Project Plan Briefing Reflection

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My team met on the Friday prior to our briefing in order to prepare the presentation. We each split up the work and gathered materials from our prior presentations, distilled the most important information, and added to the briefing. I personally pulled in our abbreviated Gantt Chart from an earlier presentation we gave to the Air Force. I also grabbed our most important constraints and assumptions. When we had added all of the required information, we realized we only had 7 of the eight required body slides for our team. We decided to add an extra non-required slide in order to fulfill this requirement. The slide we added discussed the work we had done most recently which was researching and comparing radar's that we might buy. The main part of our project will be developing a radar sensor to detect people and display this information to a user. Therefore, the radar we use is a very important decision that will affect the success of our product. We have started investigating this question early in order to make sure we have plenty of time to make an informed and optimal decision. The extra slide we added showed several of the radar boards we had researched and presented a comparison of some of their specs along with images of the products. This process allowed us to quickly compile the presentation. We did not have to make any new decisions for this presentation since we had already created all of the information required for the briefing in previous assignments. Therefore, there was not really need for discussion and we could independently add the required information to complete the presentation.

We met on Monday to prepare to present. This was part of our already planned Monday meeting with Dr Redkar. We decided who would do which slides simply by each person selecting a pair of consecutive slides that they liked. We were all more or less equally well versed in all parts of the project plan so it did not seem very important who did what. We were confident in everyone's ability to present all of the information. After deciding which slides everyone would present, we independently thought about and practiced what we would say. I personally chose to present our success criteria and condensed Gantt Chart. I thought about how I could describe the success criteria and some of the terminology I would use. I also thought about how to summarize the Gantt Chart without being too vague or boring. However, I did not come up with a specific plan of what exactly I wanted to say for either slide.

During class, we chose to be the first team to present so we could get out our nervousness and then focus on paying attention to our classmates' presentations. When we went up, Miguel introduced our team and we each introduced ourselves. Then we moved into the body slides. I was the second to last to speak. When I presented our success criteria, I explained that they summarized our most important requirements and specifications. I tried to go through the chart, explaining what each criteria was without being boring and reading out the specific values. I also tried to explain why each criteria was important to our project. I mentioned that we had received judging criteria from the Air Force and that we had interviewed first responders and that our success criteria had come from the information from both of these. Although I tried to focus on what was important/difficult to understand and avoided reading the entire slide, I feel I still spent too long on this slide. I went through the Gantt Chart very quickly. I explained that due to the competition dates, we were on an accelerated timeline. I also stated that consequently, we intended to begin testing our subsystems this semester so that next semester we could focus on integration. I spent little time on this slide partly because I thought there was not much interesting content here. Other than those two points, our timeline is basically the same as everyone else's, and also, I recognized that we were running out of time.

Our time ran out right as Joel was finishing our second to last slide. As a result, Michaela hurriedly put up the last slide and stated what it was and that we had done some benchmarking. Therefore, one issue was that we ran out of time a little too soon and we're not able to properly finish the presentation. We should have provided a higher-level description of some of our slides and presented fewer details that could be read or that are the same for everyone else.

We also received feedback that we read from our slides too much. I am not sure how much I did that. I feel like most of the things I said weren't actually on the slides and that I did a pretty good job of looking at the audience, but I am not sure. The next time we present I will take steps to make sure specifically that I do not (hopefully that I cannot) read off the slides. For example, I will put more pictures/diagrams and fewer words on my slides to make sure there is nothing to read. Also, I will stand in front of the slides so that I cannot easily look sideways to read them. Instead, I will have to turn around which will make it less easy to do accidentally. It's important that I, along with the rest of my team maintain eye contact with the audience. Aside from looking at the audience, we did not receive any specific criticism or feedback from our professor or the class. Therefore, I believe that the content of our presentation was good.

We can apply what we learned to the design review by practicing our entire presentation as a group to see how long it takes. This will help us make sure we are within our time. We also can give each other criticism about the quality of the things we say for each slide. This will allow us to cut out unnecessary content that takes up valuable time.