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**END OF TERM REFLECTION PAPER**

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**Introduction**

Project management combines technical expertise, leadership, and interpersonal skills to achieve goals efficiently. This report reflects on three key areas: project management tools, the role of leadership through metaphor, and conflict resolution in relationships. By applying techniques like the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and the Influence Currency Model, I gained valuable insights into managing teams and resolving challenges. These experiences highlight the importance of clear planning, adaptability, and effective communication in achieving success.

**Section 1: Project Management Experience**

Project management integrates planning, organization, and execution to achieve goals effectively. This report reflects on the key skills and knowledge I gained through my project management experience, focusing on the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), risk management, and the scope statement. These tools enhanced my understanding of managing complex projects while fostering effective teamwork and communication.

The WBS was an essential tool that improved our planning for the wedding project by dividing it into manageable tasks such as venue selection and catering logistics. This breakdown clarified priorities, revealed dependencies, and made resource allocation more effective. The WBS also fostered team accountability, aligning with the PMBOK Guide’s emphasis on clear project scope decomposition (Project Management Institute, 2021). This experience highlighted WBS’s applicability in professional settings like software development, where tasks can be

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organized into features and modules. It underscored how structured planning improves project clarity and adaptability.

Also, brainstorming risks allowed us to prepare for challenges like logistical delays and financial constraints. Categorizing risks by likelihood and impact led to actionable mitigation strategies, such as arranging backup vendors. This proactive approach prevented disruptions and emphasized collaboration, as team members contributed diverse perspectives.

Moreover, Risk management is vital in professional projects, helping minimize delays and cost overruns. This process equipped me with a framework for anticipating challenges and implementing solutions, particularly in dynamic environments like software engineering.

In terms of the scope statement, it provided a clear framework for aligning the wedding’s dual purposes—personal celebration and political fundraising. By defining objectives and constraints, such as a $200,000 budget and the fixed date, the team avoided scope creep and made informed decisions. This experience emphasized the importance of scope clarity in managing stakeholder expectations and achieving measurable outcomes. It also reinforced the role of scope statements as foundational tools in professional practice.

Lastly,Collaboration played a central role in executing these project management processes. Open communication and frequent meetings ensured alignment and trust within the team. For instance, discussing potential catering delays led to backup plans, highlighting the value of diverse input. These interpersonal skills—active listening, conflict resolution, and fostering dialogue—are transferable to professional environments, enhancing team productivity and morale.

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To sum up,this project provided practical insights into project management, particularly the value of WBS, risk management, and scope statements in planning and execution. These tools, combined with effective team interactions, have strengthened my ability to handle complex projects. Moving forward, I aim to refine these skills by engaging stakeholders early and incorporating regular review cycles.

**Section 2: Metaphor for Project Management**

Project management is often likened to conducting an orchestra, as both require aligning the efforts of various participants toward a unified goal. While this comparison emphasizes the importance of coordination and leadership, it doesn’t fully capture all the complexities of project management. In reflecting on my group project experience this semester, I will explore how this metaphor fits, where it falls short, suggest an alternative metaphor, and provide recommendations for effective project management practices.

The analogy between a project manager (PM) and an orchestra conductor is quite fitting, as both roles involve organizing and guiding a team toward a shared outcome. During the first half of our group project, I took on many PM duties, particularly when team members were unclear about their roles or tasks. I helped them navigate by referencing the scope statement and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). This is similar to a conductor who leads musicians by signaling when to play, ensuring their efforts contribute to the overall performance. Likewise, I offered the team clarity and direction, helping us stay organized and on track.

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While the conductor metaphor captures certain aspects of project management, it overlooks the interpersonal and motivational challenges PMs face. For example, there were days when team members were disengaged or demotivated. As the informal PM, I had to use communication skills to reignite their enthusiasm and ensure their active participation. This is a dynamic not reflected in the conductor metaphor, as conductors cannot pause a performance to individually motivate musicians. Additionally, project management often involves managing external factors, such as stakeholder expectations and unforeseen risks, which are not captured in the conductor analogy. A PM’s role extends beyond coordination to include adaptability, problem-solving, and fostering a collaborative environment.

A more fitting metaphor for project management might be that of a ship captain. Sailing is similar to the extended timeline and complexity of a project, requiring resource allocation, risk management, and strategic decision-making. Just as a captain allocates limited provisions and navigates through potential hazards, a PM must manage budgets, identify risks, and adapt plans as needed. Moreover, the captain’s leadership extends to motivating and supporting the crew during long voyages, a parallel to maintaining team morale and cohesion throughout a project. This metaphor captures the multidimensional nature of project management, encompassing not only coordination but also resilience and leadership under pressure.

To apply these reflections, I recommend that PMs focus on clear communication and decisive action during challenging situations. When projects deviate from the plan and team morale falters, PMs should act firmly, relying on data and background knowledge to make informed decisions. Regularly revisiting project goals and fostering an inclusive environment

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where all team members feel valued can help sustain motivation. Additionally, incorporating structured frameworks, such as the WBS and risk management processes, ensures clarity and preparedness, enabling teams to navigate complexities effectively.

While the conductor metaphor highlights the importance of coordination in project management, it fails to capture the motivational and problem-solving aspects of the role. A ship captain offers a more comprehensive metaphor, reflecting the multifaceted responsibilities of a PM. By adopting proactive and adaptive strategies, project managers can lead their teams toward success, regardless of the challenges encountered.

**Section 3: Reflecting on Relationship**

Building and maintaining healthy relationships often requires addressing conflict and misunderstandings. In my experience with a friend at university, I encountered challenges due to his defensive and occasionally rude behavior. Applying the Influence Currency Model helped me reflect on the nature of this relationship and how confronting the issues ultimately improved our understanding of one another.

To start with, I struggled to gain cooperation and establish a meaningful connection with him due to his defensive and abrasive behavior. According to the Influence Currency Model, I attempted to exchange relationship-related currencies by fostering open communication and addressing the inappropriate comments directly. Despite receiving apologies, his behavior did not change, which suggested that our "relationship bank account" was in the red—a deficit that created tension and hindered trust.

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To address the problem, I opted for a collaborating approach from the Thomas-Kilmann model of conflict resolution. Instead of avoiding the issue or accommodating his behavior, I openly confronted him with my concerns, expressing my frustrations clearly but respectfully. This conversation was uncomfortable but necessary, as it allowed him to share his perspective and explain how his past experiences with bullying influenced his actions. This exchange of personal-related currencies, such as empathy and understanding, helped rebuild the relationship and shift the "bank account" to the black.

This experience reinforced the value of direct yet empathetic communication in resolving conflicts and strengthening relationships. By addressing issues head-on and fostering mutual understanding, we were able to establish a healthier dynamic. For future projects and interactions, I plan to focus on identifying appropriate influence currencies and utilizing conflict resolution strategies like collaboration to build stronger, more cooperative relationships.

**Conclusion**

This report emphasizes the importance of technical tools and interpersonal skills in successful project management. Using strategies like risk management and collaboration helped me address both team dynamics and personal conflicts. The ship captain metaphor illustrates the adaptability and resilience needed in leadership. These experiences will guide me in managing future projects and fostering positive, productive relationships.

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