Learning Journal 3 – Chapter 6&7

Student Name: TAREK FERDOUS

Course: Software Project Management – SOEN6841

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Dates Rage of activities: 10-10-2024 to 02-11-2024

Date of the journal: 02-11-2024

This journal reflects how I've grown in my understanding of project planning, monitoring and control and how these concepts are helping me improve my ability to manage projects effectively.

Key Concepts Learned: In Chapter 6, I learned about Project Planning, which involves defining the structure and sequence of activities for successful project execution. Key concepts included Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), top-down and bottom-up planning, resource allocation, and scheduling methods such as the Critical Path Method (CPM) and Goldratt's Critical Chain Method. I also explored quality assurance and risk management as essential components of a project plan to ensure goals are met on time and within budget.
Chapter 7 focused on Project Monitoring and Control, a continuous activity to track project progress against the plan. Important techniques included Earned Value Management (EVM) to measure schedule and budget variance, and the variance analysis process to identify deviations. The chapter also discussed corrective actions for issues, including resource leveling and schedule optimization, to realign projects with their original scope and objectives.

Application in Real Projects: In practical scenarios, these chapters provide essential strategies for managing both the planning and execution stages of projects. In real-world projects, creating a clear WBS and effectively allocating resources is crucial, especially when managing complex software development tasks with interdependent milestones. I can see how using tools like EVM in monitoring helps identify cost or schedule overruns early. These techniques will be particularly useful in projects with tight deadlines or budget constraints, allowing for prompt corrective actions to keep the project on track. These chapters gave me useful strategies for planning projects, monitor and control them.

Peer Interactions: Collaborating with my teammates allowed me to gain insights into applying planning techniques in Agile environments, where scope and requirements often change. Discussions on risk management and quality assurance helped deepen my understanding of balancing flexibility with control. Peers shared their experiences with using EVM in tracking project health, which gave me new ideas on how to approach budget monitoring in iterative projects. We also did brainstorming for strategies that we can apply for our project.

Challenges Faced: One challenge I faced was understanding the complexities of the Critical Path Method and Goldratt's Critical Chain Method, especially in estimating task durations and managing dependencies. I also found it challenging to interpret EVM metrics accurately, as it requires precise tracking of baseline vs. actuals. Balancing between monitoring progress and implementing

corrective actions was another difficult aspect, as it demands a strong grasp of project metrics and a quick response to deviations.

The topic analysis presentation was very difficult to do during the mid-week. I had an exam the day after the presentation. We had to prepare the poster which we did 2 days earlier than the presentation date. However, we were not properly ready for the presentation. The TA Hritik was helpful enough to give us the permission to do the presentation the next day. It helped us a lot.

Personal Development Activities: To enhance my understanding, I reviewed online case studies to observe how these concepts are applied in real-world projects. I also practiced exercises related to project planning, monitoring and control. I've been considering ways to incorporate these new insights, doing some initial brainstorming on potential applications on our project. I still need to share these ideas with my team members to get their feedback.

Goals for the Next Week: Next week, I plan to deepen my knowledge of resource allocation techniques and further explore corrective action strategies, especially in Agile settings. I also aim to practice with more case studies to strengthen my understanding of the Critical Path Method. Lastly, I intend to review examples of EVM implementation to better understand how to apply these concepts to larger projects, particularly focusing on budget variance tracking and its impact on project success. We have to think about our next project also. So, we need to do a small meeting.