Learning Journal 1

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Course: SOEN 6841: Software Project Management

Dates Rage of activities: 9th September 2024 – 20th September 2024

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1. Key Concepts Learned:

In Class

After attending the first class I could define appropriately what the project actually means.
"Project is a set of activities undertaken to accomplish certain goals and has a start and end date"
This simple definition helps us characterize tasks and projects into well-defined structure for effective management.
For Software projects in general I learned that they are more difficult to build than other engineered artifacts.

At Home

After attending the lecture I sort out to read the reference book "Software Project Management: A Process-Driven Approach" by Ashfaque Ahmed
I read the first two chapters of the book and tries to summarize my learnings and key concepts given below:

Chapter 1: Introduction to Software Project Management

This chapter emphasizes why software projects require structured management. Ahmed explains that projects often face tight deadlines and budgets, and a process-driven approach is key to handling such constraints. Software engineering principles are foundational to this approach, ensuring high product quality while optimizing resources and controlling risks. The author also introduces the concept of a **process framework**, which includes various stages like initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure.

Key Concepts

- Importance of process-driven project management.
- The role of software engineering in maintaining quality, budget, and time.
- Introduction to basic project management frameworks and methodologies (e.g., Waterfall, Agile).

Chapter 2: Project Initiation Management

This chapter focuses on the initial phase of a project—its initiation. A successful software project begins with the project charter, which defines objectives, scope, stakeholders, and overall feasibility. Ahmed stresses that proper initiation helps in setting realistic expectations and planning the next steps. Conducting feasibility studies, identifying risks early, and gathering requirements are critical tasks at this stage. Without solid groundwork, projects can easily fail to meet goals.

Key Concepts:

- **Project Charter:** A document that outlines the project's purpose, objectives, and key stakeholders.
- **Feasibility Studies:** Assess the technical, financial, and operational viability of the project.
- **Risk Identification:** Early recognition of risks helps in developing mitigation strategies.
- **Scope Definition:** Clearly outlining what will be included in the project to avoid scope creep.

Scope creep is the expansion of a project's scope beyond its predefined limits without corresponding accommodations in resources, time or budget. These chapters lay a foundation for a structured, systematic approach to managing software projects, ensuring both efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Application in Real Projects:

The first chapter helps define what a software project is and how software development models be utilized to structure a projects lifecycle from ideation stage to completion stage.
Many projects both open sourced and company projects are following the process framework being highlighted in the book. This simple organization saves time, cost and delivers a good quality project at the end of the lifecycle.
Th second chapter on the other hand discusses the start of a project including initiation steps, formation of charter, objectives and setting the scope. This step is the most crucial step in real world as when we ought to start a new project the first thing we define is the charter that is what is the main use and aim of the project in few lines. Next we define the objectives which are some points we need to make sure that the initial version of the project would cover the given objects and finally we look at the scope which sets the boundaries of the project and determines the completion time of the project.

3. Peer Interactions:

No peer interactions were undertaken as such.

4. Challenges Faced:

Time management becomes an issue when we have a lot of things on our plate but this subject teaches that exact same thing about a project so I am looking forward to learning and improving y organization skills further as the course progresses. No difficulties so far with the course content.

5. Personal development activities:

I am starting a new project and for that project I am following the guidelines and steps I have learned till now during the course. I am still working on the problem statement but will soon form a project charter and continue from there.

6. Goals for the Next Week:

Next week I am planning on studying chapters 3 and 4 apart from revisiting the ppts of chapters 1 and 2. I am also looking forward to start working on the group project and prepare for the pitch from the coming week.