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BENEFIT

EVENT

An upgrade to the development tools has overcome a bothersome debugging issue that had been sapping productivity.

LIKELIHOOD

-1

IMPACT

-1

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BENEFIT

EVENT

A subject matter expert (SME) has been able to spend more time on the project than originally scheduled.

LIKELIHOOD

-1

IMPACT

-1

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SETBACK

EVENT

A lunch meeting between the project manager and business sponsor increased the scope of work.

LIKELIHOOD

0

IMPACT

+2

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SETBACK

EVENT

Poorly executed performance reviews during the project have decreased team morale.

LIKELIHOOD

+1

IMPACT

+1

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SETBACK

EVENT

The company moves locations during the project, distracting the team and disrupting efforts.

LIKELIHOOD

+1

IMPACT

0

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SETBACK

EVENT

Critical updates by the lead business analyst were lost because of a versioning issue in the requirements management database.

LIKELIHOOD

+2

IMPACT

0

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SETBACK

EVENT

A defect in the system corrupted the records in the database over a period of a few days. The test data needs to be rebuilt and testing re-executed.

LIKELIHOOD

0

IMPACT

+1

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SETBACK

EVENT

A power failure during performance testing requires the entire performance test cycle to be re-executed.

LIKELIHOOD

+3

IMPACT

+2

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SETBACK

EVENT

A crucial, time-consuming task was not included in planning, causing a schedule delay.

LIKELIHOOD

+2

IMPACT

+3

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SETBACK

EVENT

At a demo of the system, business users insist on a change to a feature that requires reworking several workflows that were not thought to be related.

LIKELIHOOD

+2

IMPACT

+1

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SETBACK

EVENT

Usability testing was not involved early enough in the project phase and now rework is required.

LIKELIHOOD

+3

IMPACT

+1

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BENEFIT

EVENT

The project champion used quality/test data to successfully fight for needed updates to the project schedule and resource requirements.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

-2

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BENEFIT

EVENT

Project management proactively contacted the customer about a potential delay and got a schedule extension. They weren't ready for delivery anyway.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

-3

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BENEFIT

EVENT

An attempt by top management to arbitrarily move up a target date resulted in a data-driven revision of all milestones.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

0

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BENEFIT

EVENT

The early emphasis placed on data-driven trend-based status reporting enabled project management to adapt to challenges in a timely manner.

LIKELIHOOD

0

IMPACT

-1

BENEFIT

EVENT

A recent hallway conversation resolved a conflict between two team members and gets an important task back on track.

LIKELIHOOD

-1

IMPACT

0

BENEFIT

EVENT

A proven 3rd party library is identified to replace a fragile legacy code module, reducing maintenance rework.

LIKELIHOOD

-2

IMPACT

-1

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BENEFIT

EVENT

Early walk-through demos to business users elicited undocumented workflows, reducing rework already anticipated later in the schedule.

LIKELIHOOD

-1

IMPACT

-2

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PHASE

1

RISK

The competing business units will take longer than scheduled to agree on the scope of needs versus wants, delaying planning and budget approval.

LIKELIHOOD

3

IMPACT

6

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PHASE

2

RISK

The effort and schedule required for coordination of decision-making across the many business units involved in this project will be underestimated.

LIKELIHOOD

2

IMPACT

2

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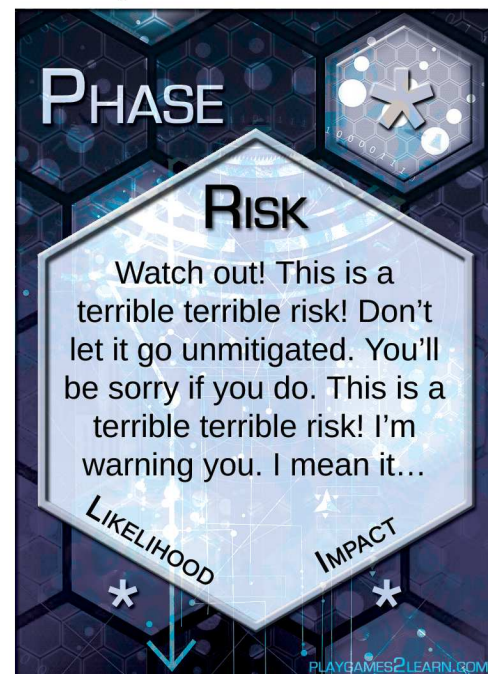
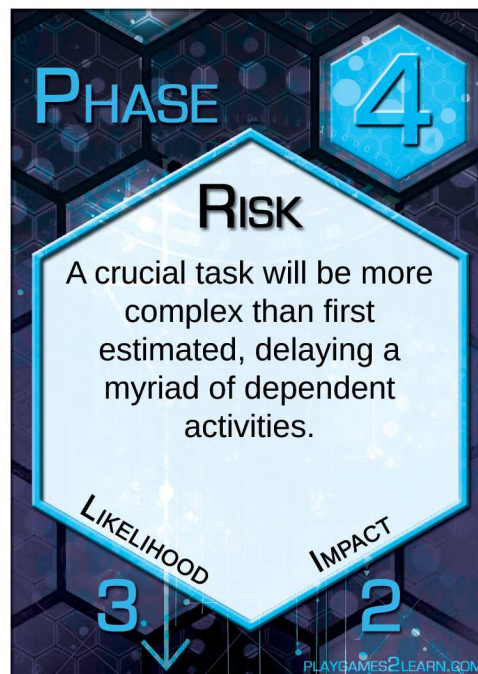


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Thanks for playing PROJECT: RISKY DECISION

This game was designed by Trevor Atkins in 2014 to supplement Software Risk Management training and presentations and to fuel the conversation around risk mitigation strategies.

This version of "Project: Risky Decision" is made available as a free print-and-play card game in hopes it might do the same for you and your teams!

Send Us Your Feedback!

Did you like the game? Did it help your team with real projects?
We would love to hear about how it worked for you.

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