**LEARNING JOURNAL**

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**Course:** Software Project Management

**Journal URL:** <https://github.com/habeebdashti/SOEN6841journal>

**Week 1:** 18/01/2024 – 24/01/2024

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**Key Concepts Learned:**

The summary of key concepts learnt in week 1 sessions are:

* **Operation vs Project**

Gained clarity that not everything built from scratch or added existing features is a project, it is an **operation**. Example: - Building a table, house, etc., from scratch or adding non-unique features that do not solve a problem.

However, a **project** is something unique that is solving an existing problem in a very efficiently. A project might be unique from scratch or can be add uniqueness to something that exists. Example: - Creating an office chair that adjusts ergonomically to maintain the correct posture of your body once you sit. It eliminates the problem of feeling uncomfortable frequently due to longer sitting sessions while working and avoids future health problems.

* **Project Manager Responsibilities**

Understood that to stand as a successful manager of a project, holding experience in the specific project technology is unnecessary. A manager can be successful with abstract knowledge of technologies, while the major responsibilities come with an understanding of project management, software engineering, tools, managing the team, clients and suppliers, and working under an organisation framework. Deadlines are of utmost importance to prove yourself as a successful manager who gets the objectives and/or sub-objectives completed within the given time constraints.

* **Understanding Business POV(point of view)**

In such a highly competitive market where everyone is pursuing a particular field in large numbers, it is not going to help in growth by being one-directional. In the end, everything that earns money comes under the business sector. Thus, a software developer should always understand the needs of the market and sell their skills according to the perspective that would help sustain them.

* **Management vs Technical Metrics**

The “Productivity data report” of the project acts as the metrics used for **management**. It helps with measuring the improvement of the business and evaluation of productivity, while “Quality data” of the working project is **technical metrics**.

* **Comparison of a Project’s Charter, Scope and Objectives**

A general guideline of the project is the **charter**, diving a bit further into details and the objectives of the implementation plan is the **scope** and having set the achievable and measurable goals to work hands-on is called **objectives**. Objectives should be always S.M.A.R.T(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, relevant and Time Constrained)

* **Project Initiation and Iterative Model**

Many factors such as resources, number of workers, financial investment, return profit, teams and time required to deliver the project are considered. However, the crucial part is the risk factor. If the risk factor is high in taking up the project, the organisation drops it rather than face loss of money and damage to reputation in the market. The iterative model aims to reduce project size by breaking down complete requirements into smaller sets, treated as separate iterations. Each iteration, starting from scratch, builds upon the previous one, allowing for customer approval before progressing to the next. Project planning occurs at three levels: top-level for the entire product development, middle-level for major releases, and the lowest level for each iteration. Project initiation is relatively at the iteration level, with the team selecting the next set of requirements informally.

* **Waterfall model Project Management**

Learned about the environment under which a project starts and ends following a waterfall model through a diagram representation. The diagram explains the sequence of steps Initiation, Planning, Monitoring and Control and Closure. Here, the waterfall system lies between Planning and Closure, consisting of the following steps in order, i.e., Requirements, Design, Construction, Testing, Release and Maintenance.

**Application in Real Projects:**

In practical scenarios, there is a tendency to mistakenly treat routine operations as projects. By adopting a more discerning approach, we can distinguish between the two and shift from monotonous development to genuine project work. Rather than blindly replicating existing solutions, a market-oriented research approach allows us to identify unique needs and potentially revolutionize the project. This strategic shift not only guards against project failures but also opens the door to developing innovative solutions. It empowers us to take ownership of the project, enabling a more holistic and self-managed approach to its execution.

* **Potential challenges**

1. Balancing abstract and technical knowledge.
2. Continuous adaptation to market needs.
3. Ensuring accurate distinction between operations and projects.
4. Balancing qualitative and quantitative metrics.

* **Potential Benefits**

1. Enhanced project leadership skills.
2. Improved alignment with market demands.
3. Clear project guidelines and focused objectives.
4. Flexibility and adaptability in project approaches.

**Peer Interactions:**

During a conversation with a colleague to evaluate the relevance of the week 1 session, we discussed showcasing our previous projects in the market. It became evident that these projects might not find users, even for free, as superior and comparable products are already available. This realisation highlighted the misconception of treating operations as projects. We recognized that our perspective was limited, akin to frogs in a well seeking solutions within our confined environment. The key insight was the need to step outside our comfort zone and view the broader external landscape to identify effective solutions.

**Challenges Faced:**

I have spent a lot of hours reading from the textbook, the internet, slides provided and revising the case study to try and understand week 1 as accurately as possible. So, I have spent double the time suggested for reading. The challenge I faced was that I am a slow reader; spent more than the required time and understood to overcome this challenge I needed to read more often. It would increase my speed too slowly. There are a few concepts that are unclear due to the clouding up of my mind by reading continuously. So, I need to revisit them and read Chapter 2 again with a fresh mind.

**Personal development activities:**

Reading itself has helped me as it felt interesting to read and learn. I approached my roommate with an agree or disagree and justify style about the things I learned. Since I am a bit introverted, the activities this course has to offer would help me improve my self-esteem too.

**Goals for the Next Week:**

My goal for next week is to interact in class with the Professor about the topics being discussed and find different people to review the contents as it would enable me to understand different opinions. I feel interactive way is the best way to question, understand and remember the facts being taught.