**🎬 Case Study: “Building the Projector” – A Strategic Vision That Disrupted an Industry**

**🕒 Duration: ~20 minutes**

**📚 Purpose: Help students apply project management principles while exploring innovation, risk, stakeholder management, and strategic execution.**

**🧠 Overview**

In this case study, your students will act as **Project Managers** responsible for building and launching a **home projector device and streaming service** for a startup that wants to compete with the outdated video rental model—**a direct Blockbuster rival**.

The story is inspired by **Netflix’s rise** and **Blockbuster’s fall**, with a fictional twist to bring it to life.

**🎞️ Background**

It’s the early 2000s. Blockbuster is king of the video rental industry with thousands of stores across America. Families flock in to rent DVDs, pay late fees, and buy overpriced popcorn at checkout. It’s routine.

Then a little-known startup called **Netflix** proposes a different idea:

“What if customers could **rent DVDs online** and get them delivered to their homes with **no late fees**?”

They pitch this model to Blockbuster—and even offer to **sell Netflix for $50 million**.  
Blockbuster laughs them out of the room.

Fast forward:  
Netflix innovates with **streaming**, **data algorithms**, and **original content**, while Blockbuster clings to its traditional brick-and-mortar model.

By 2010, Blockbuster files for bankruptcy.  
Netflix becomes a global giant worth billions.

**🎯 Your Mission as a Project Team**

Your startup, **VisionStream**, wants to get ahead of this curve.

You're hired as Project Managers to **build and launch a device called “The Projector”—a compact home streaming system bundled with a digital library**. Think of it as an early version of Roku or Apple TV—but in 2002.

**🧱 Project Parameters**

**🎯 Objective:**

Launch “The Projector” and its streaming platform in 6 months, starting with a beta market of 10,000 users in college towns.

**💰 Budget:**

* $1.2 million
* Includes hardware, software, licensing content, and marketing

**⏳ Timeline:**

* 6 months to build, test, and deploy
* Stakeholder review every 4 weeks

**👥 Key Stakeholders:**

* **CEO**: Visionary, aggressive timeline, wants results fast
* **Investors**: Expect ROI in 12–18 months
* **Content Partners**: Want contracts, nervous about licensing
* **Hardware Team**: Based overseas, timezone conflicts
* **Marketing Team**: Focused on student influencers and word-of-mouth

**🔧 Project Challenges**

Students will have to consider and discuss:

* How to break down the project (WBS)
* Risk of technology failure or poor streaming quality
* Budget decisions: hardware vs content acquisition
* Managing vendors in different time zones
* How to measure success (KPIs)
* Preparing a stakeholder communication plan

**💬 Guided Group Questions (Interactive Discussion)**

**Part 1 – Planning Phase**

1. What would your **WBS** look like for building this product?
2. What are **3 major risks** you foresee and how would you manage them?
3. What type of **project lifecycle** would you use? Predictive, Agile, or Hybrid?

**Part 2 – Execution & Communication**

1. How would you handle conflicts between the overseas hardware team and your local developers?
2. What would your **stakeholder communication plan** include?
3. What **quality controls** would you put in place to ensure the streaming experience is smooth?

**Part 3 – Monitoring & Delivery**

1. What **KPIs** would you track during launch?
2. What would a successful beta launch look like?
3. How would you **present your progress** to the CEO and investors in week 4?

**🎓 Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the session, students should be able to:

* Break down a project into actionable parts (WBS)
* Apply communication planning and stakeholder management
* Consider real-world risks and trade-offs
* Use metrics and status reports to communicate progress
* Understand the importance of innovation and timing in strategic execution

**💥 Wrap-Up Insight**

Netflix succeeded not because of luck—but because they **saw around the corner**, managed their projects well, and responded to the evolving needs of users with speed and strategy.

Blockbuster failed not just because of arrogance, but because they **refused to change**.

**As a Project Manager, you don’t just manage tasks—you manage vision.**