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SWENG 505

Portfolio 9

Over the course of the semester, I have learned a lot about myself and how I fit into the software project management role. I learned that my personality type is ISTJ. According to David Keirsey, this means that I prefer to supervise and oversee. I think that this is a double edge sword in terms of being a manager. I find that I do manage well, but I also have trouble giving direction and letting others complete it without trying to micromanage and be constantly aware of every piece of the project. I can address this by being cognisant of when I am overstepping the overseer role and stepping into the developer role - then stopping myself from doing so.

My goal is to be as much of a transformational leader as possible. I want those following me to know that I am thinking through each decision I make as much as possible and considering how it affects the greater picture. I don’t want others to think I am only interested in making decisions that benefit me or just a few individuals. I also don’t want others to think I expect something in return or that they are being punished when I make a decision, like you would with a transactional leader. I think I am well on my way to becoming this type of leader, I think I just need to be as transparent as possible when making and communicating my decisions with colleagues.

I have since discovered that my negotiation style is dependent on who I am negotiating with. However, I am usually a collaborative negotiator. I think that it’s better for the bigger picture when everyone wins. The best way for me to improve is work on crafting offers that are as mutually beneficial as possible.

The most glaring antipattern that I exhibit is Geek Hazing. And although it is relatively harmless, I would still like to address it and limit my usage of it. In the future I will be more deliberate about using it, maybe saving it for testing a new developer's experience to see how they handle certain tasks so they can best be allocated. As for the antipatterns that I see around me, I have been trying to be more confrontational. Not necessarily aggressively call them out, but maybe speak out more about my observations and work with those who are exhibiting it to come to a solution.

I’ve learned that there is a lot that goes into project planning and estimating costs. There are so many factors that can contribute to project delays and rising costs. Fortunately, some of the new tools taught in the course can help me to provide more accurate information regarding scheduling and cost in the first place. This can help to mitigate project deviations caused by other factors.

Systematic thinking can aid in simplifying aspects of a system at the operational and managerial level. At the managerial level, it is important to see how all pieces of a system fit together, which will help with project scheduling, cost estimation, and overall success of the project. At this level, it is important to know how the system behaves as a whole, not necessarily how or why (design choices) each part behaves a particular way. At the operational level, you won’t have to spend time developing a deep understanding of other pieces of the project. Understanding how the system as a whole will behave can provide better insight into how your portion of the project should behave. At both levels, it allows you to understand the high level concepts needed to know the project and ensure its success.

Each lesson in this course has taught me ways to fine tune my current process or how to address any shortcomings. I mentioned ways to improve some of skills above, but some of the key lessons that I learned this semester that will improve my project management skills are:

* Leading can be learned. There may be some innate qualities that predispose you to a specific style, but one can learn and improve on any style of leadership
* Antipatterns are unavoidable. Finding a positive way to address antipatterns within yourself or those around will ultimately lead to a more successful team.
* Successful negotiations aren’t about taking everything you can from your “opponent”. It is important to contextualize your negotiations and, more often than not, find ways for both parties to come out winning.
* Prepare for the unexpected when planning a project. There are an unlimited number of factors that can affect a project timeline and budget. Taking advantage of tools, frameworks, and processes can help to mitigate the effect of some of these factors.
* Understand system interactions over system implementation. For complex systems, it is more beneficial to understand system interactions than how individual pieces of the system function

These key points will allow me to have a more well rounded understanding of what it takes to manage and lead a successful project.