

Multimedia Project Planning



Title: Multimedia Project Planning

By: Ali Akbary

Chapter 3 **PROJECT PLANNING STEPS**

Learning Outcome

Objectives of this chapter are: -

- Project Planning Steps
- Project management Software
- Project management plan
- Elements of project plan

Project Planning Steps

The project planning process is critical for the success of your project, and as a project manager, you have to think about all the elements that make up your project management plan such as work, time, resources and risks.

project planning steps are: -

1. Outline the business case
2. Meet with key stakeholders
3. Define project scope
4. Assemble a project team
5. Determine a project budget
6. Set project goals & objectives
7. Outline project deliverables
8. Create a project schedule
9. Assign tasks to your team members
10. Do a risk analysis
11. Create your project plan
12. Report your progress

By following these project planning steps, you'll clarify what you need to achieve, work out the processes you need to get there and develop an action plan for how you are going to take this project plan outline forward.

1. Outline the Business Case

If you have a project, there's a reason for it - that's your business case. The business case outlines reasons why the project is being initiated, its benefits and the return on investment. If there's a problem that is being solved, then that problem is outlined

here. The business case will be presented to those who make decisions at your organization, explaining what has to be done, and how, along with a feasibility study to assess the practicality of the project. If approved, you have a project.

2. Meet with Key Stakeholders

Every project has stakeholders, those who have a vested interest in the project. From the ones who profit from it, to the project team members who are responsible for its success. Therefore, any project manager must identify who these key stakeholders are during the project planning process, from customers to regulators. Meeting with them is crucial to get a better picture of what the project management plan should include and what is expected from the final deliverable.

3. Define Project Scope

It refers to the work required to accomplish the project objectives and generate the required deliverables. The project scope should be defined and organized by a work breakdown structure (WBS). Therefore, the project scope includes what you must do in the project (deliverables, sub deliverables, work packages, activities, tasks), but also what is nonessential. The latter is important for the project plan, because knowing what isn't high priority helps to avoid scope creep; that is, using valuable resources for something that isn't key to your project's success.

4. Assemble a Project Team

You'll need a capable project team to help you create your project plan and execute it successfully. It's advisable to gather a diverse group of experienced professionals to build a multi-disciplinary team that sees your project management plan from different perspectives.

5. Determine a Project Budget

Once you define your project scope, you'll have a task list that must be completed to deliver your project successfully. To do so, you'll need resources such as equipment, materials, human capital, and of course, money. Your project budget will pay for all this. The first step to create a project budget is to estimate the costs associated with each task. Once you have those estimated costs, you can establish a cost baseline, which is the base for your project budget.

6. Set Project Goals & Objectives

Goals and objectives are different things when it comes to planning a project. **Goals** are the results you want to achieve, and are usually broad. **Objectives**, on the other hand, are more specific; measurable actions that must be taken to reach your goal.

When creating a project plan, the goals and objectives naturally spring from the business case, but in this stage, you go into further detail. In a sense, you're fine-tuning the goals set forth in the business case and creating tasks that are clearly defined. These goals and objectives are collected in a project charter, which you'll use throughout the project life cycle.

7. Outline Project Deliverables

A project can have numerous deliverables. A deliverable can be a good, service or result that is needed to complete a task, process, phase, subproject or project. For example, the final deliverable is the reason for the project, and once this deliverable is produced, the project is completed. As defined in the project scope, a project consists of subprojects, phases, work packages, activities and tasks, and each of these components can have a deliverable. The first thing to do is determine what the final deliverable is, and how you will know that the quality meets your stakeholder's expectations. As for the other deliverables in the project, they must also be identified and someone on the team must be accountable for their successful completion.

8. Create a Project Schedule

The project schedule is what everything hangs on. From your tasks to your budget, it's all defined by time. Schedules are made up by collecting all the tasks needed to reach your final deliverable, and setting them on a project timeline that ends at your deadline. This can make for an unruly job ahead, which is why schedules are broken into phases, indicated by milestones, which mark the end of one project phase and the beginning of the next.

9. Assign Tasks to Your Team Members

The plan is set, but it still exists in the abstract until you take the tasks on your schedule and begin assigning them out to your team members. Their roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined, so they know what to do. Then, when you assign them tasks from your plan, they should be clear, with directions and any related documentation they will need to execute the tasks.

10. Do a Risk Analysis

Every project has some level of risk. There are several types of risk such as scope risk, technical risks and schedule risk, among others. Even if your project plan is thorough, internal and external factors can impact your project's time, cost and scope (triple constraint). Therefore, you need to regard your planning as flexible. There are many ways to prepare for risk, such as developing a change management plan, but for now, the most important thing to do is to track your progress throughout the execution phase by using project status reports and/or project planning software to monitor risk.

11. Create your Project Plan

As discussed above, a project management plan is a document that's made of several elements. Before we get into a detailed explanation of each of them, it's important to understand that you should include them all to have a solid project plan. The components that you'll need might vary depending on your project, but in general terms, you'll need these main documents to create your project management plan:

- Project charter
- Project schedule
- Project budget
- Project scope statement
- Risk management plan
- Change management plan
- Cost management plan
- Resource management plan
- Stakeholder management plan

12. Report Your Progress

Your ultimate goal is to ensure a successful project for your stakeholders. They're invested, and will not be satisfied twiddling their thumbs without looking at project status reports to track progress. By constructing a work breakdown structure (WBS) during the project planning phase you can break down the project for them so that they understand how your project plan will be executed. Keeping stakeholders informed is important to manage their expectations and ensure that they're satisfied. Having regular meetings where you present progress reports are a great way to show them that everything is moving forward as planned and to field any questions or concerns, they might have. Your stakeholder management plan will specify how you'll engage stakeholders in the project.

Example to Create a Project Plan by using software tools

Project planning software is a tool that helps to plan, organize and manage the schedule and resources needed to complete a project. ProjectManager is an award-winning project management software that organizes projects from planning to completion. Sign up for a free 30-day trial and follow along to build a thorough project plan that covers every detail.

The link below is the software download: -

<https://www.projectmanager.com/software/planning>

1. List Your Tasks for the Plan

Tasks are the building blocks of any project and the start of any plan is identifying all the tasks that lead to your final deliverable.

Open the tool to add your tasks on the Gantt chart or one of the other multiple project views. You can import a task list from any spreadsheet or use one of our templates to get started.

Done	Task Name	Assigned To	Progress	Priority	Due
<input type="radio"/>	Sprint planning Sprint 1		0%	Critical	08 Apr
<input type="radio"/>	Retrospective Sprint 2		0%	Critical	19 Jun
<input type="radio"/>	Bug 4 QA Epic		0%	Critical	11 Jun
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Bug 5 QA Epic		100%	Very High	16 Jun
<input type="radio"/>	Story 3 Feature Epic		0%	High	18 May
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Story 6 Feature Epic		100%	Medium	08 Jun
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Story 4 Feature Epic		100%	Medium	04 Jun
<input type="radio"/>	Story 2 Feature Epic		75%	Medium	04 May
<input type="radio"/>	Story 1		25%	Medium	21 Apr

Sprint planning

Sprint 1

Progress
Not Started

Assigned To
Tiffany, Mo

Description
We will use this to sprint process.

Files (2)
Add File

Add a comment

Figure 1 Task List

2. Add Duration and Costs to Tasks

Every task has an estimated duration, which is the time it will take to complete it. They will also require a certain amount of funding, which needs to be collected to formulate your plan.

Add the start and end dates for each task in the Gantt and they populate a project timeline, so you can see the whole project laid out in one place. There's also a column for task costs.

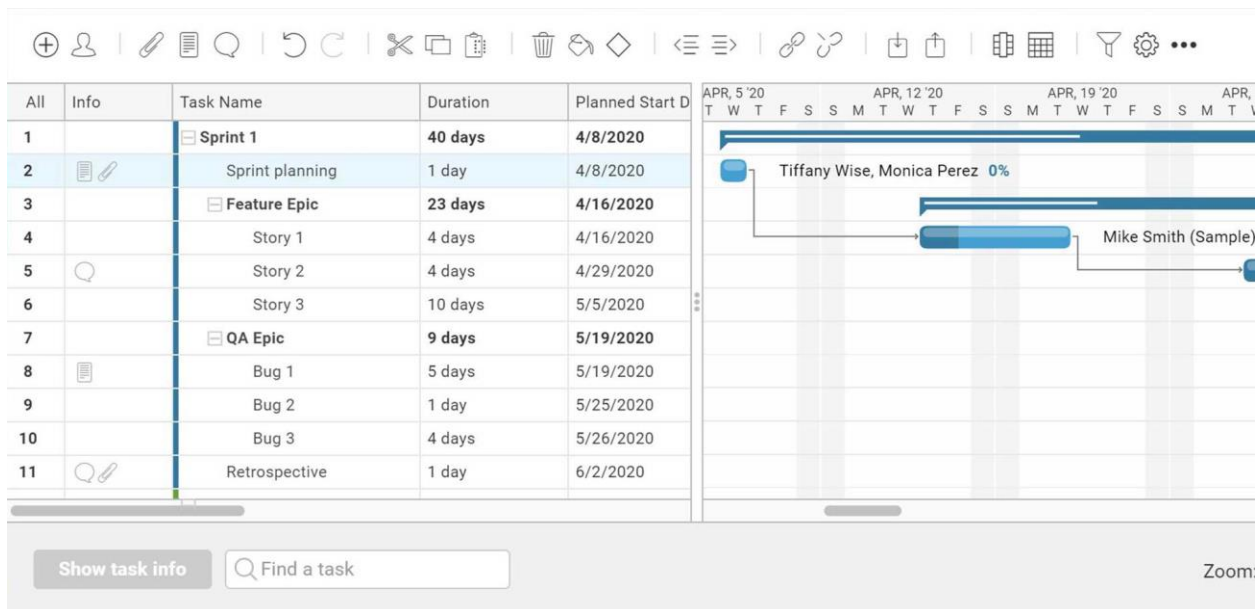


Figure 2 Duration and cost

3. Link Dependent Tasks

Tasks are not always separate from one another. Often one cannot start or stop until another has started or stopped. That's called a task dependency and needs to be noted in your plan.

Link dependent tasks by dragging one to the other. A dotted line indicates that they're linked, so you stay aware of the fact and can avoid bottlenecks later in the project.

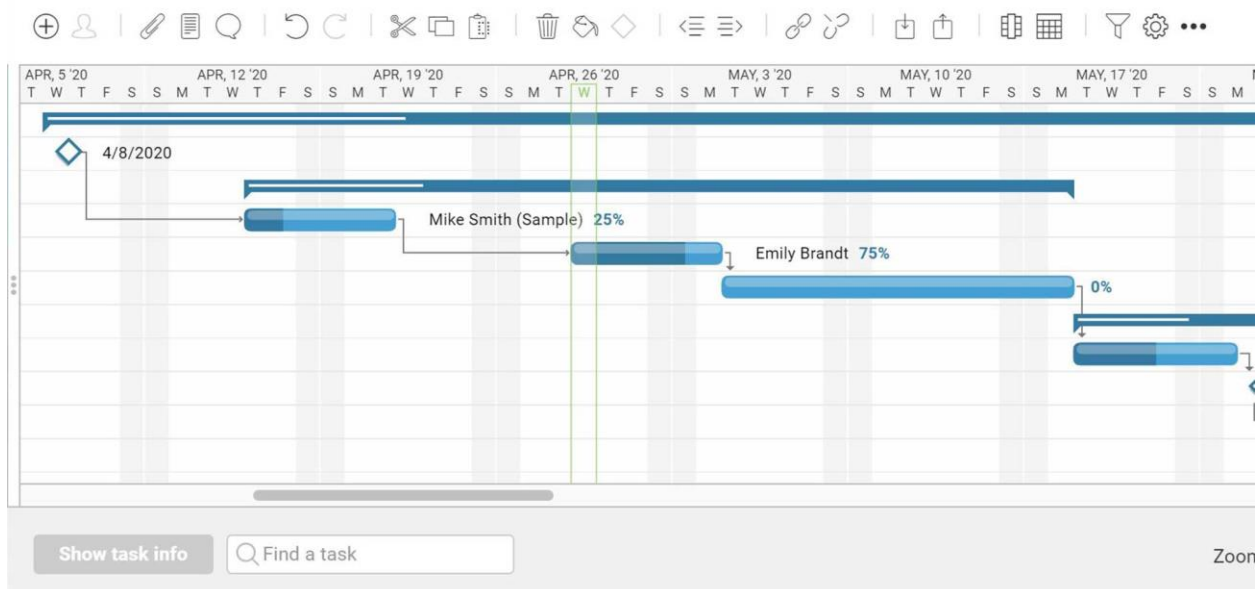


Figure 3 Linking departmental task

4. Set Milestones & Baseline

A milestone indicates the end of one phase and the beginning of another, which helps with tracking and morale. The baseline sets your plan so you can compare it to actual progress.

There is a filter on the Gantt that automatically sets the baseline, so you can use it to track your actual progress against the plan. The baseline can also be locked with a click.

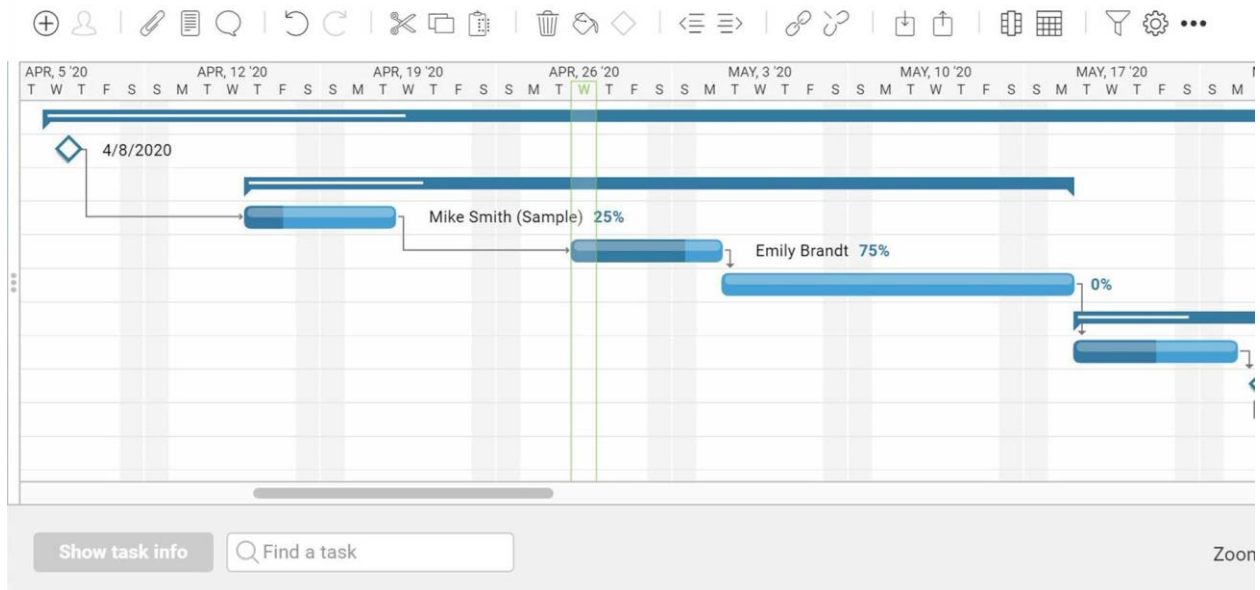


Figure 4 milestone

5. Onboard Team & Assign

Getting the team and the tool together is how a project plan becomes actualized. The easier and seamless this transition, the faster you'll get to work on the project.

Invite your team from the software and it generates an email with a link. Once they follow that link, they're in and have access to the tools they need to manage their tasks.

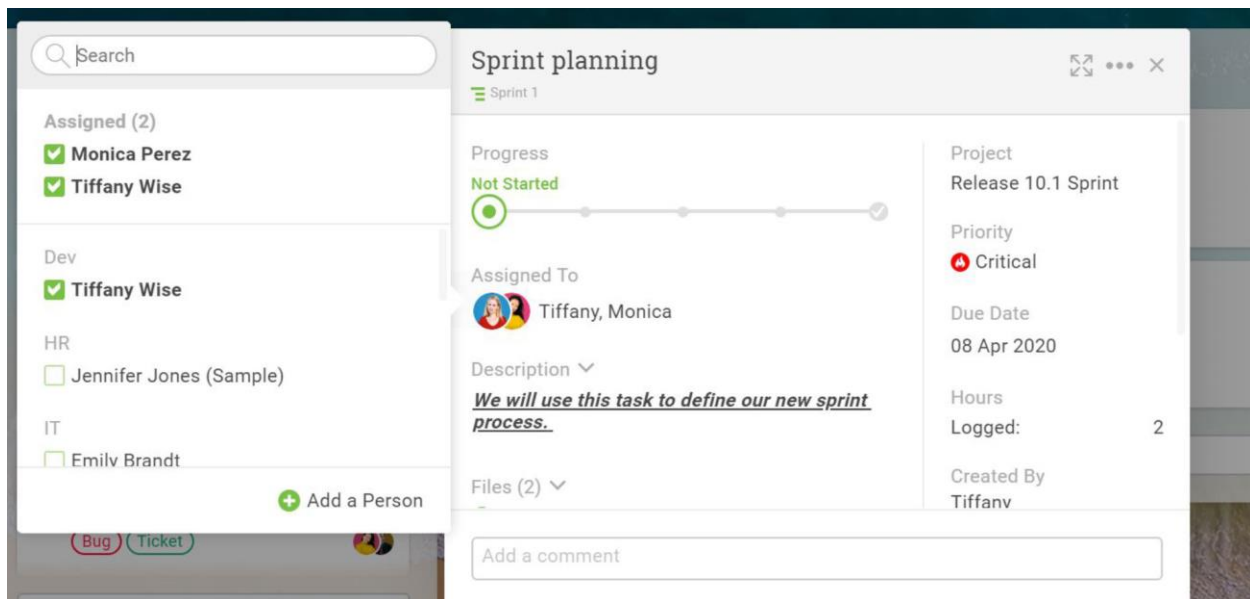


Figure 5 Assigning team members

6. Monitor Progress & Report to Stakeholders

Keeping track of your progress and then updating stakeholders is both how you stay on track and manage your stakeholders' expectations.

See progress as it happens on our real-time dashboard, which calculates data and displays it over six project metrics. Reports can be filtered and shared for a deep dive into those numbers.

Project Plan

From 29 December 2019 to 29 May 2020. As at 29 April 2020 EDT.

Planned Start Date: **10 April 2020**

Planned Due Date: **01 August 2020**

WBS	Name	Planned Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Planned Duration	Planned Hours	Planned Cost	Planned Resource Co
1.1	On-Site Meetings	4/10/2020	4/15/2020	4 days	32 hours	\$0.00	\$0.00
1.2.1	Stakeholder Requirement 1	4/15/2020	4/15/2020	1 day	8 hours	\$0.00	\$0.00
1.2.2	Stakeholder Requirement 2	4/15/2020	4/15/2020	1 day	8 hours	\$0.00	\$0.00
1.2.3	Customer Requirement 1	4/15/2020	4/15/2020	1 day	16 hours	\$0.00	\$0.00
1.3	Document Current Systems	4/24/2020	5/5/2020	8 days	64 hours	\$0.00	\$4,480.00
1.4	Analysis Complete	5/6/2020	5/7/2020	2 days	16 hours	\$0.00	\$2,400.00
2.1	Design Database	5/8/2020	5/13/2020	4 days	6 hours	\$0.00	\$0.00
2.2	Software Design	5/14/2020	5/20/2020	5 days	120 hours	\$0.00	\$6,000.00

Figure 6 Monitoring

7. Adjust Plan as Needed

No plan remains the same throughout a project. Things happen and changes are demanded. Therefore, being able to edit your plan easily is key to the project planning process.

Edit your plan on the Gantt by a simple drag and drop. Move the old date to the new date and not only is that task fixed, but any impacted tasks are also updated automatically.

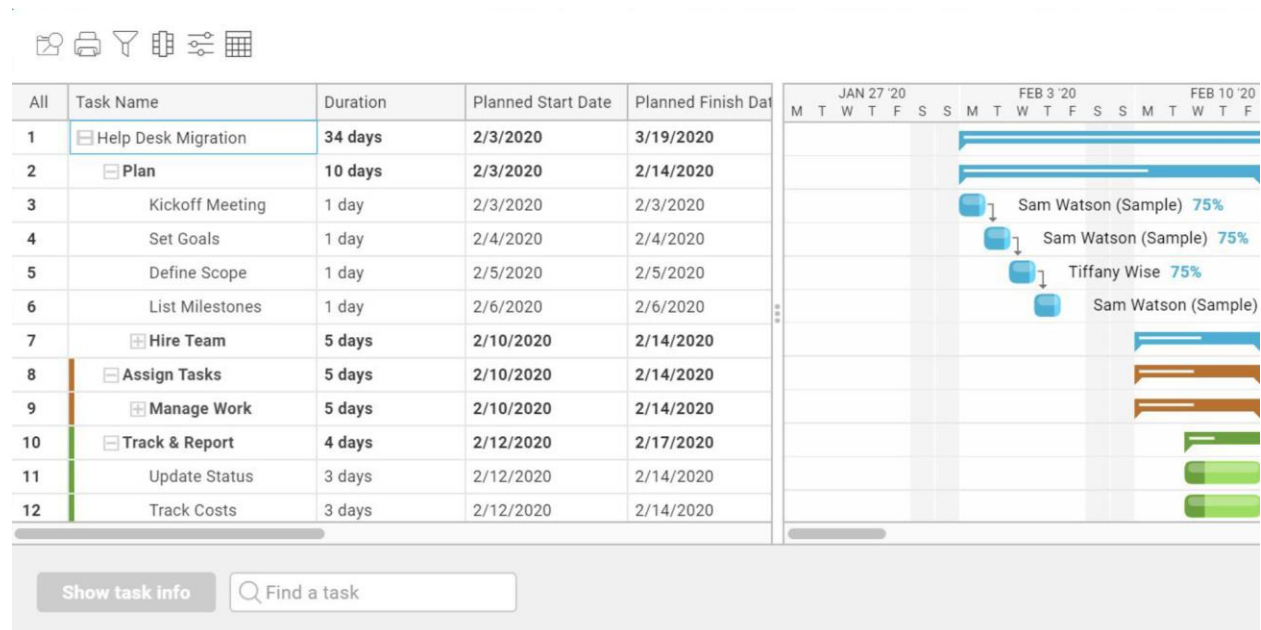


Figure 7 adjust the plan

ProjectManager is an award-winning software that helps managers plan and helps teams get organized. Gantt charts control all aspects of your project plan from scheduling to assigning tasks and even monitoring progress. Multiple project views provide transparency into workflow and give everyone the tools they need to be at their best.

What Is the Purpose of a Project Management Plan?

The purpose of a project management plan is to serve as a guide for the execution and control phases. The project plan provides all the information necessary for the execution phases such as the project's goals, objectives, scope of work, milestones, risks and resources. Then, this information helps project managers monitor and control the progress of the project.

We plan at the beginning to save time later. A good project plan means that you don't have to worry about whether the project participants are going to be available on the

right dates because you've planned for them to be. You don't have to worry about how to pay those invoices you've planned your financial process. You don't have to worry about whether everyone agrees on what a quality outcome looks like you've already planned what quality measures you are going to use.

A good project plan sets out the processes that everyone is expected to follow, so it avoids a lot of headaches later. For example, if you specify that estimates are going to be worked out by subject matter experts based on their judgement, and that's approved, later no one can complain that they wanted you to use a different estimating technique. They've known the deal since the start.

Planning streamlines the doing.

Project plans are also really helpful for monitoring progress. You can go back to them and check what you said you were going to do and how, comparing it to what you are actually doing. This gives you a good reality check and enables you to change course if you need to, bringing the project back on track.

Tools like dashboards can help you make sure that your project is proceeding according to plan. ProjectManager.com has a real-time dashboard that updates automatically whenever tasks are updated.

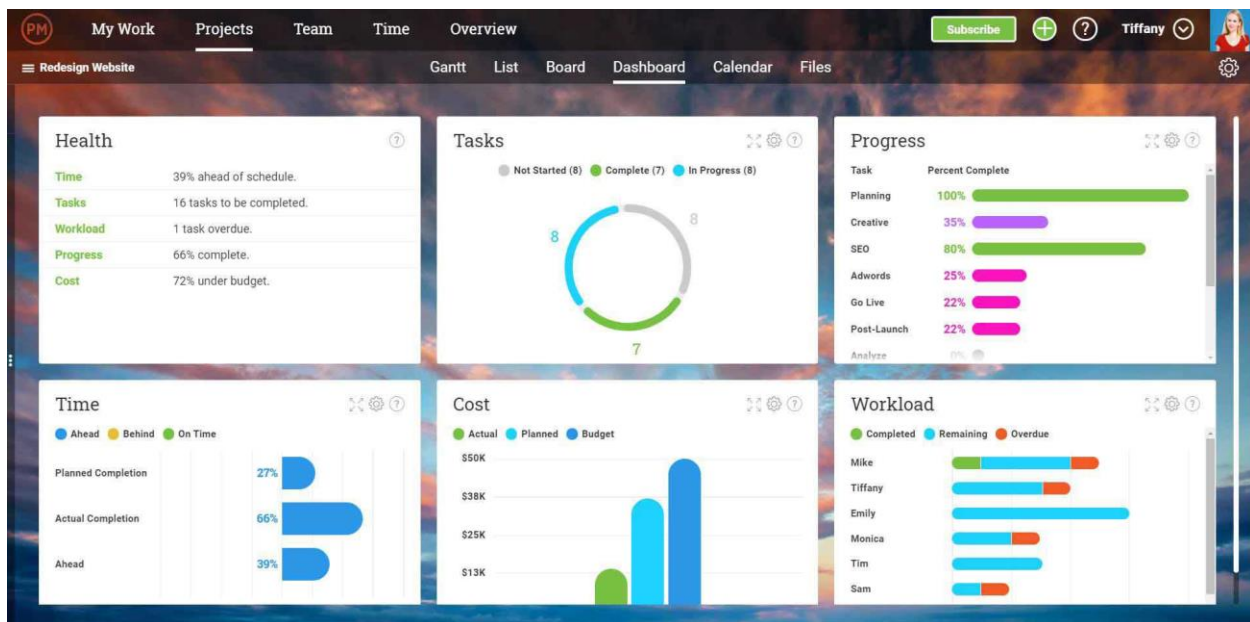


Figure 8 project management dashboard

The Elements of a Project Plan

The project planning process already discussed only scratches the surface of what is a deep well of practices created to control your project. They start with dialogue — speaking to stakeholders, teams, et al.

The deliverable for your planning phase is a document called the project plan. A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide) – Fifth Edition says that the project plan is made up of lots of subsidiary plans. These include: -

- A project scope statement to define all the tasks and deliverables that are needed to complete the project
- A risk management plan for dealing with project risk including the processes for logging and tracking risks
- A change management plan to manage any changes that will be made to the project plan
- A cost management plan for managing costs and the budgeting elements of the project including any procurements or supplier engagements you might have
- A resource management plan for managing the material resources such as equipment and the human resources on the team both in terms of availability and skills
- A stakeholder management plan setting out who is going to receive messages about the project, when and in what format
- A quality plan that specifies the quality targets for the project

That's a lot of documentation.

In reality, it's rare that you'll produce these as individual documents. What you need is a project plan that talks about the important elements of each of these. There's no point creating a big document that sets out exactly how your business works anyway. If you already have a structured risk management process, then don't waste time writing it all down again in your project plan.

Your project management plan needs to include enough information to make sure that you know exactly what processes and procedures need to be followed and who needs to be involved. Get your project plan approved by your stakeholders, your project sponsor and your team so there are no surprises later. As explained above, project planning charts and techniques such as Gantt charts, CPM, WBS or PERT can help you create your project plan.

How Long Does the Project Planning Phase Take?

This is hard to answer. It's going to take longer to plan the moon landing than a new dating app.

The best way to estimate how long your project planning phase will take is to look at similar projects that have happened before, and see how long it took them to plan. Talk to the project manager as well, if you can, because they'll have a view on whether that length of time was enough or not!

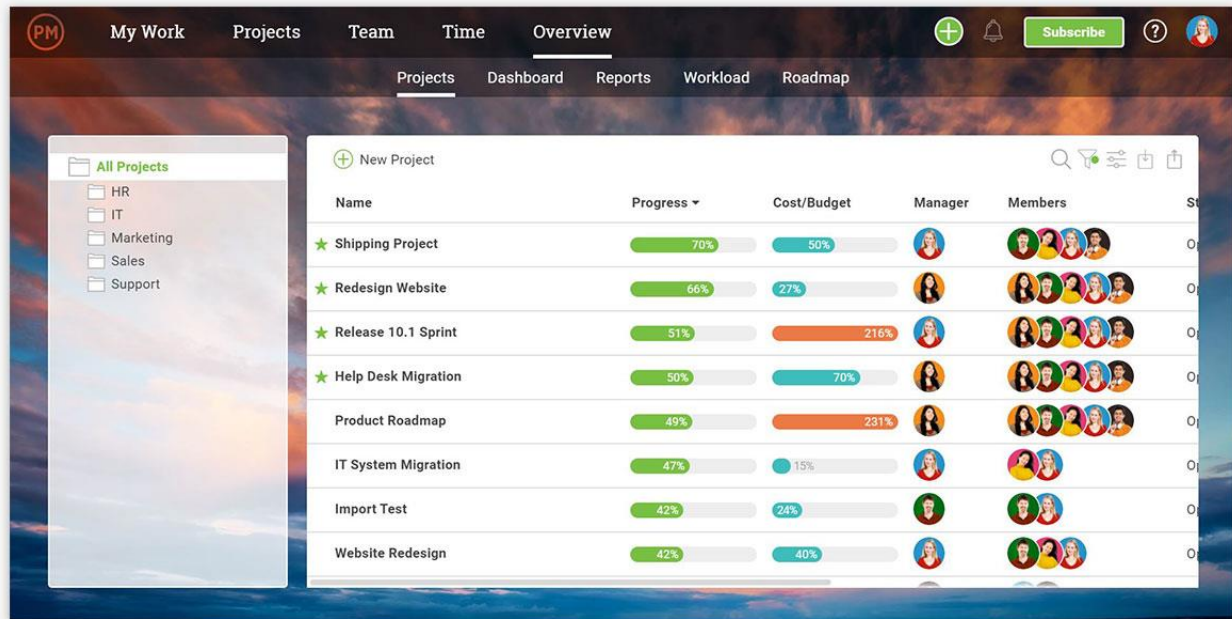


Figure 9 Project Management software Dashboard

It's easy to see how long other projects took if you have a project management tool that archives your old project schedules and makes the data available to everyone who needs it. You can then search for similar projects and study their schedules in detail.

Techniques for the Project Planning Process

A project plan is all about working out what to do and how to do it, so you need to get a lot of people involved. There are several good tools and techniques for getting information from other people including: -

- Workshops
- One-to-one meetings or interviews
- Surveys or customer focus groups to gather and validate requirements.

You should also arm yourself with a task management tool, like a list or a kanban board. They are incredibly useful for noting down important things that should be in your project plan. Kanban board software can help structure your plan by writing down the key headings and then moving them around as required until you have a flow that looks right.

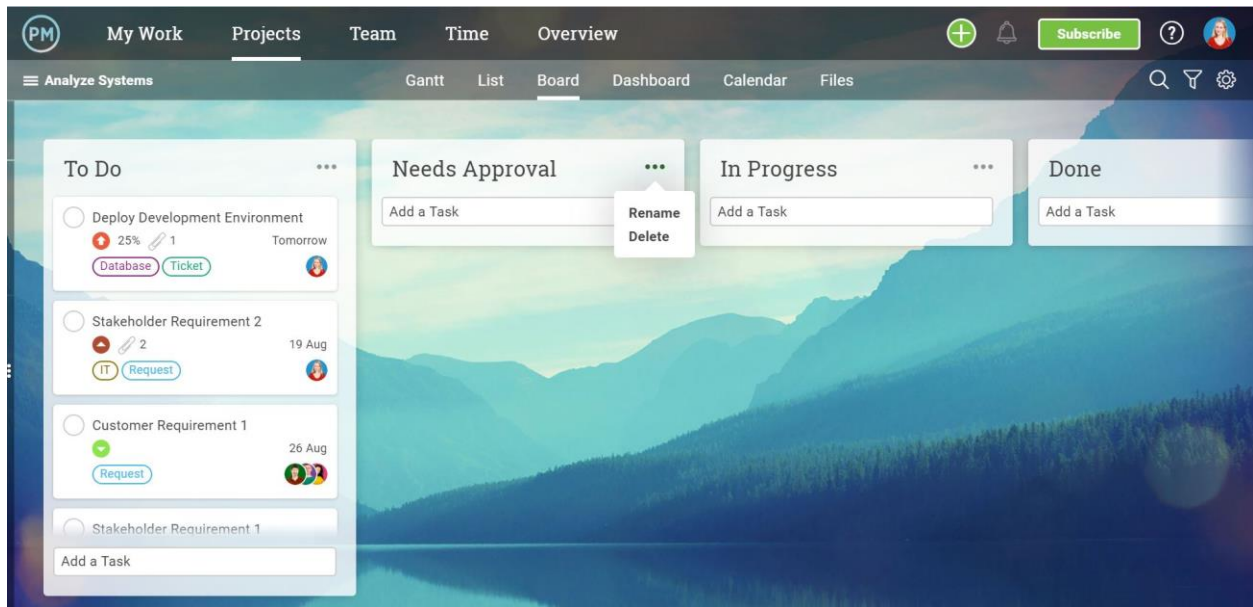


Figure 10 project Management software

Finally, you'll need an online project management system to store your project management plan in. Make sure that everyone in the team can access the latest version of the project plan.

How To Manage Your Project Plan

Your project plan is not a document written in stone. You should be referring back to it and making changes to it as often as you need to. Parts of it, like your project schedule, will change almost daily. Other parts, like your procurement plans and cost management processes, won't change at all during the life of your project.

The important thing to remember is that if your project management plan isn't working for you, think about what you can do to change it. It's there to guide your project management, not restrict you from doing the right thing. If you need to review how you manage project resources, then go back and review it. Make the changes you need, get the plan approved again and share it with the team.

Guide to Planning Better Projects



Define the Direction

Identify the vision, goals and deliverables of the project to help keep everyone (bosses included) on track and in scope.



Be Fearless & Link Tasks

By linking your tasks you can ensure a new one isn't started before an old one has been completed.



Set Baselines & Monitor Progress

This is where you compare the planned versus actual time your project is taking.



Nobody knows for certain what roadblocks you'll come across on your trip through the life cycle of your project, but the right tools can make your project a whole lot easier.



Identify Tasks & Set Up Online Tools

Now you have to figure out what tasks are needed to accomplish the goals you set up, and break them down into doable subtasks with deadlines.



Assign Resources & Help Them Help You

Assign a team member, piece of equipment, location or material to each task on your list.

PROJECTMANAGER

Figure 11 Guideline

How To Make a Project Plan When You Don't Have All the Answers?

Yes, this happens—most of the time! It's rare to have all the information at the beginning of a project. Most managers want you to dive in and get started, but you might not have the luxury of knowing all the details.

That's OK; we have techniques to help deal with uncertainty.

First is the project assumption. You use these to put caveats on your plan and to document the things that you assume to be true at this point in time. For example:

- We assume that the resources will be available.
- We assume that the required funding is available.
- We assume that the colors requested will be in line with the company brand and that Marketing sign off is not required.

You get the picture. Then, if the design team comes back and says that they want the product to be a totally new palette of colors and that Marketing has to approve that, you are justified in saying that you'll have to change the timescales on the schedule to make that possible.

You planned based on an assumption (that everyone agreed to, because you got the document approved) and that assumption turned out not to be true.