Perry Wilson, PMP

Project Management Can Be Easy!

Fast-Track Guide for Accidental Project Managers

Table of Contents

Why did we create this book?

For almost a decade I've been in the project management software business, I had privilege to speak with hundreds of business owners, entrepreneurs, managers, developers, designers, marketing specialists and "jacks of all trades" from over 50 countries around the globe.

They all had one thing in common: they were looking for a tool that would help them manage their tasks and projects. However, a surprisingly large number of these people did not have a clear picture of what project management really is. What was even more disturbing to me, plenty of really smart and successful individuals could not even name a couple of specific goals and objectives they wanted to achieve with the help of project management software.

I started digging a little deeper and uncovered an interesting fact. About 80% of people who came to us were first-time "accidental" project managers.

In some cases they were just promoted and immediately thrown into the deep-end: "...you're a manager now, so start managing your projects." Some were given an assignment by their supervisors to find a project management tool for their organization. Another group, mostly executives and business owners, realized that they could not effectively manage their company any longer with paper, whiteboards and Excel.

All these people were in desperate need of at least some guidance on the basics of project management: how are projects different from activities, what is the purpose of portfolios, what are the best practices for planning and scheduling and so on...

Initially, our company would hold one-on-one training sessions to cover the essentials of project management, and then we realized that we need something else, something that would scale better.

That's how "**Project Management Can Be Easy!**" was born. Our key goal was to put together a quick reference that assists you to easily grasp all the basics of project management in a matter of days.

This book is really a no-nonsense guide with very little if any fancy jargon and you will find a lot of good practical advice here.

This book is really no-nonsense guide with very little if any fancy jargon and you will find a lot of good practical advice here.

I hope you will enjoy "**Project Management Can Be Easy!**" and it will help you advance in your life and career.

Vadim Katcherovski,

Chief Make-It-Happen Officer
Logic Software Inc.

Word from the Author

I started in project management the same way many of you did. I volunteered. For me it was the start of a career I love, but I faced many of the same challenges you are. I was lucky enough to have a mentor in the beginning to help me find my way.

Since that first opportunity, I have managed complex programs of projects designed to completely change the way a client delivered service to customers. I've managed multimillion dollar mergers and I've managed small projects to improve processes.

Along the way I realized that there are some basic skills and techniques to make every project, no matter the size or complexity. I now work with clients to help them apply these basic skills and techniques so they can be successful with their projects.

Perry A Wilson, PMP

Helpful Reading Tips

In order to help you easily digest all of the content presented in this e-book, we have split it up into major Sections and Sub-Sections.

At the end of the book, you'll find a very useful glossary with all of the popular project management terminology along with a number of useful resources which you can research for more information.

You will also find plenty of tips, suggestions and examples throughout the book. The legend below will help you identify the different kinds of content that you'll come across:

i This is a definition or an explanation of project management terminology. You can also reference this in the glossary at the end of the book.

? This is a question that you should ask yourself and ponder upon. Finding the answer relevant to your situation will help you become a better project manager.

This is an example of how project management methodologies can be applied in a real-life project.

This is a useful resource or a link which you should research further.

Introduction

This book is for people who have been given a project to do. Often you've been picked because you have a reputation for getting things done. And, some of you volunteered to take on the project— a great way to show or grow your skills across the entire spectrum of management skills.

The challenge you now face is that you'll need to show you are in control of the project. People will want to know what you are doing and will need reassurance that you will deliver. So, no more just getting it done, you need a language and an understanding of how to successfully deliver projects over and over.

The book is structured to help you do just that, without overloading you with technical project speak. There's jargon, yes, but it's there so you know what other project managers mean when they say things like scope creep. Each section will start with the project management information you need and then use a story to illustrate the skills and the common pitfalls.

There are no tests, but here and there throughout are questions for you to reflect on for your company. I suggest that you take a few minutes to do just that; reflect.

Do we talk about tools? Yes, project management comes with all kinds of tools and templates. The secret is we all make up our own. Start with a sample from someone else then tailor it to your specific needs. We put together some ready to use templates for you, you will find them at http://www.easyprojects.net/Templates/.

The big tool that people focus on is a scheduling tool; most of us don't make up our own. For small projects, a calendar or spreadsheet will work just fine, but as your projects get larger, you will need a tool that does some of the complicated adjustments for you. Easy Projects .NET is a tool that I use and (full disclosure) it has sponsored this book, so naturally I arranged for some discounts for my readers. You'll find coupon codes at the end of the book.

And finally if you are looking for a book that will help you pass the PMP, this isn't it. This book is designed to help people who aren't project managers but have a project to get done.

1 WHAT IS PROJECT MANAGEMENT ABOUT?

There is a definition from the Project Management Institute – a professional organization for Project Managers.

i *A temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result.*

That's a bit jargony and vague for our purposes. And, it doesn't take into account what is happening in business these days, where repetitive jobs are being run like projects. So, let's take a stab at a more clear definition.

A project has a beginning and an end:

That means month end processing could be a project, but sales wouldn't be one. Another example is marketing campaigns, they are often seen as projects, but selling the products is not.

A project creates something unique:

That means developing a new car model is a project, but building an existing car model is not. Maybe a bit more needs to be said here.

If we look at some fairly common projects worldwide, we can see buildings and bridges and airports that are all projects. So, why is every bridge, building and airport unique? There are so many variable that each one needs a tailored design and has specific conditions that apply. So each bridge, building and airport is unique.

To go back to the car example, a new model of car will be unique because it will have new features, new materials, and new regulations to meet. Building the existing models is a repetitive process. But, if the auto company is improving the process of building the existing models, now we have a project.

Does it fit into the definition? Before going further, reflect on your project. If not, there may be something missing that you'll discover through this book.

A project is defined by what it will deliver and what it won't:

This is called scope – what you will do and what you won't do – the boundaries of the project. We'll get into the details of scope later in the book, but an example project managers use a lot to describe projects is building or renovation of a house. Let's look at it from two perspectives: You are doing major renovations yourself on your own time.

What you will or won't do (scope) is often defined by what you can spend at the time, how much time you have and how much inconvenience you'll put up with.

You may have planned to paint the walls in the den and not the ceiling. But, there's a great deal on lighting when you go to the store, so now you've increased your scope to include installing lights and painting the ceiling.

This isn't a project because there is flexibility in what will be done and decisions are made based on opportunities, not on the overall effect on the project.

You hire a contractor to do the renovations.

The contractor will start with defining exactly what you want done, make suggestions about what you need to do, and get you to estimate your budget.

The contractor will come back with an estimate of the timeline and budget. You sign the agreement and you get what you agreed to. Any additions – like the great deal on lighting – will need to be assessed and added to the timeline and the budget.

This is a project.

It might sound like you can't start your project until you have thought through everything, planned for every contingency and agreed on every little detail. We'll there's one thing that is also true about projects:

Things change and the more complex your project and the longer your timeline, the more things will change.

This book will guide you through the tools and techniques you can use to help you manage your project to successful completion—despite the fact that things change.

2 WHAT SKILLS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO PROJECT MANAGERS?

One of the misconceptions of project management is that the project manager is supposed to manage the schedule and make sure the tasks are done. Well, tasks don't do themselves, so the PM is actually managing people to deliver the project successfully.

If you have a background in people management, you'll use those skills in project management. What you'll find is your skills aren't just applied to the project team; you manage up, down and sideways.

Here's what you'll find as we delve into the project management skills:

Communication Skills

As the PM, you need to provide information to all the people who are affected by your project. You don't always need to understand how to develop the communication, but you do need to understand what needs to be communicated to, whom, and when it needs to be done. You will be responsible for communicating to:

1. *your sponsor* – the person who holds the budget and is responsible to the company for the outcomes of the project.

2. *your team* - the people who will have to deliver your project work.

3. possibly *your clients.*

And, you'll work with and manage stakeholders – people who are in some way impacted by the project. Your message will not always be welcome, so you need to be able to communicate difficult topics.

? *Take a moment to consider who is in the communication stream for your project. How will you tailor your communications to each group?*

Conflict Management

No matter what the objectives and goals of the project, it drives change within an organization. Change brings conflict. You will need to develop skills in conflict management to keep your project on track.Conflict can come in the form of competing ideas for features of your deliverable. Or it can be challenges to the validity of your project within the organization. Your sponsor will count on you to help manage whatever conflict arises.

? *Take a moment to think about what conflicts will arise as you progress through your project. How will you handle each one?*

Facilitation

When you hold a planning session, you will be facilitating a brainstorming (check the glossary for tips on this) meeting. You will need to manage the process of building the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) – a graphical representation of the work of the project (when you get to the planning section, this will make more sense), without taking over the meeting.

? *Take some time to think about your facilitation skills, do they need some brushing up? Think about meetings you've attended that went really well, or really badly. What can you learn from the experience?*

Political Savvy

Because projects bring change, you will need to be comfortable working with people throughout the organization. You will need to manage your sponsor, who will likely be a VP or higher in the organization, as well the end user, who might be sales people on the front line, or clients.

?

Think about how your organization runs. What do you think you can do to help your project be successful?

Stakeholder Management

Stakeholders are people who are affected by or think they are affected by your project.You need the skills to manage both types and know when to raise their issues to your sponsor and when to take care of it within the team.

?

Take some time to think about who will be your stakeholders. How can you work with both groups to make your project successful?

Team Leadership

A project is successful because of people, not because tasks were completed on time. As the PM you will need to be able to manage a team of people who have no reporting relationship to you. PMs call it management without authority. You will need to be able to motivate your team when deadlines approach. You will need to encourage innovation, and manage the consequences of innovative changes.

What if you are the team? Well it becomes much more complicated, but you need to manage yourself. You'll need to know when to switch hats from worker to manager and you'll need to remember to lift yourself out of the details periodically to make sure the project continues on track.

In this list of skills you probably noticed you will be managing a variety of issues and challenges. As the PM you will act differently than if you were a department manager. In your operational job, you are probably expected to take care of things and not bother your boss. As the PM you need to learn when to fix the problem and when to ask for help. The sections below in the Working the Plan chapter will help with that.

Getting Started

Let's look first at the project management lifecycle.

These are the stages of a project and they illustrate the most efficient path from beginning to end. What often happens is people want to get going, so they start executing, but then realize (hopefully quickly) that they don't really know what they are executing. So they head back up the lifecycle path and work out what they want to do (initiate) then jump back into executing.

Then someone says "when will you be done" and they realize they can't answer the question. Or, someone says "are you on track for budget?" and they realize they can't answer the question. So the whole team goes back and does some planning.

You can see how the costs add up when you jump around like this. Imagine you are trying to bring a new product to market before your competitor. If you don't know when you'll be ready, marketing can't do their job. If you don't know how much it's going to cost, no one can decide on the price.

This book will follow the lifecycle so you have the best chance to be successful. And in order to minimize the jargon in the book, here's how we define the lifecycle:

? *Think about projects you have been involved in. Have they been managed clearly through a lifecycle? What did you learn? What would you do differently?*

1 THE BASICS OF INITIATION

Getting started is the process of determining what you are doing, why you are doing it, and what benefits you expect to achieve. This starts with the business case (a document that details the financial and other benefits of the project) and ends with the information you need to start planning.

As the PM, you benefit from being there at the beginning, but in practice, you might not be brought in until the project seems ready to plan.

Whether you are invited to be part of the process or not, as the project manager you need to have at least two pieces of information in order to start planning:

One – An understanding of what the project is expected to do

That can be in the form of a list of features, or benefits, or a set of objectives. For instance, if you have been assigned to manage a project to move the head office of your company to a new location, you might get:

- A list of features: people need to be in offices, equipment needs to be in a central place, all colors must be calming, sound must be reduced.

- A list of benefits: we need to ensure our employees are provided with an ergonomic and environmentally healthy environment.

- A set of objectives: we need to support a productivity increase of 20% through effective placement of workgroups and equipment.

These statements are not complete, but you have enough information to gather a group of people and brainstorm how to achieve the desired results.

How to write a Project Initiation Report

http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/help/write-a-project-initiation-report-HA001140644.aspx

Two – An understanding of your boundaries

If there is anything that may restrict how you approach the project you need to know. This could be a budget restraint (and often is). It could be a competing project. It could be a limitation of software used by the company. No matter what, if you know before you plan you can plan more effectively.

Really, only two things?

One more thing to keep in mind, you won't have all the details. Part of the planning process will uncover more work, questions about boundaries, and potential challenges. As the PM, you will work with your sponsor to answer the questions that get raised.

What do you do if you don't have this information? It's pretty common for your sponsor to not tell you what you need to know at first. It's because they don't often know what you need. Having a conversation with your sponsor and asking questions is the best way to pull the details out.

Initiation Story

JBL Industries produces designer furniture for their retail stores and other furniture retailers.

The latest fad for furniture is collapsible coffee tables for small apartments. JBL missed the opportunity to be the first to market, and now needs to provide their version of the coffee table.

Bill Watson, VP product development has assigned Jane Jones as the project manager. Jane is new to the role, but she's eager to show Bill she's up to the challenge.

Before you read the story, think about what information Jane might need to get before she can start planning.

Bill and Jane have their first meeting.

“Jane, I’m happy you were available to take this on. It’s a challenge because we need to get the product designed and available for sale ASAP.”

Jane pulls out her notebook and looks at the list of information she needs to get from Bill. “Bill, I’m excited to get started. I have a couple of questions. First, can you tell me what you want the project to achieve?”

“I have to admit we’re a bit embarrassed that we missed the signals on this. We want something in the stores within the month.”

Jane puts that in her notebook. “Anything else?”

“We want to make sure we improve on the current versions out there. That’s only way to make up for the fact we’re not first.”

“Thanks, Bill. Is there anything I need to know that we can’t do, or we need to avoid?”

“Well, Jane, I guess you can’t spend a ton of money on the project, but other than that, you should be okay.”

Jane makes the note and tells Bill she’ll start the planning tomorrow morning.

Before you read on, think for a minute. If you were Jane, would you be able to explain to a team of people what they need to do to deliver a successful project?

That afternoon, Jane prepares for her planning session. She sends initiations to the design team, the manufacturing foreman and one of the sales managers. Then she starts to create a list of speaking points:

1. What are we going to accomplish?
    - o Collapsible coffee table
    - o In the stores within 30 days

Looking at the list she realizes it's not enough information. She asks herself what questions the planning team might have that she needs to answer. She starts listing the questions:

1. **Quality** – is this targeted at our high end customers, or is it a cheaper item intended to be replaced after a year.

2. **Budget** – what is the limit?

3. **Product range** – how many versions of the table need to be ready.

4. **Design improvements** – do we have any industry research on what the customer wants?

Jane calls Bill and asks if she can have a half hour of his time today.

Jane realized she was taking too much for granted at the earlier meeting. When she met with Bill again, he provided her with the following details.

1. **Quality** – we need to provide two levels of quality. For about 40% of the customers this is a fad and will be replaced with the next fad, but for 50% of them, it's a viable solution to the lack of space in their apartments.

2. **Budget** – the project budget is $50,000 which does not include the salary cost for the team.

3. **Product range** – for the first delivery in 30 days, there needs to be two versions of the product, one wood and one metal. After that, the product needs to come in five colors of wood, and both stainless steel and bronze metal.

4. **Design improvements** – a quick survey of the sales people where the tables are available shows that customers are interested in lighter versions which are easier to collapse and an ability to have the tables at two different heights.

At this point, Jane believes she has enough information to allow the team to start planning the work involved in developing the product.

2 CREATING THE PLAN

When a project manager creates a plan, they need to have a team of people who will be able to describe the work that needs to be done to complete the project.

Sometimes you will have a team, and sometimes not. Let's start with the ideal situation and see how the process works. Then we'll talk about what you can do to create a reliable plan when you are the PM and the team.

The steps to create a plan are:

1. Identify the areas touched by the project and invite people to the planning meeting who represent those areas. This is important because these are the people who will know what work needs to be done.

2. Hold the planning meeting to create the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). This is a representation of the work of the project— it is not your schedule. You will use this to create your schedule. I'll explain this more below.

3. Review the information and confirm any new scope items with your Sponsor.

4. Create the schedule and validate it with the team.

You'll see how our project manager goes through the steps in the planning story, but let's go through the steps and add a little more detail.

Identify the planning team

If you are the team and going to do all the work, and you know exactly what needs to be done, it is wise to still include someone else in your planning team. You need someone to challenge your assumptions. In this case, ask someone who will not make the same assumptions.

If you have a team, try to invite people who are actually doing the work right now. It's tempting to bring in people who have done the job in the past, but the danger is they will not know what is really happening now. So, if you need a sales representative, the manager is only useful if they are also doing sales. If they aren't they can only talk in theory.

Hold the planning meeting

This one is more complicated. Now we need to talk about the WBS.

First, I recommend you use this process even if you are the only team member. One of the advantages of creating the WBS is its brainstorming, nonlinear approach. By using this method, new ideas will pop into your mind, or the team's mind and you'll end with a more complete understanding of the work.

Begin the meeting with an explanation of the scope and objective of the meeting. If you are the team, read the scope statement to refresh your thoughts.

When people know what the project is about, ask them to sit for 10 minutes and write all the different things they need to do on sticky notes. Have them think in the terms of noun/verb formats; e.g. create document, build prototype, test program. Doing the first round of brainstorming individually allows them to think from their expertise. Then ask them to place the notes on a blank wall.

Now you have a wall covered with work.

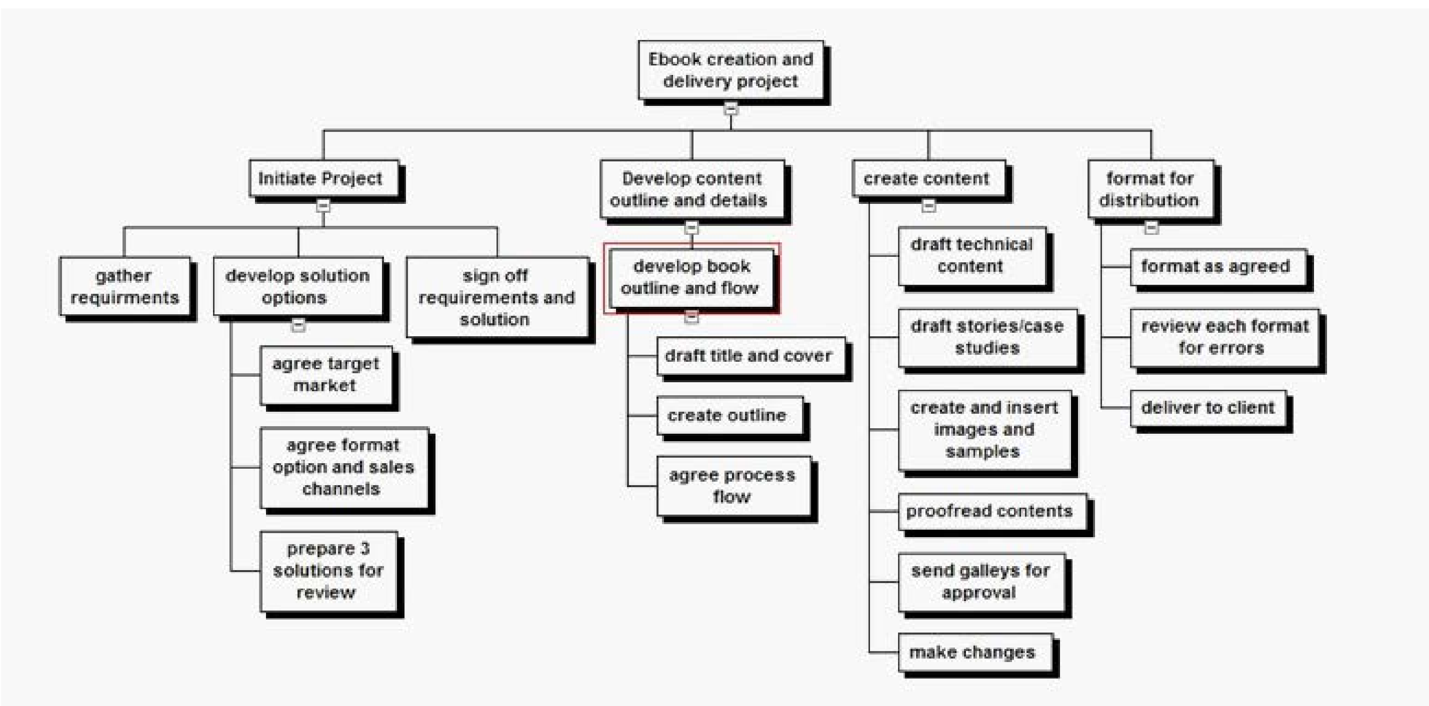
The next step is to review what is on the wall and add to it. If you have a team, you can ask them to go up as a group and review the information and add notes where they think it's needed.

If you are the team, do the same steps, you will find more work.

When the team (or you) slows down, start the next step. Have them group the work by what they think is logical. You'll end up with clusters of work on the wall.

At this point, you can end the meeting. As the PM you'll want to validate that the groupings make sense to you since you have to manage the schedule that will come out of the WBS.

This is what you'll have at the end (maybe not so pretty because it's clustered notes). You can see that this is my plan to create this book.



Your WBS may look different, but here's the language around the levels.

- the first level is usually the project name.

- the second level is usually main phases.

Any box without a sub box is a work package. That means someone is doing the work, all of the work packages add up to the phases.

Your next steps as the PM are about validating the work:

1. Review the work against the scope statement, you will likely find new scope which you need to take to the sponsor for approval. Sometimes at this stage projects have grown so big and complicated that they are not worth doing.

2. Create a schedule.

Creating the schedule involves talking to your team members, getting their ideas on what work needs to be done first, how long it will take them and asking again if there is anything missing. Your best approach here is to talk to the people who will do the work since they know the most about how long it will take. There are a lot of techniques to gather an estimate of the time it takes to do a project task, but you only need to know enough about it to feel confident that the timeline is accurate.

The first thing to understand is the difference between effort and duration.

Effort is what time the work would take if there were no interruptions, no other priorities, and you didn't have to wait for anyone or anything. If I have to write an email it might take 5 minutes of effort. But if someone calls me in the middle of it, then I have to go to a meeting, and then someone needs a decision...

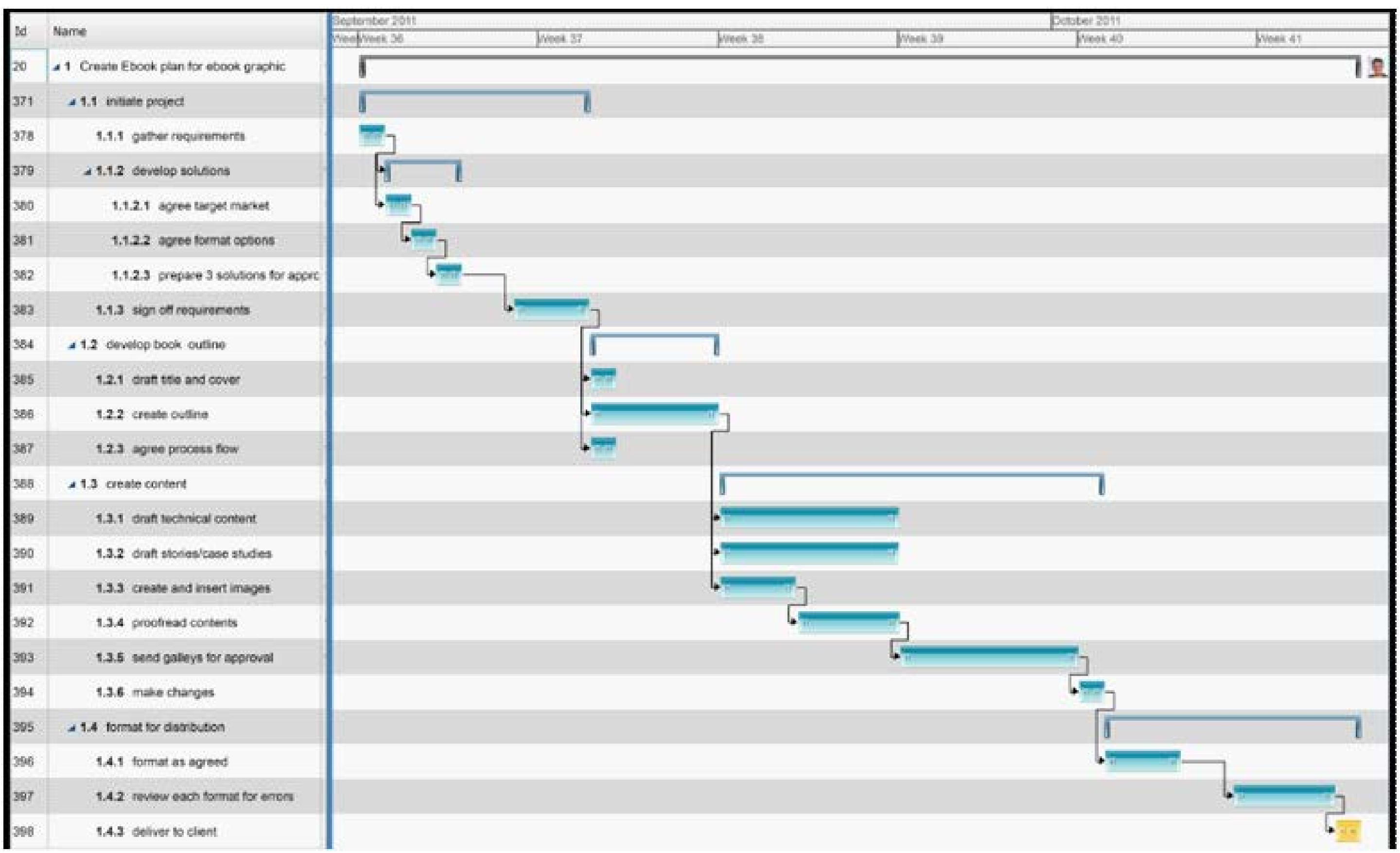
You see what happens. This means that the duration of writing the email could be 3 hours or all day.

? *Think about how you estimate your own work. Do you under estimate? Over estimate? Do you come in pretty close?*

To manage your schedule you need to know whether the estimate is given as effort or duration. And you need to know if the estimate is reliable. What I use is a 2 point estimate, *what's the shortest time* and *what's the longest time*. This technique works whether you are the team or you have a team.

You can use your judgment and knowledge to decide where in that spectrum you will plan your timeline. If you take all the worse case timings, you'll be running the project well past the expected delivery date, and coming in early is not always a good thing. If you take all the best case scenarios, you'll miss deadlines.

And a final caution; you will never achieve 100% accuracy. No matter how good the plan is, things will happen along the way. You are trying to find the best estimate not a guarantee. When you put all the information into a schedule you'll see something like the graphic on the next page. It's called a Gantt chart. The bars are timelines for individual tasks; the linking lines show logical order called dependencies.



When you look at line 382 'prepare three solutions' you can see the links between lines 381 and 380. This is the order I need to do the tasks in.

You can see that the whole project takes 6 weeks (estimated) and as the PM you can manage the progress of the project.

Top 10 Benefits of a Gantt Chart

http://www.brighthub.com/office/project-management/articles/2434.aspx

You have the schedule all worked out, it looks great and you've included all the estimates after thinking through what you received from the team. You are finished, right? Okay, no that was a trick question.

There is one more step before you get the sponsor to sign off on the project. You need to take it back to the team and make sure you've captured what they meant when they gave you the information. It's still surprising to me that when people see the whole plan put together, there's usually a small (or sometimes large) gap left between their assumptions.

This happens because of the things you don't know people are assuming. The sales people might have assumed that training will take place in a one hour meeting on Monday. Based on that assumption, they estimated that they would be ready to start selling by Tuesday afternoon at the latest. When the training team looked at the amount of information that needed to be delivered, they estimated three one hour training sessions over three days. If the training starts on Monday, it will be Thursday before sales can start.

By returning with the plan to the team, you can capture most of the assumption gaps. I like to do this with the whole team if possible. In our example, if training and sales people are in the same room when they notice the gap, they can find a resolution to the problem and you don't have to head back into a planning session.

When you have the project scheduled the next step is to go back to your sponsor and get them to sign off on the plan. Once they do that, you are then ready to work on it.

Planning Story

Our PM, Jane, has invited the following people to the planning meeting:

Design: Oscar Fremant

Manufacturing: Julie Olsop

Sales: Wendy Larntor

She starts her planning meeting by explaining what the goals are and what the current view of the scope is.

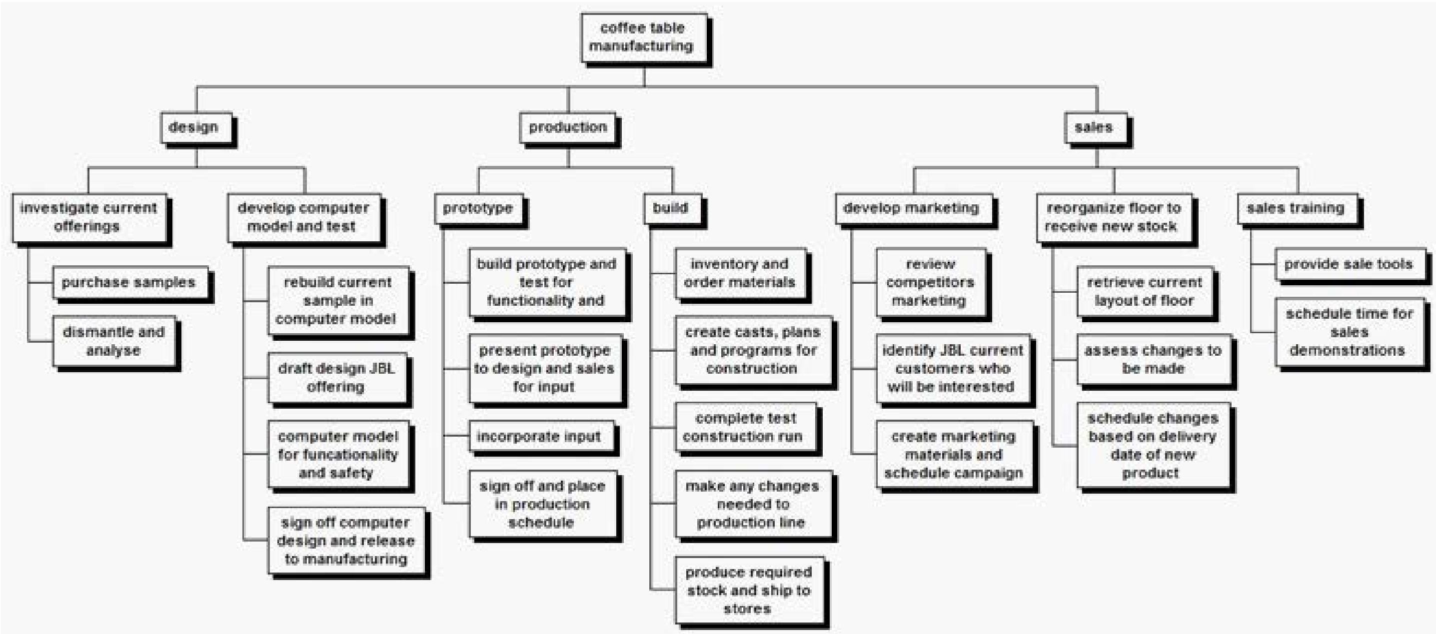
Quality – we need to provide two levels of quality. For about 40% of the customers this is a fad and will be replaced with the next fad, but for 50% of them, it's a viable solution to the lack of space in their apartments.

1. **Budget** – the project budget is $50,000 which does not include the salary cost for the team.

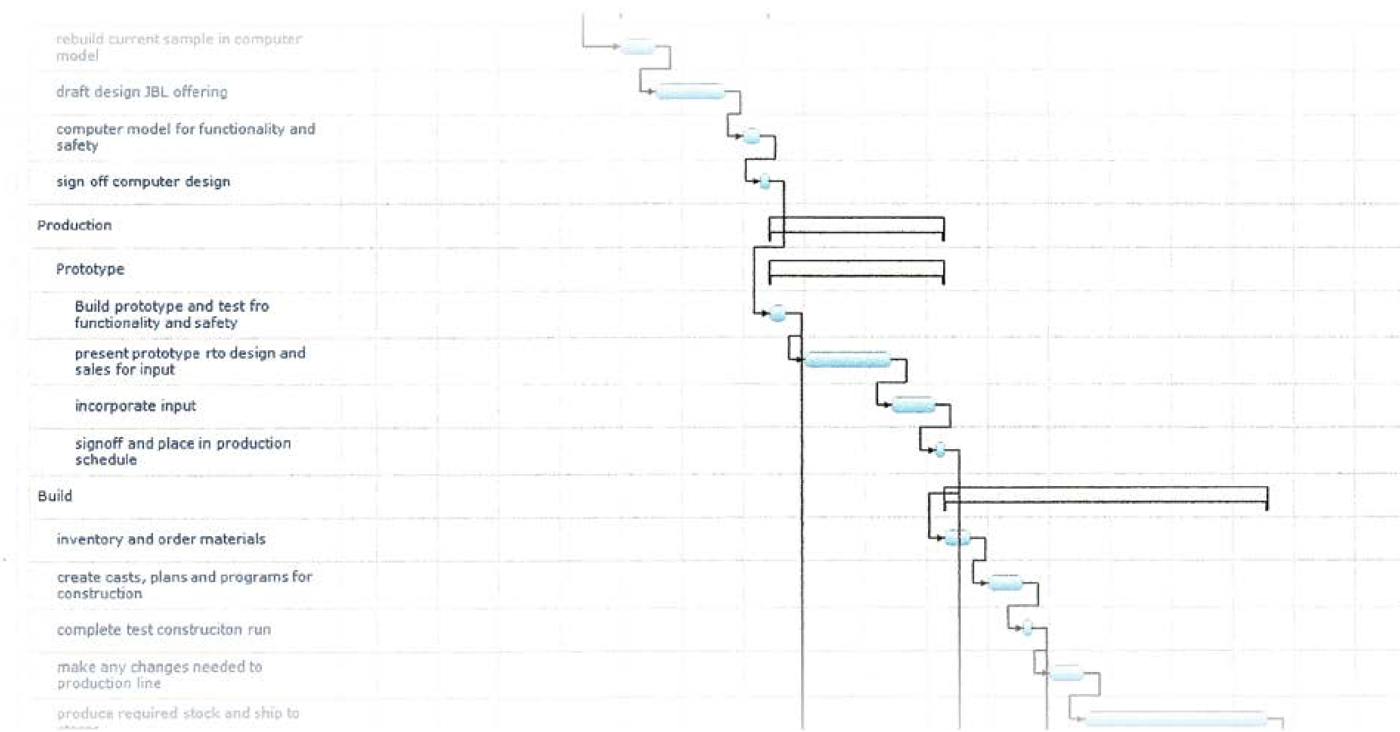
2. **Product range** – for the first delivery in 30 days, there needs to be two versions of the product, one wood and one metal. After that, the product needs to come in five colors of wood, and both stainless steel and bronze metal.

3. **Design improvements** – a quick survey of the sales people where the tables are available shows that customers are interested in lighter versions which are easier to collapse and an ability to have the tables at two different heights.

The three team members take some time to quietly reflect on what needs to be done. At the end of a half hour brainstorming session, Jane works with them to develop the following WBS from the sticky notes generated.



After reviewing the details and gathering the estimated duration and sequence information from the team, Jane translates the WBS in to the schedule using a Gantt Chart tool.



Jane is pleased to see that if all goes well, they will be ready to sell the new coffee table in the middle of the third month.

She arranges an appointment with Bill to sign off the schedule so she can start the project.

“Jane, this looks great. I’m really happy we’ll be in the stores before Christmas,” Bill says then gives her the authorization to go ahead.”

Jane gives Oscar a call.

“Oscar, you can start the coffee table design. Let me know if you have any challenges meeting your deadlines.”

“Great, Jane,” Oscar replies. “You know that the schedule is pretty tight, we may need more time to get through the approval process than we expected.”

At this point in the story, I ask you to think about what the implications are of Oscar’s comment. We’ll discuss how to manage the plan next.

Working the Plan

The most effort for project management goes into this stage. No matter how well you plan, when you start to execute the tasks things will change. As the PM you need to find your balance on each project between close management and empowerment.

When you have a team of experienced people, you will want to ensure they understand what needs to be done and how they need to communicate with you.

When you have people on your team who are inexperienced, or are often late on their deadlines, you will want to keep in closer contact.

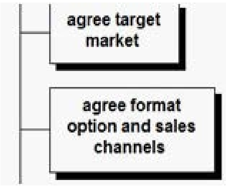
When you are the team, you will need to balance the 'doing' with the 'managing'. There will be times when you have to self manage to the project needs rather than to the operational needs of your area. You might find it useful to schedule yourself appointments to act as the PM – looking at the schedule going forward, prepare status reports (short reports that provide a snapshot of where you are in the project), anticipate future road blocks, etc. This will allow you to focus on the details when you do the 'work' and focus on the project when you are managing.

Take some time to think about how you might be able to manage the conflicting demands of your desk job and your project.

1 HOW TO GET IT ALL DONE

Let's talk first about how you manage your team. We'll start with the presumption that no one like to be micro managed and no one really likes to micro manage.

Let's go back to the WBS for writing an ebook (that we had as an example before), and look at a specific slice of the work:



This slice shows two work packages, ‘*agree target market*’ and ‘*agree format option and sales channels*’.

As the PM, you instinctively know that there is more than just one task in ‘agree target market’. The work package owner (the person responsible for ensuring that work is done on time), will know that they have to arrange a meeting with the marketing department to discuss the possible target markets and with an analyst to do the initial report. And then they need to get approval of the target market. As the PM, you can ask for a report on every step, or you can ask for a report on 3 points:

1. Are you ready to start? If there is something in the way, how do we fix it?

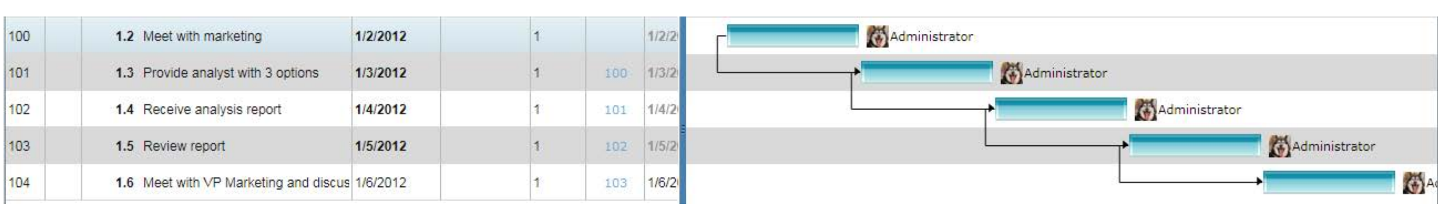
2. Have you started? It’s a good idea to clarify whether work is started.

3. About 2/3 of the way through the timeline of that work package, “will you finish on time?”.

Using this method, the PM is going to be able to manage time without constantly nagging people about getting the work done.

However, there is an even better way of going about this. The answer is simple, use project management software. PM software will be able to keep you updated on whether a task has been started, what issues might the person assigned to it be experiencing and you’ll be easily able to track and monitor the progress of the task as well as the timelines associated with it.

Let’s see this on a Gantt Chart timeline. Our work package owner (the person responsible to make sure the work gets done) will have broken down the task into steps.



As the PM you need to know in Day -1 (the day before they start) if they will be ready. By day 3 you will want to know if they are on track and at the beginning of day 5 you will want to know if they will be ready on time.

If you are the worker as well as the PM, you can use these questions to keep your PM hat up to date. If you don't do that, you might find yourself starting on time, but not completing on time or not dealing with issues early.

We will discuss how to deal with the answers to the questions in following sections.

2 SCOPE MANAGEMENT

Managing scope is the way PMs get through a project. If scope is managed well, the impacts on the timeline, quality and budget will be understood when the scope changes are requested. If scope is not managed, you will have scope creep (the process of never-ending additions and changes to what you are supposed to be doing) and you might get to the end of the project and find you haven't delivered on the original scope. Or, you might never get to the point where people agree your project is done.

An example of well managed scope is building a house.

Your contractor will have you sign the original agreement on how many bedrooms, whether there is a basement or not, and the quality of the fixtures (and many other aspects).
If you decide to add a bedroom, the contractor will assess the impact and tell you how much more it will cost, how much longer the project will take, and what else has to change to accommodate the new room. He will not start the work until you sign off on the change. As the client, you have the opportunity to decide not to add the bedroom if the cost is too great.

An example of scope creep is in planning a wedding.

You and your fiancé agree that a small wedding is your ideal celebration. You want friends and immediate family there. You think the wedding will be 40 to 45 people. Then your future in-laws ask you to invite second cousin Amy and her partner. When your parents hear about that, they say you should invite Mario, your dad's old friend and his new girlfriend. Your uncle Joe wants to bring his three kids along, your fiancé says his boss has been angling for an invitation and wants to bring his mother and father along. After the dust settles, you realize you have sent out 75 invitations and if everyone comes with a guest, your wedding reception can't be held in the back yard. So your mother starts looking for halls….. you suddenly have no control over the scope of your wedding project.

This might seem like a specific example that wouldn't apply to your projects. But, take care. If we think about the sample ebook project, it can easily grow to include pictures, links to tools, audio, video, interactive testing and scoring.

All projects can be subject to scope creep, however it can be easily managed through Change Request tracking, a feature available in most project management software applications. Change Request tracking will allow you to keep tabs on all sorts of requests and changes that might arise during the lifecycle of your projects. You can then easily estimate their impact on your project schedule and allocate available resources as you see fit, without jeopardizing your project deadlines.

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks are events that can affect your project – positively and negatively – that can be predicted. Risk identification and planning can start at the planning stage and will continue until you are almost done. The reflection questions in the skills section were a form of risk management. Taking the time to reflect early in the project will help to minimize the impact of events later.

People often confuse Risks with Issues. Issues are events that are happening; risks may happen. Issues must be resolved, risk have other management strategies.

We'll work with an example of issue management below. In this section we'll deal with risks. Often people think about risks as something to be mitigated. In practice, you can do much more than mitigate.

Avoid

This strategy means what it says. You do everything you can to avoid the risk arising.

Your project takes place in a country that has a hurricane season. The risk might be that at a certain time of year you will have a potential shut down for several weeks. If there are activities that can take place elsewhere, you would plan your project to take advantage of offsite work during hurricane season.

Mitigate

You may not be able to avoid, but you can minimize the impact.

Your project is to deliver a significant change to your company. The risk is that people will not change. You mitigate that risk by keeping everyone up to date on the progress of your project and placing measurements in the project to assess the progress of people changing their behavior.

Accept

Some risks can only be accepted.

You are building an office tower in an earthquake zone, the risk is that the building will collapse if an earthquake is stronger than 3.6. You build in more reinforcement and systems to ensure the building will survive to 7.4 earthquake.

Transfer

The impact of some risks can be transferred, at a cost, to someone else.

You are planning a golf tournament and you have a hole-in-one prize of a new car. You purchase insurance that transfers the risk to the insurance company if someone wins.

Exploit

This section is called risk management but it is really risk and opportunity management. An opportunity will have an impact on your project, but you might want to make it happen.

Your project is to build a new bank in a commercial development. You find out that the drugstore going in is planning to open two weeks before your bank is planning to open. A joint opening will bring in more business to the bank. You work with your schedule to open 2 weeks earlier.

4 ISSUE MANAGEMENT STORY

Remember, issues are events happening now that are getting in the way of completing your project. If the event does not affect your schedule, your budget, or the scope then it's not a project issue.

> Jane's coffee table project is going well until she gets a call from Julie in manufacturing.
>
> "Jane, I've just gotten off the phone with our supplier and we have a problem. The supply of hinges we need is back ordered 3 weeks and that means a delay in delivery to the stores by 3 weeks. We won't be in store for Christmas shopping."
>
> Julie knows that the project will be successful as long as they have the coffee table in the stores by year end, but the schedule says mid December. "Are there any other suppliers?"
>
> Julie answers, "Yes, but no one has enough stock. If we order the hinges from several suppliers, it will cost more. And I don't really have a lot of time to call around."
>
> "How much more?" Jane is hoping that it will be within her budget discretion.
>
> "It's going to be at least 20% more."

"Let me call you back in a few minutes." Jane has the information she needs to get a decision from Bill.

Jane makes a note that the options are:

1. Delay the delivery of the coffee tables until year end which misses prime selling time.
    o This may cost the company up to $10,000 in lost revenue, but there is no hard data to support the figures.

2. Order hinges from multiple suppliers which will increase the cost by at least $1,000 to $2,000.
    o There is a risk that one of the suppliers will be late in delivery, but they are within a two hour drive. Jane may be able to pick up the hinges.

She calls Bill who listens to the options and approves option 2.

Jane documents the decision with the supporting analysis and sends it to Bill as a permanent record. She calls Julie and gives her the go ahead.

5 STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

Stakeholders can be very helpful to the PM, or they can cause issues if not handled properly. Stakeholders that the project team has identified are easy to manage because you know who they are and why they are affected by the project. You can talk to them in advance and prepare them to contribute where they are needed.

Stakeholders who have not been identified can be difficult to manage. They will appear when a decision has been made, or a deadline is approaching. The PM will need to manage how new stakeholders are brought into the project, and ensure they contribute rather than block progress.

Jane gets a call from Michael Anderson, the VP of manufacturing, the day after Julie confirms which suppliers they are using to fulfill the hinge order.

"Jane, I hear you have approved ABC metals to provide the hinges for this new coffee table."

"Yes, they've come to our rescue since HRM wasn't able to fill the order."

"You know we dropped them as a supplier because the quality is not great?" Michael asks. "I don't think we can go to market with a poorly constructed product."

Jane remembers that Julie did mention there had been problems, but that her contact there guaranteed the quality would be high. "I think we have it covered, Michael, but if we don't we are stuck because there is no other stock in town."

"Let me know when the stock comes in. I might know someone who can sell us some of their own supply if we are in a pinch."

Jane thanks Michael and sends an email to Julie to let her know about his offer.

6 TEAM MANAGEMENT STORY

Jane gets a message that the shipment from ABC has come in and there is a problem with the stock; about half of the order is not high enough quality to work on the coffee table. Julie has asked for a meeting.

Jane meets Julie in her office. "What did Michael say about his contacts?" she asks.

"He found us some, but we're going to be short on the order. I called and the hinge is still back ordered, but we should be able to get the final 10% to ship by year end."

Jane makes a note to update Bill on the partial delay, and thanks Michael for the help, but she waits for Julie to tell her why they needed to meet.

Julie sighs and says, “I have a problem. I don’t know if Michael is on board with the decision to put this coffee table in the stores. He keeps saying things to the line guys that makes them question the project.”

“Okay, give me some details, I’ll talk to Michael, or get Bill to talk to him.” Jane realizes that it’s time to reenergize the production team.

If they are not sure about the project, it might be hard to get them to agree to overtime if it’s needed.

“How about we have a quick morning meeting with the line guys tomorrow and give them a recap on the importance of this product in our new range? I’ll bring the coffee and donuts.”

Julie agrees and seems relieved that the problem will be resolved.

7 SCOPE MANAGEMENT STORY

Bill calls Jane the next day and suggests there should be changes to the design. “I think it would be a good idea to make the table in a variety of sizes, like an end table and a consol table.”

Jane makes a note and says “We’re pretty far along in the process, Bill. Let me check with the team and see what we can do.” She sets a meeting with Bill for that afternoon.

She looks at the schedule, production has commenced. If they have to stop and redesign, then the coffee table will not make it into the stores on time. Jane needs to know how much time the design team needs to make the new designs.

She also needs to get some information on supplies needed. The hinges will be a delay, but is there anything else that might be in short supply? She makes a note to call Michael and check on his supply contacts if needed.

Jane meets with Oscar and Julie. Oscar tells her that the design team needs a day to adjust the current design and a second day to build and test a model. Julie needs a couple of days to build a prototype and another day to source the inventory of parts. The production schedule will need to be adjusted, but it is based on the design so she can't give a real estimate of the delay.

She remembers that the hinges were available in different sizes and will give Oscar the information to see if his team can incorporate the available supplies into the design. Jane thanks them and starts creating the decision document for Bill.

Change request:

Add two new sizes to the product range.

Options:

1. Continue with the current coffee table production and start sales with original scope. Begin design phase for two new sizes while the coffee table is selling. Assess the success and schedule the new sizes to coincide with the secondary scope of the original request (more finishes).

    a. Pros

        i. Provides the sales team with a product while the design is still fashionable.

        ii. Allows a test of the market for the design and any suggestions for improvement can be incorporated.

        iii. Minimizes inventory if product is not popular.

b. Cons

i. Narrows the market to people only interested in coffee tables.

ii. May miss the short window for the fad of this style.

iii. May allow competitors time to copy and create their own version of the products.

2. Stop production and delay sales of coffee table until new sizes are available.

a. Pros

i. Delivers a full range of options. This allows people who want a matched set to purchase and opens a new market for smaller homes to purchase a side table, rather than a coffee table.

b. Cons

i. Delay the sales, possibly missing the market opportunity.

ii. Will require additional sales training

\- - -

Jane reflects on the documentation she created at the beginning of the project. At that time Bill was more concerned about the timeline than the budget, and she assumes that is still the case. Based on that knowledge, she recommends option 1.

When she meets with Bill, she presents the information she's collected. "I also gave a call to Wendy in Sales and she said they could incorporate some new models in the sales training as long as there is minimal difference in design."

Bill asks, "How confident are you in the estimated delay?"

"It's more likely we'll hit a snag and the delay will increase rather than shorten."

Bill agrees to Jane's recommendation and she arranges a new planning session to tie down the details of the new project.

8 POLITICS

In any organization you will find politics and influence that has an effect on your project. Projects bring change and that will shift the balance of power. As the PM you will need to understand how to be successful within that shift and work with the politics.

As project managers we often focus on getting to the end of a project, and try to ignore the politics in the organization, or see it as a barrier to our success. For a PM to be successful, they need to understand who will be helpful, who will obstruct and who will champion.

By observing and using the relationships within your organization, you can be more successful than someone who ignores or pushes through the barriers.

9 BALANCING OPERATIONAL NEEDS WITH PROJECT

It is far more common these days for a Project Manager to have operational duties as well as project duties. Managing a project 'off the side of your desk' is a challenge of balancing priorities and making sure that the project is not the last priority every time.

The main challenge for the PM is that operational priorities tend to be immediate and high visibility. The report has to be on your boss's desk by the end of the day is competing with a status report that needs to be completed tomorrow. The system is down is competing with the process analysis due by the end of the week. The competing demands accumulate until your status report is late and your process analysis is rushed to meet the deadline.

As the project manager you are expected to manage these conflicting demands. The trick to being successful at it can be found in time management techniques. A successful PM will include the 'normal' demands into the timeline of their project – whether they have a team or are the team. They work with the concept of Effort and Duration that we looked at in the planning section.

What surprises people is the amount of time spent on 'other things' when assigned to a project. The rule of thumb is that if the effort is 1 day, plan 1.6 days of duration. That's if you are assigned 100% to a project. Here’s how it works:

Project overhead (writing reports, attending meetings, etc)	*5%*
Schedule contingency (a guess at what the cumulative delays might be)	*10%*
Non Project overhead (department meetings, personal appointments, operational issues)	*40%*
Available for project work	*45%*

That translates to 18 hours in a 40 hour week that someone will be working on the project. These numbers are fairly standard, but you can work them out for your organization. If you plan your project so that you need to work 35 hours of your work week, you need to understand where that time will come from.

Tip: Track your time, so you can compare estimation and actual and use it for the next project. Same for the team if possible.

10 PROJECT ROLES

Simple projects will have 3 roles, even if you are going to be all of them you need to understand what the function is of every role.

Sponsor: the person who holds the budget, who is responsible for the business objectives, who has the final decision making power. Usually found within the executive team.

Project Manager: the person responsible for making sure the project is delivering on time, within budget, and with full scope. Will have some decision making power, but is the liaison between the sponsor and the team.

Team Member: this person is doing the work. They will have little decision making power outside the details of the work.

For more complex projects, the PM will only fulfill their PM role and will have subject matter experts to do the work, or provide guidance and advice to the team members. The PM will often have a group of team leaders who supervise the workers in a very large project.

But, let's look at the way PMs can balance the different hats in a small project:

PM and Team Member hats

The main challenge here is that the team member is deep in the details of the project work and the PM is supposed to be looking at the whole project and its progress.

Think of it as a garden. The PM is planning the whole garden and its future. The team member is working on the vegetable section. If you are wearing both hats, and you don't ensure you look up from the details, you may end up with a great vegetable garden with no lawn and no flowers.

PM and Sponsor hats

This is far more challenging than the first combination because of the decision making aspect of the sponsor's job. Using the garden analogy, let's assume the scope was to have a lawn and a rose garden. As the PM you work with your team and design a large lawn and a small rose garden because that fits into the budget. As the sponsor, you really wanted a larger rose garden but you understand the challenge and go ahead. Then as the PM you find out that the garden needs more drainage and that will cost more money. You put on your sponsor hat and decide to spend the money even though you really wanted to keep it within the budget. What happens is a series of compromises and you don't have a project.

? *You should take some time to think about some effective ways you can juggle the different roles in order to deliver a successful project.*

Ideally you would only fill the PM role on a project, but if you need to fill more roles, it's important for you to understand the purpose of the roles and consciously switch hats to keep the project on track.

Project Communication

Some project managers will tell you that their job is 90% communication and 10% schedule management. Keeping the lines of communication open is important because it builds trust within the team and with your sponsor.

Being open to communication about everything means your team will come to you as they encounter barriers and challenges so you can help resolve them early when there are more choices. Building an open relationship with your sponsor means they will trust your recommendations.

There are two focuses for communication within a project; the internal communication and the external.

Internal communications are sent to the project team, the sponsor, and the stakeholders.

- Use a central repository, such as a project management system, to record all of your project communications including messages, files and progress updates.

- Give stakeholders and your customers access to the system so they are always kept in the loop on the latest happenings with their projects and tasks.

- Set up e-mail notifications within the project management software so everyone on your team is always kept up-to-date on the latest changes and updates.

Anything that will build relationships and keep the team engaged is good communication.

Face-to-face communication is sometimes challenging but it is important to make that contact to help build the relationship for the team. Emails are great for documenting information, but an occasional drop by the desk will go a long way to engage the team.

What can you do if you are the PM and the team? Often pulling together a status report that only you will read is a good way to shift your perspective from the 'work' to the management.

The status report is a good summary of what was just accomplished, what is up next in the project, what risks are being managed, and what issues have arisen. Even if you think you are writing this just for yourself, you might find it handy to share with people who know you are involved in a project.

External communications are usually the result of project work. These communications are part of a work package.

- You might have a training communication plan.

- A change management plan, or a road map.

- You might be communicating to the sales team to give them the features and benefits of the product.

- You might be communicating to customers to advise them of coming changes, or launch.

- Your marketing plan is also part of the communications.

The list will differ depending on your project, but you will have different information in your internal communications than in your external.

This is also a good place to talk about tools. Most people think of the scheduling tool as the primary project management tool. By now, I hope you have realized that managing the schedule is only part of project management.

One of the most known project scheduling tools is Microsoft Project. And for the experienced project manager it's a powerful and valuable tool. However it lacks as a team communication tool because simply put, it was build to be used by the project manager and not the rest of the team. In many cases like these, the team has no choice but to resort to basic tools such as e-mails and spreadsheets for their project management, however they just aren't all that effective for productivity.

These days, many project managers along with their teams are looking at a combination of tools. Perhaps the PM is already using MS Project and they are looking to implement an online project management solution along side their existing MS Project workflow. This type of scenario benefits both the project manager, as they continue to use MS Project to set and manage their project schedule, and their project team which can now use the online solution to enable communication, share files, provide status updates and more.

Many web-based project management tools allow for on-line collaboration with the team, the stakeholders, the sponsor, and anyone else you think should have access to the live information. The team updates their task progress in the web-based tool while the PM reviews it and exports it into their MS Project environment. This way everyone on the team is in-sync on the entire project and the sponsor and stakeholders can review the information as often as they want.

The PM will still provide formal project status reports because they are the opportunity to provide one view of the project overall. And, as the PM you will still need to follow up to get your team in the habit of keeping their activities up to date, but in the long run your team members will pick up the habit.

One major benefit to having an on-line collaborative tool - fewer meetings!!! You don't have to bring the team together just to find out what progress everyone has made, as you can easily check that online through the web-based tool.

1 COMMUNICATION STORY

Jane is approaching the delivery timeline of the project. The coffee tables are ready and the sales team has started training. In her weekly status report, Jane advises that the project is on time, in budget, and delivering the complete approved scope. She also notes that they have started the second phase of design and will be ready for production if the sales targets are met.

She sends the status report to Bill and they have a phone conversation to clarify the next steps. Bill suggests that they provide an article for the company newsletter about the project and share the marketing information company wide.

Jane pulls together all the information she has from the original scope and the recent status reports. As she reviews the content, she realizes that the presentation of the information needs to be different because the language is internal to the project. Jane calls Carrie in Marketing and asks for some help in redrafting the messages.

“This is really cut and dried,” Carrie says. “Let’s start with what you really want people to know.”

Jane answers, “I think the number one message is that the new product will be hitting the stores in two weeks.”

“And do you want people to take any action?”

“I think Bill wants everyone to talk up the new product, so I guess we need to ask them to do that.”

Carrie points at the documents in front of her and says, “We can do that. Is there anything you want to include that isn’t here?”

Jane thinks for a minute and then says, “The team really pulled together on this, would it be appropriate to thank them in the same message?”

“That’s a great way to make it interesting. Add a little human touch to the information.” Carrie tells Jane she’ll draft up something this afternoon and send it for review.

Wrapping it Up

The closing phase of the project is a place to reflect and build your knowledge for the next project. The challenge is that everyone wants to get on with the next project, and without some diligence the lessons learned throughout this project are lost.

Why do we need to reflect?

Every organization has some aspect of 'getting things done' that seems to be a challenge. Often it's communication, other times it is decision making or documentation.

? *Think about your own organization, what do people say 'we need to improve' most often?*

Projects give us an opportunity to reflect on what was done, or suggest ideas for future improvements. Let's use communication as an example.

People hear different things when communications are sent out. Any change, and projects always bring change, needs to be sent multiple times and in different channels.

Let's use estimating as an example of the benefit of reflection.

The first time you work with your project team to estimate their work effort you will probably find it to be a challenge. Most people haven't thought through their work that closely. If you take the time to review the project estimates against the actual task times, you and your team will be better informed next time you do a similar task.

I worked with one client over a series of four acquisition projects. The first time we estimated, it was more like taking a wild shot in the dark. By project number three we were almost 90% accurate in the estimation of our work efforts. We accomplished this improvement by keeping track of estimated vs actual project hours through our project management system, this really gave us a good understanding of the capabilities of our team and how they managed their workload.

1 PROJECT WRAP-UP STORY

Jane was so successful in the coffee table project that Bill assigned her the project to open a new store which will launch an entirely new product line; the project schedule is seven months from initiation to launch.

Jane remembers the last time they made a significant change and how many of the employees were unaware of the launch date, even though there were weekly updates sent to the whole organization through the intranet.

She makes a list of the various channels available for communication

- Weekly newsletter to all employees
- Intranet posting
- Broadcast emails
- Broadcast voicemails
- Marketing facts and updates
- Quarterly financial updates

She decided to test a new approach. In the first three months of the project she would include information in the weekly newsletter and post on the intranet. In month four, she would send a short survey to employees to assess whether the information was understood and ask how people prefer to get information in the future. In the following four months she would increase the pace of the information and have the management team reinforce the information in their sales meetings. She would incorporate any suggestions from the survey.

At the end of the project she would survey again to get an evaluation of the communication and any new suggestions.

When the project completed, Jane sent the survey to all employees and received the following results:

85% of the employees responded that the communication had improved and could continue to improve.

10% of the employees felt that the communication was too frequent.

5% of the employees did not remember receiving any communication.

There were 3 suggestions for further improvement:

1. Create a handout/handbook so that people can review the information when needed.

2. Create a library of communications for reference.

3. Use the blog function on the intranet to allow for more interaction.

Jane called a meeting of the project team and they discussed what they did well in the project and what they would have done differently in the project. She gathered this information and the communication survey results into a closing document and posted it on the intranet in a project management directory.

The last step she took to wind up the project was to have the operational manager sign to take over the new store.

Three weeks after she closed the project, Jane received a call from John Spencer the other project manager at JBL Industries.

"Jane, I'm looking at this lessons learned document you did. Thanks for this, it's great. Can we meet for coffee and talk about it so I get started on the right foot?"

A final comment about project closing, if you are the PM and the team, it is still a good idea to reflect and to have the operational sign over. You might want to do a quick debrief document noting 3 points done well and 3 ideas for next time so that you can build on what you learned rather than start from scratch again.

We used the example of communication to illustrate the benefit of project closing, but you can use it for any aspect. It would be valuable to make note if your estimating was off by 50% in the project – that will allow you to do a better estimate next time. Or, what if you found a fast and reliable way to document decisions?

2 FINAL WORDS

I hope this book was helpful and gave you an appreciation for the skills and techniques of project management. It's not rocket science but it can be complicated whether you are the team or whether you have a large team. It's more about managing people than about managing tasks. It's not about getting a perfect plan, but more about getting a plan down before you start.

Good luck in your projects!

References and Glossary

Brainstorming

This the process used to gather the contents of the WBS, a few key points to keep in mind:

- Allow people to put duplicate ideas up, it keeps the flow of information.
- Don't judge the information until you are sure you have most of the work up.
- Watch people during the individual brainstorming. When they slow down, prompt for more, when they slow down the second time move to the group exercise.
- Expect noisiness, ideas flow with the noise.

Business Case

This document is generally created by the business leader and it justifies the project. It will include cost estimates, timeline estimates and benefits. The benefits can be financial and nonfinancial and will often include the break-even timeline.

Dependencies

This term relates to the logical order of the tasks in the timeline. The work that logically follows after a specific task is called a dependency.

Duration

This term is used for the actual time it will take to complete a work package or task. Duration can be expressed in hours or days (minutes are too short a timeline to manage) and most scheduling tools will translate it to a work week. That means a 6 day task starting on Monday will take a total of 8 calendar days.

Effort

This term is used for the time it will take to do a task if everything and everyone you need is available. This is the basis for estimating the timeline for your project. Adding an estimated level of interruption will provide you with a reasonable estimate of the duration of the task. For instance, it may take only 10 minutes to walk to the grocery store, but along the way you stop to chat with a neighbor which means it takes you 20 minutes instead. The 10 minutes is the effort, the 20 minutes is the duration.

Gantt Chart

This is a bar chart that details the timeline and dependencies of your project.

Milestones

Key times in your project, it can be the end of a phase, or a major decision.

PMP

The professional designation from the Project Management Institute (PMI).

Project Plan

This is made up of all the documents you use; the charter, the WBS, the project schedule, the risk management plan, the decision documents.

Scope

This is a list of the boundaries of the project. It's what you will do and what you won't do.

In a project to organize a party, items in scope might include:

- Food
- Securing a location
- Hiring caterer
- Hiring bartender

Items out of scope might be:

- Transporting people to the party
- Accommodations for out of town guests

Scope Creep

This is the term for unmanaged scope changes.

Sponsor

The person in the project who will make the final decisions and who holds control of the budget. Usually they are found in the executive or senior management level of the organization.

Stakeholder

Someone who is not part of the project team, but is affected by the outcomes of your project. A stakeholder can be an end user, or the Vice President of a related division. In major projects, a stakeholder group could be the community.

Status Report

A periodic report to the sponsor that shows the status of the schedule and budget, upcoming activities and current risks and issues. This can be shared with the project team, but is targeted to the sponsor. Often a dashboard using the traffic light format, red (project is in trouble), yellow (project needs attention) and green (project is on track).

Work Breakdown Structure

A graphical representation of the work required to do the project. The WBS is not set up linearly, but is a hierarchical structure. The WBS is the basis for creating the schedule.

Work Package

The lowest level of the WBS. It contains a list of tasks to be completed and all the work packages will add up to a completed project.

Work Package Leader

The person who will report to the PM on the progress of the work package. This is someone who logically 'owns' the responsibility for the work being done. In a work package that delivers a procedure manual, the leader would logically be the procedure writer, but the work would be done by any number of other people.

Web-based project management software
http://www.EasyProjects.net

Project Management Templates
http://www.easyprojects.net/templates/

PM Hut - Project Management Articles
http://www.pmhut.com

allPM - Project Manager Community and Resources
http://www.allpm.com

Free Management Library - All About Project Management
http://managementhelp.org/projectmanagement/

PMI - Project Management Institute
http://www.pmi.org

And here is a small gift for you...

The following coupon code will get you 10% discount off any order you place with
Easy Projects .NET (including licenses and services): **eBOOK-10**

Did you find this ebook useful?

If you enjoyed reading this ebook, please take a few moments to give us feedback. We respect and value your opinion. Can you think of any ways to improve it? Are there any other subjects you would like us to cover in the next ebook?
Please send your feedback to: ***info@easyprojects.net***