The number of possible schedules is equal to the factorial of the amount of jobs to the power of the number of machines which will be large quickly. Therefore, scheduling tries to provide acceptable planning and not optimal planning. The main task of scheduling is to make sure that sufficient numbers of people are working at any point in time to provide a capacity appropriate for the level of demand at that point in time. So in short, capacity should match demand.

There are two ways to schedule: forward and backward scheduling. Forward scheduling involves starting work as soon as possible while backward scheduling involves starting working as late as possible.

Advantages of forward scheduling:

* High labor utilization: workers always start work to keep busy
* Flexible: the time slack in the system allows unexpected work to be loaded

Advantages of backward scheduling:

* Lower material costs: materials are not used until they have to be, therefore delaying added value until the last moment
* Less exposed to risk in case of schedule change by the customer
* Tends to focus the operation on customer due dates

The Gantt chart is a simple method of scheduling where blocks represent the task carried out and time over which it is carried out. It gives a good visual representation of the scheduling and also can be used to test different schedules