

# Advanced Microsoft Project Training

Since 1999 Pace Micro Technology have used Project Learning for Project Management and Microsoft Project training. Paul Boocock - Pace's Programme Manager, explains the relationship...



## Background

Pace Micro Technology plc develop and manufacture high-tech consumer electronics, for digital broadcasters worldwide. This is a highly customer-focused sector, which makes use of very rapidly changing technologies. To ensure that we remain the fastest to market, we need our staff to have effective multi-project management skills and to make consistent and full use of Microsoft Project - our standard PM software tool.

At any one moment in time, we have many concurrent projects (currently 50+ at time of writing) sharing the same highly skilled and scarce people. We require our Project Managers and their Project Coordinators, to be able to make professional decisions; aware of the impact they may have upon their colleagues or on their own project success. Planning, standardisation and reflecting reality is the key to running our business.

Our first experience of Project Learning (PL) was their co-running of a number of training courses in the summer of 1999. This training formed part of a deliberate programme to revive the planning and general management skills that had become diluted by our huge rate of new staff intake, and this allowed us to set a baseline across the department for further improvements.

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case study

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## Requirement

Late last summer [2000] we recognised the need for further (very detailed) advanced level software training, to relate the Pace ISO9001 standards and the development process, to the tools and methods used. I invited PL to work with us in creating a tailored training solution. PL's Andy Jessop and I worked together to specify the course content, basing it on their existing advanced course material and incorporating within it, our standards, practices and procedures.

Following approximately 30 man-hours of course development, we were able to make the initial presentation to a number of handpicked delegates (and myself). This presentation was well received and allowed us both to identify areas of rework in the training materials (very, very slight) our goals (we reduced slightly the quantity of material to cover) the duration of the course (we made it a 20hrs presentation) and the examples to be used (some of the original Pace material was just too realistic - and complicated). When you consider the amount of material that we are talking about here, I found this a remarkably good experience - well done Andy.

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## Outcome

Since then we have successfully trained a further 40 managers (including Departmental and General Managers) in getting the best out of Project. Feedback from them has been very encouraging (although the course does work them hard) and we have expanded the training's scope to include our subsidiary companies in Cambridge, Bracknell and the USA. All in all, the collaboration between PL and Pace has been a great success; our managers are able to plan and control their projects better and our MIS information is enhanced, since the plans feeding the information are more accurate and up to date. We are currently [early 2001] working with PL to update our managers to Project 2000 - a straightforward exercise, which will help us get the best out of the new software available.

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