

Learning Journal 1

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Course: SOEN 6841

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Key Concepts Learned

This week, I concentrated on **project initiation** and the foundational elements of **software project management**, focusing on:

1. **Project Charters:** Defined by the **top management**, these outline the **purpose**, **objectives**, and high-level goals of a project.
2. **Project Scope:** Establishes clear **boundaries**, specifying deliverables, required functionalities, and the expected **quality standards**.
3. **SMART Objectives:** This framework transforms abstract ideas into **specific**, **measurable**, **achievable**, **relevant**, and **time-bound objectives**.

Additionally, I explored how to break down project tasks into **manageable phases** and establish a **baseline schedule**, which sets expectations for time, cost, and effort.

Application in Real Projects

These learnings can be applied to **real-world scenarios**, such as managing a **software product for a non-profit organization**.

- **Project Charter as a Motivational Tool:** Incorporating a **vision statement** alongside technical goals can inspire and align stakeholders. For example, framing a software development project as “empowering local communities through efficient technology” motivates the team beyond operational goals.
- **Refining Project Scope:** By detailing **functional requirements** and **exclusions**, ambiguity is minimized. This clarity supports **risk mitigation** and avoids **scope creep**.

Peer Interactions

In group discussions, I introduced the idea of embedding **motivational vision elements** in **project charters**. Feedback highlighted its adaptability for **corporate and Agile settings**, emphasizing its potential to foster **team cohesion**. Peers shared examples where **emotional alignment** enhanced performance, reinforcing my belief in integrating **technical and human-centric approaches**.

Challenges Faced

1. **Balancing Simplicity and Detail:** Defining the **project scope** concisely yet comprehensively required researching examples of well-structured project charters.
2. **Understanding Baselineing:** Differentiating between the **baseline schedule** and iterative refinements took time to internalize, particularly when applied to dynamic environments like **Agile** versus **Waterfall** models.

Personal Development Activities

To enhance my skills, I explored:

- **Visualization Tools:** I experimented with **Gantt charts** and **mind maps** to represent **project plans**, blending **analytical precision** with **visual engagement**.
- **Effort Estimation Techniques:** Studied methods like **COCOMO** and **Delphi** to gain better insights into predicting labor, cost, and time for projects.

These activities are sharpening my ability to combine **creative communication** with structured project management methodologies.

Goals for the Next Week

1. **Advanced Visualization:** Develop **dynamic dashboards** for tracking project milestones, using tools that support **real-time updates**.
2. **Mock Project Plan:** Create a detailed plan with integrated **motivational elements** to assess its feasibility and stakeholder reception.
3. **One-on-One Learning:** Schedule discussions with peers or mentors to refine my understanding of:
 - **Effort estimation techniques** like **Wideband Delphi**