

Right on schedule

To deliver a project on time, project managers manage and control its associated activities and resources, and check on the progress of each stage.

This systematic approach is known as project time management.

Definition and process

Time management may be defined as the ability to plan and complete a project in a timely manner.

As a project can be broken down into activities to be accomplished, its time-management process starts with identifying these activities. Then, the sequence of the activities can be established.

At the same time, the project manager must assign the optimal duration for each activity and consider the resources for the project.

By doing so, a schedule detailing who is working on what, when and how can be developed and shared with the project team to serve as a baseline to effectively control and deliver the project on time.

Activities

An activity is a specific task with a clearly defined scope (for example, the installation of doors or windows), and its duration is derived from when it starts and finishes.

In a project, the sequence of activities can be established by considering what activities must be completed (predecessors) to start a specific activity, as well as what activities should follow (successors) the activity.

For example, a predecessor for the installation of doors can be the installation of door frames, while installing door handles and door locks can be its successor.

The time required for each activity is determined by the sequence established, as well as the resources and constraints associated with the project.

Progress check and control

It is important to develop a schedule, but it is more important to use it to manage and control a project. The original schedule developed at the beginning of a project serves as a baseline for the project team to check projects and thus assess its status, i.e. behind, on track or ahead of schedule.

If there is a variance, the project

manager needs to identify what activities caused the gap, citing specific reasons, and take the necessary action. This is the essence of project time management.

To ensure a project is on track, it is good practice to check its schedule either daily, weekly or monthly, keeping in mind a predefined set of baselines, analysis methods and adjustment measures.

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