Script for project management thing aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

Hello, I’m Hamish, and today I’ll be talking to you about activity planning, as well as showing you an example activity plan that I have drawn up, based on the case studies provided. I will be talking for around 7 minutes, after which I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.

So firstly, we’ll look at the procedure and guidelines for making effective activity plans.

A checklist can be used when creating project plans to make sure you follow each step and don’t miss anything out.

Step one on the checklist is to write down your tasks. At this point it can be useful to think about the level of detail you want to achieve with each task. For example, if you think about cooking a meal, you may have a step titled “put the chicken in the oven”, however, this could be broken down further if you wanted to. You could split up this task into “preheat the oven, open the door, etc.” Breaking down larger tasks into smaller ones helps to effectively estimate cost and time needed.

Step 2 is to establish the order of your tasks. Going back to the cooking analogy, you don’t want to serve the chicken before you’ve cooked it. This one’s pretty self-explanatory.

Next, we should think about the milestones of the project. These are significant points in the project that can be considered the end point of a large sets of tasks. These often note the end of a development phase, or a significant goal within the project.

After this, we must calculate the time needed for each task. Most project management software will automatically calculate start and end dates for you if you input a calendar of working times and the amount of man hours needed to complete the task. In order to gauge the hours needed to complete certain tasks, you can use past experience to help, or talk to the employees who will be carrying out each task. Remember to make the timeframe realistic for each task and allow sufficient time for a good standard of work to be done.

After we have laid out our tasks and have a schedule, we now need to add people and resources to each task. This details who will be doing what within each project. It is important not to overwork your resources and ensure there are no points where a single resource is being made to do multiple tasks. Factoring in any overtime that will be needed to complete the tasks on time can also be done here.

Finally, now we have our completed plan, we can sit back and relax, right? No. It’s almost impossible to create a plan that doesn’t run over time or budget, so it’s important to review your plan regularly and update it where needed. If you update the schedule, ensure that your resources are notified of this so as they can change their schedule accordingly.

The 2 main methods of modelling relationships between tasks are PERT and Gantt charts.

Here we have an example of an activity-on-node diagram, which is a common variation of the classic PERT chart, where the activities are placed between the nodes. These charts show the task name, the start and end dates, and the amount of work required to complete. It shows a clear path between each task and shows the dependency of each nicely. PERT charts are created before work has started on the project and allow for a clear view of the path taken through each task within your project.

But what if you wanted a chart you could update as work was being carried out?

Well don’t worry, Henry Gantt has just the thing for you.

Gantt charts are a flexible project management technique that can be updated as the task progresses and is effectively a horizontal bar chart detailing the length of each task. Gantt charts are usually created by filling a spread sheet with information and generating based off of that. This usually contain an ID, name, any predecessors to the task, and a duration, as well as a start and end date if not using auto scheduling. One of the most useful features of Gantt charts is the critical path, which we can see here is highlighted in red. Tasks that are on the critical path are tasks whose duration directly affect the time taken to complete the project. This visualisation is invaluable when trying to save money and time within a project. Gantt charts also give a better visualisation of time taken per task in comparison to PERT charts where the visualisation of time is unclear.