LEARNING JOURNAL

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Course: SOEN 6841 Software Project Management

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Week 1: 18/01/2024 – 24/01/2024

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Key Concepts Learned:

In our first week, we dived into essential concepts that form the foundation of project management. Let's break down the key takeaways:

1. **Distinguishing Operation vs. Project:**

   We clarified that not everything we create or add features to is a project; some are routine operations. For instance, building a table from scratch is an operation, while a unique solution like creating an ergonomic office chair that tackles the discomfort of long sitting sessions is a project.

2. **Project Manager's Responsibilities:**

   We grasped that being a successful project manager doesn't necessarily require specific project technology expertise. Instead, success lies in understanding project management, software engineering, team dynamics, and meeting deadlines.

3. **Understanding Business Perspective:**

   In a competitive market, being one-directional hinders growth. We learned the importance of understanding the business perspective as everything that earns money falls under the business sector. Software developers should align their skills with market needs for sustained success.

4. **Management vs. Technical Metrics:**

We explored how "Productivity data reports" serve as metrics for management, helping measure business improvement and productivity evaluation. On the technical side, "Quality data" focuses on technical metrics for working projects.

5. Comparing Project's Charter, Scope, and Objectives:

The project's guidelines are outlined in the charter, with further details in the scope. Objectives, which should always be S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Constrained), set achievable and measurable goals for hands-on work.

6. Project Initiation and Iterative Model:

When starting a project, various factors such as resources, teams, financial investments, and risks are considered. We delved into the iterative model, which breaks down project requirements into smaller sets, treated as separate iterations. Each iteration builds upon the previous one, allowing for customer approval before progressing.

7. Waterfall Model Project Management:

We learned about the environment in which a project follows a waterfall model. The diagram illustrated the sequence of steps - Initiation, Planning, Monitoring and Control, and Closure. The waterfall system, positioned between Planning and Closure, encompasses steps like Requirements, Design, Construction, Testing, Release, and Maintenance.

Application in Real Projects:

Real-world application involves differentiating routine operations from genuine projects, avoiding the pitfall of treating everything as a project. Adopting a market-oriented research approach enables the identification of unique needs and transformative project solutions. This strategic shift guards against project failures, fosters innovation, and empowers project ownership, facilitating a holistic and self-managed execution.

Potential Challenges:

1. Balancing abstract and technical knowledge.

2. Continuous adaptation to market needs.

3. Ensuring accurate distinction between operations and projects.

4. Balancing qualitative and quantitative metrics.

Potential Benefits:

1. Enhanced project leadership skills.

2. Improved alignment with market demands.

3. Clear project guidelines and focused objectives.

4. Flexibility and adaptability in project approaches.

Peer Interactions:

Engaging in discussions with a colleague highlighted the misconception of treating routine operations as projects. The realization emphasized the need to step outside comfort zones, view the broader external landscape, and identify effective solutions.

Challenges Faced:

Extensive time spent on reading and revising raised challenges, particularly due to not being in the habit of reading. Overcoming this involves increasing reading frequency to improve speed and revisiting unclear concepts with a fresh mind.

Personal Development Activities:

Engaging in reading and discussing learned concepts with others, particularly with a classmate, enhanced interest and contributed to my personal growth. The course activities are anticipated to aid in improving self-esteem, especially for someone more introverted.

Goals for the Next Week:

The goal for the upcoming week is to actively participate in class discussions with the professor, seeking diverse opinions from different individuals to enhance understanding and retention of the discussed topics through interactive engagement.