Project Management Advanced Diploma

Computers & PM – Week 9

Josephine Coffey

Computers & PM – Week 9

- **Updating Schedules & Multi-Project Schedules**
- Large Networks, Risk Analysis and Standard Networks & Templates

Objectives

- Understand computer schedules and managing project progress
- Cover updating project schedules and gathering project information
- Creation and maintenance of multi-project schedules

Introduction

- Managing progress – keeping team moving in same direction
- Need consistency of approach and standards
- Keep progress accurately recorded, schedules up-to-date
- Reporting progress in a timely manner
- PR exercise

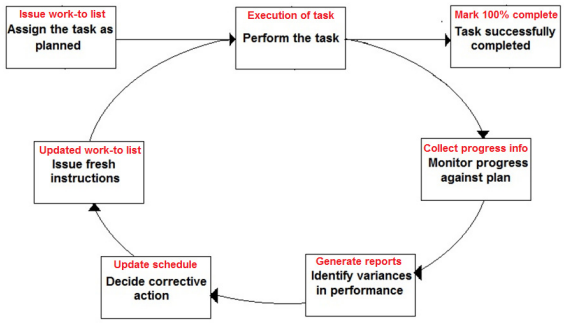
Closed Loop Systems

- Performance measurement routines built-in
- Recognises when system is performing outside expected / required tolerances
- Capable of making internal adjustments

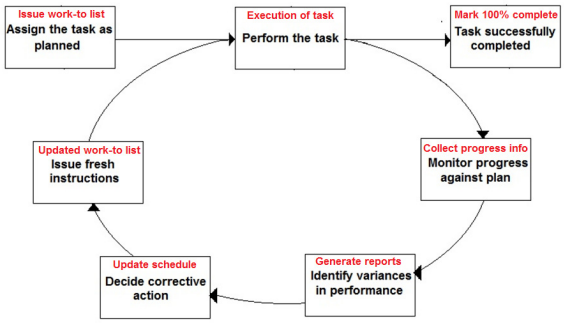
command – measure – feedback – correct

- at each level: task, milestone and project

Closed Loop Systems



Closed Loop System - PM



Management & Reporting Styles

- For example: forceful, commanding, adversarial, teaming, partnership
- Influence on project performance and success
- Influence on reporting and status updates
- Management by…
  - ➢Exception (MbE)
  - ➢Objectives (MbO)
  - ➢Walking Around (MbWA)

Management by exception

- Closed Loop System – feedback of variance or exception
- Attention concentrated on problems in project
- PRINCE2 methodology
- Exceptions: variances PM cannot fix that directly impact time, cost or scope
  - Exception report
  - Project Board or Owner need to make decision

Exception Report

- Description and Cause of the Deviations
- Consequences of the Deviation
- The Available Options
- Options Appraisal
- Business Case – for the options available
- Risks
- Recommendations
- Sign Off

Management by Objectives

- Objective setting and meeting those objectives
- Project objectives should always be SMART
  - **S**pecific
  - **M**easurable
  - **A**greed
  - **R**ealistic
  - **T**ime-bound

Management By Walking Around

- PM available to the team, offers support and encouragement
- Walk-abouts can provide valuable source of information including:
  - Issues, risks, threats, opportunities, HR problems, lack of team synergy etc.

Updating Project Schedules

- Objectives of project need to be met regardless of reality v's baseline
- Plan\Schedule is constantly updated throughout lifecycle of project (Lock):
  - Changes in project parameters (cost, time, resources)
  - Changes in network logic
  - Progress updates for tasks
- Recommended to save a baseline of project before updates

Frequency of Updates

- Typically daily, weekly or monthly
- Influenced by
  - Management reporting needs
  - Level of risk
- Batch updates v's continuous updates directly into computer
- Need to balance keeping project on track and allowing team concentrate on tasks

Collecting Progress Information

- Simpler the better
  - Allow team to update schedule directly
  - Use website to enter progress
  - Emailing files (project file or spreadsheet)
  - Using timesheets to enter updates then PM updates schedule manually
  - Use of Task Lists (% complete update column)
  - Phone call to get update
- Be careful with % Complete progress updates

Collecting Progress Information

- Time-Now Data
  - Progress on all tasks marked against one date
  - "Status as at reporting date"

Contents of Task Progress Report (Lock):

✓ For every task which should start on or before time-now:
- has the task started (or will it start by time-now)?
- if not, why not?

Plus a typed report of any difficulties or problems

Collecting Progress Information

✓ For every task in progress at time-now:
- its expected finish date or
- duration remaining or
- percentage completed

Plus a typed report of any difficulties or problems

✓ For every task that should have finished since the last check:
- has it been finished?
- if not, why not?
- if it has been finished, can the following tasks start? (used to check network logic and true completion status)

Collecting Progress Information

✓ For every task running late:
- how much float remains?
- how much of that is free float?
- what action needs to be taken?
- what action *is* being taken?

Statistical Checks
- How many people should be working on this project (or task) today?
- How many people actually *are* working on this project (or task) at this moment?

Multi-Project Schedules

- Enterprise PM systems allow project files & data to be collaboratively shared
- Unique Task (Activity) Identifiers e.g. TaskID = "PE0814_Tnnnn" where
  - Type=**P**roject,
  - Owner = **E**ngineering,
  - Year = 2008,
  - Engineering Project # = 14,
  - Tnnnn = Task number within that project
- Multi-location should support flexible calendars

Managing the Multi-project Model

- Discipline & consistency in the addition of data (project, resource, activity)
- Document\Configure: task naming conventions, activity types, resource pools, reporting filters, views and templates etc.
- Only skilled, appropriately trained people should be allowed to update

Managing the Multi-project Model

- Data Preparation:
  - Each project needs a comparable schedule, compatible with Master schedule
  - Resources defined with full portfolio of projects in mind
    - Non-project related work
    - Resource pool defined at Organisation level
    - Calendars defined for diff resource types

Prioritisation across Projects

- In-house prioritisation rules e.g. time-basis (earliest completion date)
- Use app wizards\prompts to discover scheduling issues and Set organisation "preferences"

Interface Activities

- Project dependencies, linked activities, shared constraints
- Lock: Interface tasks should have same identifier, however some software will not allow duplicates
- Dummy tasks can be used

Updating Intervals – Multi-Projects

- The more frequent the better as data feeds Portfolio level schedule
- Enter Project updates and then manually re-calculate schedule

What-If Testing

- PPM software should allow "what-if" analysis
- New projects slotted in at high-level to see Portfolio impact on time, cost and resources

Summary

- Closed Loop Systems allow for feedback and corrective action to take place in Projects.
- Accurate and timely task progress updates are necessary for successful PM.
- Management of multi-projects\portfolios brings added complexity and requires PPM software. Discipline & consistency required.