Google Project Management Certificate

Course 4 - Project Execution Study Notes

Prepared for Coursera Google Project Management Professional Certificate

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Contents

1 Module 1: Tracking and Managing Progress

1.1 Key Concepts

- **Progress Tracking**:
  - Monitor project progress against the plan using key performance indicators (KPIs) such as schedule variance, cost variance, and milestone completion rates.
  - Use tools like status reports and dashboards to visualize progress.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**:
  - *Schedule Variance (SV)*: Measures deviation from the planned schedule (SV = Earned Value Planned Value).
  - *Cost Variance (CV)*: Measures deviation from the budget (CV = Earned Value Actual Cost).
  - *Earned Value Management (EVM)*: Integrates scope, schedule, and cost to assess project performance.
- **Change Management**:
  - Address scope changes, delays, or resource issues through a formal change control process.
  - Document changes in a change log and assess their impact on schedule, budget, and scope.
- **Tools for Tracking**:
  - Use project management software (e.g., Asana, Trello) and Google Sheets for tracking tasks, deadlines, and KPIs.
  - Regular status meetings ensure alignment and proactive issue resolution.

1.2 Study Tips

- **Track KPIs**:
  - Calculate SV and CV for a sample project (e.g., Budgeted Cost = \$10,000, Actual Cost = \$12,000, Earned Value = \$9,000 $\rightarrow$ CV = \$9,000 \$12,000 = -\$3,000).
  - Practice interpreting KPI results to identify project health.
- **Create a Status Report**:
  - Draft a weekly status report for a hypothetical project, including completed tasks, upcoming milestones, and issues.
  - Use a template from the course or Google Docs to structure the report.
- **Simulate Change Management**:

  - Develop a change request form for a scope change (e.g., adding a new feature) and outline its impact on schedule and budget.
  - Review the Plant Pals case study to understand change management in practice.
- **Explore Tools**:
  - Set up a project dashboard in Asana or Google Sheets to track tasks and KPIs.
  - Practice updating the dashboard with sample data to reflect progress.

2 Module 2: Quality Management

2.1 Key Concepts

- **Quality Standards**:
  - Define quality requirements for deliverables based on project objectives and stakeholder expectations.
  - Example: For a software project, quality standards might include zero critical bugs and 99% uptime.
- **Quality Assurance (QA)**:
  - Processes to ensure deliverables meet defined standards (e.g., code reviews, testing protocols).
  - Proactive measures to prevent defects before delivery.
- **Quality Control (QC)**:
  - Activities to verify deliverables meet standards (e.g., user acceptance testing, inspections).
  - Identify and correct defects during execution.
- **Continuous Improvement**:
  - Use frameworks like Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) to iteratively improve processes.
  - Gather stakeholder feedback to refine deliverables and processes.

2.2 Study Tips

- **Define Quality Standards**:
  - Create a quality checklist for a sample deliverable (e.g., a marketing report) with 35 criteria (e.g., accuracy, clarity, formatting).
  - Ensure criteria align with stakeholder expectations.
- **Practice PDCA**:
  - Apply the PDCA cycle to a hypothetical process (e.g., improving team meeting efficiency).

  - Example: Plan (set agenda), Do (hold meeting), Check (gather feedback), Act (adjust format).
- **Simulate QA/QC**:
  - Develop a QA plan for a project task (e.g., software testing) and outline QC steps (e.g., bug tracking).
  - Review course examples to understand QA/QC applications.
- **Gather Feedback**:
  - Role-play collecting stakeholder feedback on a sample deliverable and propose improvements based on input.

3 Module 3: Data-Driven Decision Making

3.1 Key Concepts

- **Data Prioritization**:
  - Identify critical data for decision-making (e.g., KPIs, risk levels, stakeholder feedback).
  - Focus on data that impacts project outcomes (e.g., cost overruns, schedule delays).
- **Data Analysis**:
  - Use tools like Google Sheets to analyze data (e.g., trend analysis, variance reports).
  - Interpret data to identify issues and opportunities for improvement.
- **Data Presentation**:
  - Communicate insights effectively using charts, graphs, and storytelling techniques.
  - Create stakeholder reports or presentations in Google Slides or PowerPoint.
- **Decision-Making Process**:
  - Collect data, analyze options, evaluate impacts, and implement decisions.
  - Document decisions to maintain transparency and accountability.

3.2 Study Tips

- **Analyze Data**:
  - Use Google Sheets to create a sample dataset (e.g., task completion times) and calculate metrics like average duration or variance.
  - Practice interpreting results to recommend actions.
- **Create Visualizations**:

  - Build a bar chart or line graph in Google Sheets to represent project progress (e.g., tasks completed per week).
  - Ensure visualizations are clear and labeled for stakeholder use.
- **Draft a Stakeholder Report**:
  - Create a report summarizing KPIs and recommendations for a hypothetical project.
  - Use a course template or Google Slides to structure the presentation.
- **Practice Decision-Making**:
  - Simulate a decision scenario (e.g., addressing a budget overrun) by listing options, analyzing impacts, and selecting a solution.

4 Module 4: Leadership and Team Dynamics

4.1 Key Concepts

- **Team Development Stages**:
  - Tuckmans model: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, Adjourning.
  - Each stage requires different leadership approaches (e.g., directive in Forming, facilitative in Storming).
- **Leadership Skills**:
  - Motivate teams through clear communication, recognition, and goal alignment.
  - Resolve conflicts using active listening and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Team Dynamics**:
  - Foster collaboration, trust, and accountability among team members.
  - Address challenges like miscommunication or low morale to maintain productivity.
- **Effective Team Management**:
  - Set clear expectations, delegate tasks, and provide regular feedback.
  - Use team-building activities to strengthen relationships and performance.

4.2 Study Tips

- **Understand Tuckmans Model**:
  - Create flashcards for the five stages of team development and their characteristics.
  - Example: Storming = Conflicts arise, leadership focuses on mediation.
- **Practice Leadership**:

  - Role-play a conflict resolution scenario (e.g., team disagreement on priorities) and propose a solution.
  - Use active listening techniques (e.g., paraphrasing) in the simulation.
- **Build a Team Plan**:
  - Draft a team management plan for a sample project, including roles, communication methods, and team-building activities.
  - Review course examples to ensure alignment with best practices.
- **Engage with Peers**:
  - Discuss team dynamics in Coursera forums, sharing strategies for motivating teams or resolving conflicts.

5 General Study Tips for Course 4

- **Organize Notes**:
  - Create a dedicated folder in Google Docs or Notion for Course 4 notes, with sub-sections for each module.
  - Maintain a glossary of key terms (e.g., EVM, PDCA, Tuckmans model) for quick reference.
- **Engage Actively**:
  - Complete all quizzes, discussion prompts, and peer-reviewed assignments to reinforce learning.
  - Participate in Coursera forums to discuss execution strategies and leadership techniques.
- **Practice Application**:
  - Apply concepts to a real-world scenario, such as managing a personal project (e.g., organizing a workshop).
  - Create a status report, quality checklist, and team management plan for this project.
- **Time Management**:
  - Allocate 23 hours per module, aiming to complete Course 4 in 45 weeks.
  - Set deadlines for assignments and review sessions to stay on track.
- **Tool Familiarity**:
  - Experiment with Asana for task tracking, Google Sheets for KPI analysis, and Google Slides for stakeholder reports.
  - Practice updating dashboards and reports with hypothetical project data.

6 Additional Notes

- **Course Context**: Course 4 focuses on executing projects effectively, covering progress tracking, quality management, data-driven decisions, and team leadership. It includes videos, readings, quizzes, and hands-on assignments (e.g., Plant Pals case study).
- **Certification Benefits**: Contributes to the Google Project Management Professional Certificate, accredited by PMI, with credits toward CAPM certification (over 100 hours total for the program).
- **Resources**: Use Coursera-provided templates (e.g., status reports, RACI charts) and explore tools like Asana and Google Sheets for practical experience.
- **Program Cost**: $49/month after a 7-day free trial; financial aid is available.
- **AI Integration**: Course materials may reference AI tools for tasks like KPI analysis or team performance monitoring.