

# Project Management Practicalities



## course factsheet

duration	Three days
availability	Company course listing
course overview	Containing practical tools and techniques to help create, plan, optimise and control people and projects more effectively. Emphasis is placed on how teams of people manage one or several projects. This learning is enforced by detailed case studies and ten practical individual and syndicate exercises.
designed for	Anyone responsible for managing one or more projects, wanting a detailed understanding of the modern tools and techniques available and how they apply to real projects and the project teams that make them successful.
prerequisites	None, other than a willingness to participate in group discussions and syndicate work.
follow on learning	To expand upon the competences developed, the following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Microsoft Project Essentials</li><li>• Project Mentor</li></ul>

**Project simulation**

To introduce delegates to project management (and to each other), this introductory exercise simulates the processes and techniques of planning and executing a simple project. The establishment of the project team and its behaviour as the project progresses is explored to provide an insight into how projects are created, planned and managed.

**Project management preliminaries**

This next section discusses essential PM principles. Why projects fail and the various types of project leads into interpersonal issues, team building and communication. An exercise creates a project methodology and a basic test determines initial PM knowledge.

**Project startup**

From an understanding of PM fundamentals, the project begins to take shape. The three project resources of work, time and cost are discussed, along with task delegation. The planning sequence is commenced, starting with an understanding of a client's requirements. A practical exercise discusses a project's feasibility.

**Defining what to do**

With a project's feasibility confirmed, the project definition can be expanded into just what is required (and at what level of detail for reporting and control). A top-down approach creates a work and cost breakdown, confirmed with a syndicate exercise.

- Understanding the project brief
- Creating and managing the project team
- Defining the project
- Mobilising the team to undertake the project
- Getting the project to meet its objectives
- Reviewing the outcome of the project

- What is a project and why do they go wrong?
- How do projects and programmes differ?
- Types of projects
- Interpersonal issues
- Team building and communication
- Creating a feedback mechanism

- The role of project planning
- The three project resources
- Knowing what the client wants
- Creating a project definition
- How feasible is the project?

- Levels of detail required for control
- Levels of reporting
- Creating a Work Breakdown Structure
- Cost breakdown and coding structures
- Adding milestones

## Projects and programmes

As projects are rarely in isolation, the relationship between the project and the overall programme is introduced. This is discussed in how the tasks themselves will be performed, together with the people that will carry out those tasks. The role of the project team is explored in detail and a practical exercise maps people with their tasks and responsibilities.

- Programmes definitions
- Product breakdowns and other structures
- Project team structures
- Creating an organisation breakdown
- Creating assignment matrices

## How to accomplish work

With the project scope defined, how it will be achieved is discussed. The work, cost and time content of tasks is explained, along with sources of this information. Task relationships are introduced and an exercise creates a project network.

- Sources of time / work information
- Time vs. work
- The cost of doing work and tasks
- Relationships between tasks
- Tasks with multiple predecessors / successors

## When things happen / further timing influences

The network says how things will be done. Critical path analysis determines when: how quickly and how slowly. Gantt charts depict the schedule of tasks and their spare time. Task relationships are expanded to increase flexibility. Influences external to the project are added to create a more realistic model of reality. Practical exercises confirm the appropriate techniques to use.

- How quickly / slowly can tasks be done?
- Tasks with spare / no spare time
- Gantt charts to show when
- Overlapping or delaying tasks
- Constraining tasks starts / finishes
- Influences from other projects

## Who does what and when

People to perform the tasks need to be added to the project to be a true model of reality. Their influence is discussed in how they are assigned and the problems that they can bring. Techniques for resource management are introduced, along with the implications in applying them. Practical exercises optimise this resource usage and create a cost schedule.

- Simple / effort-driven assignments
- How resource usage adds up
- Resource management options
- Resource levelling with / without delays
- Substituting alternative resources
- Scheduling project costs

## **Making it all happen**

With a plan in place, the needs of the project team require assessment, management and understanding. This module looks at how project information is integrated, teams are formed and the needs of project stakeholders are maintained. Emphasis is placed on the need for effective benefit management in the group discussions and delegate exercises.

- Integrating inputs from different viewpoints
- Why, how and when to mobilise
- Mobilisation roles
- Developing the project team
- Mobilisation and the project lifecycle
- Determining, assessing and managing stakeholders

## **Assessing project risks**

As projects are modelling the future, this implies an element of risk. Where the risk comes from and when it should be reviewed are discussed. Different types of risk are explained, together with their probability of happening and the impact if they do happen. Syndicate work identifies sources of risk and contingencies for removing / alleviating that risk.

- When and why manage risk?
- Using risk diagrams and matrices
- P.E.R.T. as a risk management tool
- When to apply contingencies
- Contingency effects

## **Controlling work in progress**

Once a project goes live, it is subject to (often dramatic) change. The necessity for tracking what has happened is expanded to encompass updating cycles and their frequency. What is captured and how it is done are discussed, together with what is different to as before and why it is different. A practical exercise tracks a project's progress, compared to what should have been achieved.

- Change: its impact and opportunities
- Update cycles and their frequency
- Capturing: what; how & who
- Comparisons to original plans
- Understanding earned-value analysis
- Evaluating the impact of the change

### **Replanning to stay on track**

Actual work accomplished creates a requirement for replanning - at varying levels of detail. Options to control time, cost and quality are discussed, together with the need for timely action. The importance of reporting and communication is emphasised. A practical exercise deals with alleviating a number of project problems, arising out of an update.

- Why replan, and at what detail?
- Changing how long things take
- Changing task relationships
- Keeping control of costs and quality
- Keeping people informed
- The need to update regularly

### **Reviewing after progress**

This final section emphasises the importance of formally closing a project. Confirming that it has met its requirements and that the project team performed well are important lessons to learn for the future. A final exercise re-runs a test on general PM knowledge.

- Why review the past?
- When to review and close
- Team benefits from a review
- Project closure meetings
- Project closure reports