Preparing a Detailed Project Plan

Step By Step

Scope Management

- Identifying what needs to be done is known as scope management.
- The first step in the planning process consists of identifying exactly what you're going to do, the *scope of work*.
- In this stage, identify major elements of work and then break them down systematically into smaller and smaller pieces, until each piece becomes a comfortable size to estimate, execute, and monitor.

Some Basic Definitions

- Here are some terms commonly used in scope management:
- Activity or Task
- Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)
- Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)
- Work Package

Activity or Task

- Many definitions exist for these two terms.
- Purists might say that tasks are smaller elements of work than activities, but there's actually no standard for this.
- Activities consume resources. They have a finite length (time) and an expected cost.

Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)

- The RAM is a two axis chart that shows how the project work is assigned.
- It correlates specific elements of work with specific task performers.

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

- The WBS is a graphical tool—perhaps the most foundational tool in the project planning process.
- It organizes all of the project work by placing elements of work into logical groupings.

Work Package

- This term has a variety of definitions.
- They will appear somewhere on your WBS.
- They are deliverable-oriented—that is, executing a work package typically produces some tangible or verifiable outcome.

Breaking Down the Work:
The Work Breakdown Structure

- Identifying and breaking down the work to be done is the logical starting point in the entire planning process.
- The objective of this step is to identify relatively small, specific pieces of work. (For simplicity, let's refer to them as activities.)
- Once you've identified all of the activities required to execute the project, you're ready to create a complete project plan.
- You'll be able to estimate activity durations and prepare your schedule, estimate
- activity costs and prepare your project budget, assign responsibility,
- and carry out many more planning steps.