

MANAGING A TEAM WITHOUT ENOUGH PROJECTS

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ABSTRACT

This project was focused on a problem that occurred to the military engine performance team at Infotech Aerospace Services (IAS) in Isabela Puerto Rico. The problem assessed consisted on what actions management could take when a team was cut off almost half of its funding, without getting rid of any team members. To gain additional funding from the customers, management had to consider the customer needs and prepare the team accordingly. The team was re-structured to achieve optimum efficiency and several initiatives were put into place to help develop the team and increase their capability. By doing this customer satisfaction increased and negotiations for further funding proved fruitful.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Early this year the team's technical contacts on the development and production phases resigned. This triggered a series of events that affected the military performance team at IAS. One of the first events was the need of restructuring the programs on the customer's side. By the time the restructuring was finished so was the development phase and the team was left with only field testing and production phases to work on. As it can be seen on figure 1, these new changes left the military performance team with only enough budgets for 59% of the team to work full time.

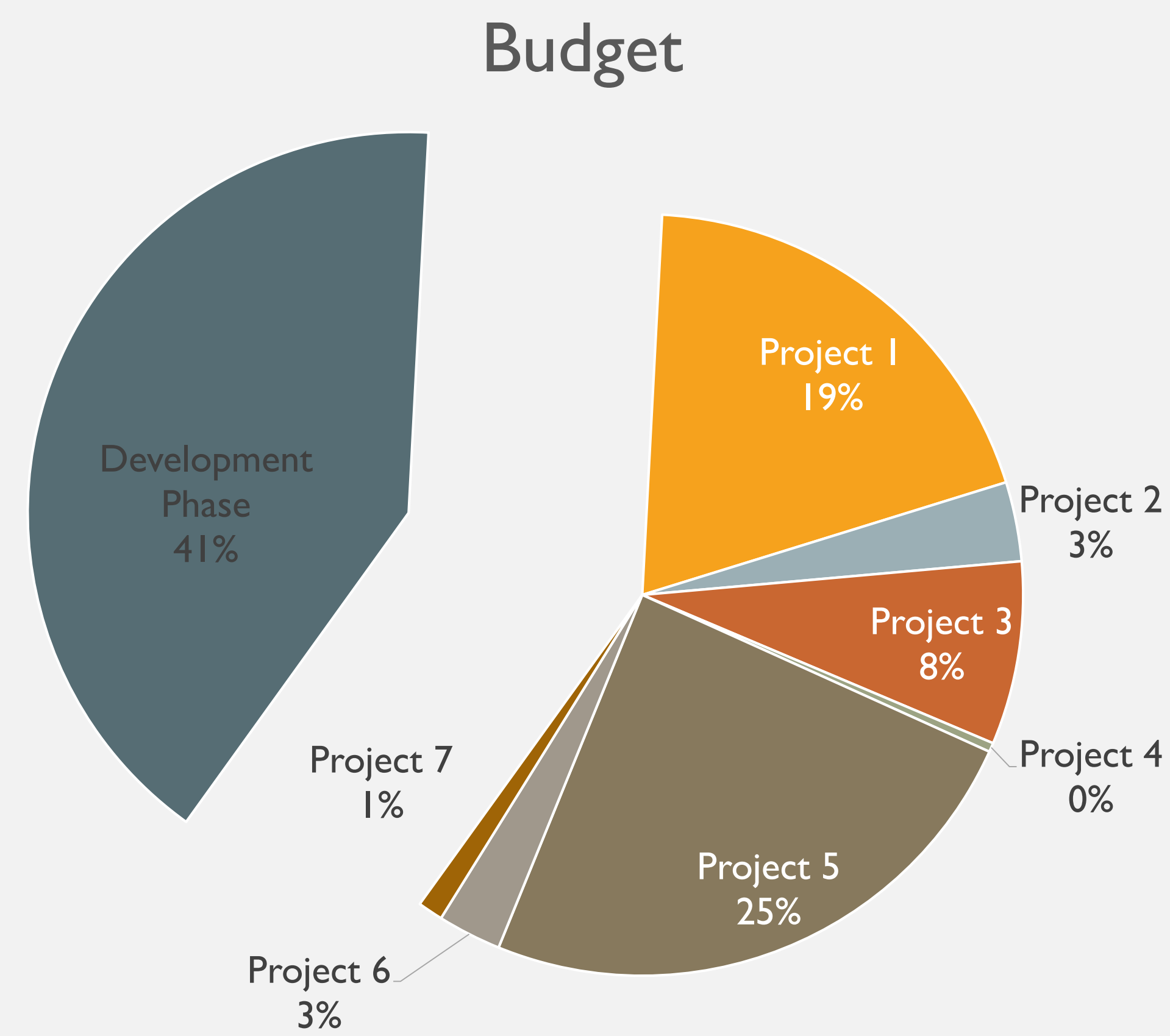


Figure 1
Budget Distribution

OBJECTIVES

- To increase the team's capabilities to allow more complicated work to be requested by the customer.
- Team is to obtain more work by exploring areas of opportunity within the customer's different groups on the military engine performance discipline.

METHODOLOGY

An analysis was made where each team member was evaluated in different categories, these included experience, behavior and capability. The analysis determined which team member would be working in each project and which team member would be leading each project.

By assigning the team members correctly on the projects that were currently available, it was made sure that the team covered the needs of the customer in a most efficient manner.

Project owners were assigned with the tasks of tracking the project's budget, assigning and tracking ongoing tasks, and scheduling status meetings with the customer. As it can be seen in figure 2 the new team structure allows for more direct communication with the customers.

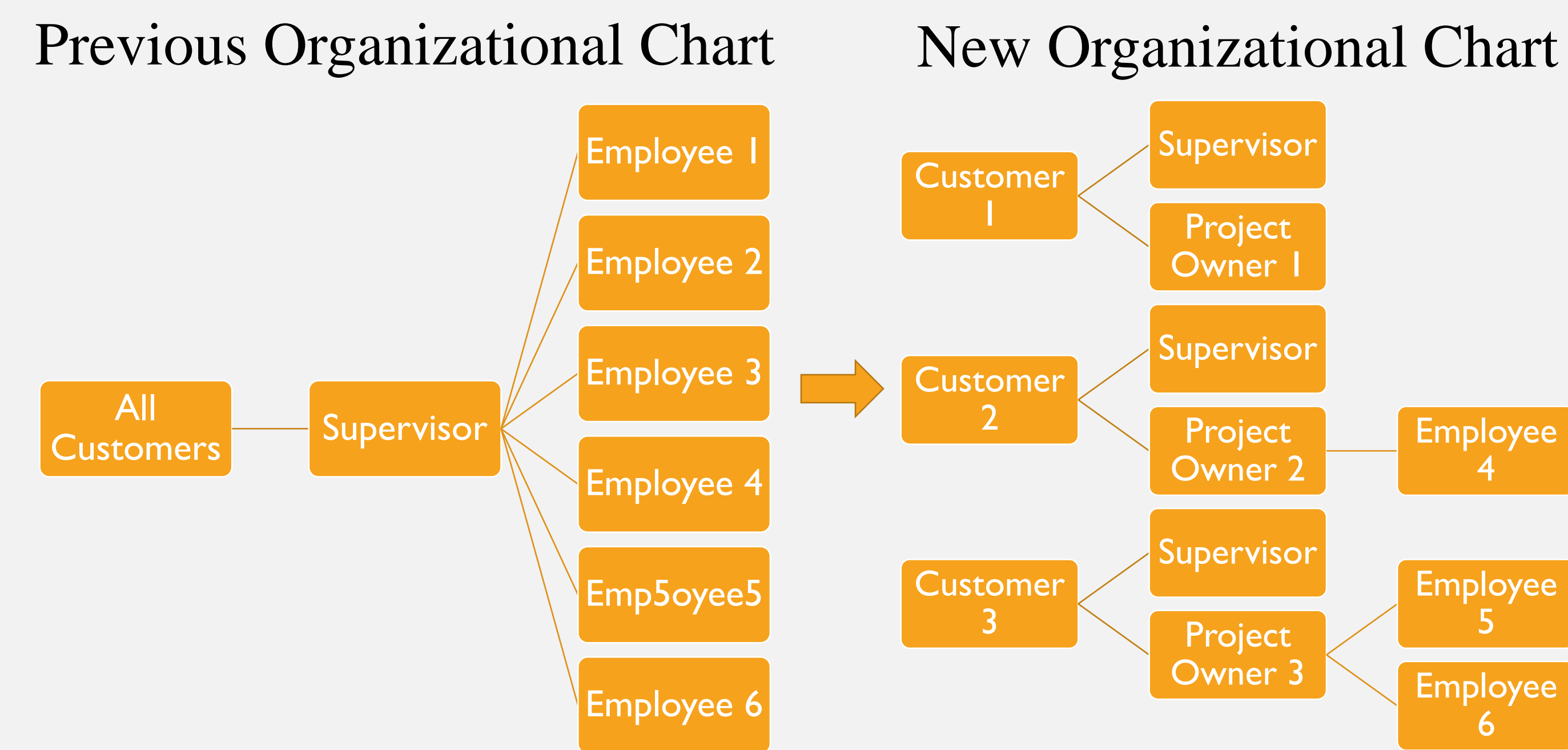


Figure 2
Team Organization Structure

Systems integration meetings were held to help team members to learn from each other about the different work that was being performed through all the different projects. These meetings would in turn help develop the team and increase their capability.

Once the team was working towards their development negotiations with the customers started. The first action that was taken, was re-evaluating the customer's needs. Their needs have always been tied to the productivity and capability of the team, if the team could prove themselves more productive and capable, the customer would make more complicated requests.

Different possibilities of new work were explored and proposals were discussed with the customer. Each proposal included an increase in budget for the work to be performed, if these proposals were accepted it would mean that the team would be able to eventually have the amount of budget required to end the year.

Additional to the new work proposals, travel proposals for On-Site Work Experience Program (OSWEP) were discussed. This program would allow the project owners to travel to the customers site and learn first-hand the skills they need to perform high capability work that they would not be able to learn at IAS.

RESULTS

During the first few weeks of the new team structure, progress on the team's performance was observed. Tasks were being delivered efficiently to the customer due to better team organization.

During the systems integration meetings, the team discussed the work being performed and difficulties they had while performing it as well as lessons learned from each task.

The customers accepted two of the proposals for new work, granting a total of 950 hours. Figure 3 shows an increase in available hours. The team is still shy of 7% or 250 hours to meet the department sales goal for the end of the year.

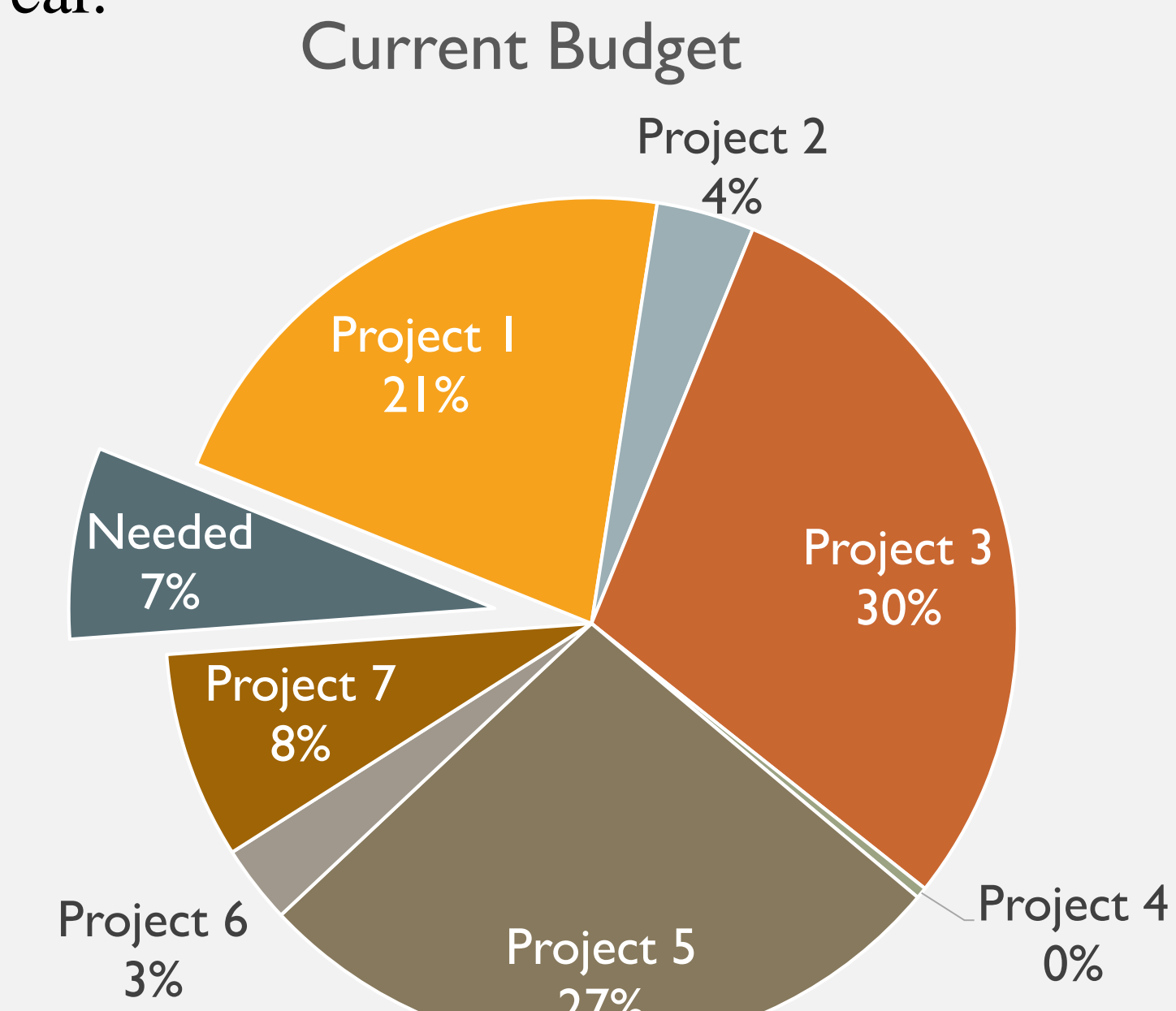


Figure 3
Team Budget with Added Funding

The customers agreed that it would be helpful if the project owners traveled to the customer's site in Connecticut. Schedules for travel are being made for each project owner, the first one will be travelling as soon as the first week of November 2016.

CONCLUSIONS

Management organized the team in a way that achieved higher work efficiency. With the actions taken the team will reach higher capability in less time than was thought possible so, it can be said that the objective of team growth and development will be achieved.

Budget wise, management could get about 80% of the budget required to finish the year. This increase in budget is enough to cover the team's work for the end of year at a rate of 8.2 hours daily, unfortunately this still doesn't meet with the department's goal for end of year sales. Management will keep looking for opportunities for further funding.

INTRODUCTION

The company the problem is focused on is called Infotech Aerospace Services (IAS), which is in Isabela, PR. It is an outsourcing company that provides multiple types of engineering services and support to aircraft engine manufacturers. In this case, the team involved in the problem performs engine performance analyses for a specific military engine model. These analyses are performed at different phases of the engine; for example, production, development and field testing.