

FOUR WAYS TO KEEP PROJECTS ON SCHEDULE

HOW WELL ARE YOU KEEPING YOUR PROJECTS ON TRACK? INEFFECTIVE PROJECT SCHEDULING CAN LEAD TO WASTED RESOURCES (INCLUDING TIME, PEOPLE, AND MONEY) AND FAILED PROJECTS.

HERE ARE FOUR TECHNIQUES THAT CAN HELP YOU IMPROVE PROJECT TIME MANAGEMENT AND KEEP YOUR ENTIRE PROJECT ON SCHEDULE:

1 DETERMINE THE CRITICAL PATH



WHAT IS THE CRITICAL PATH?

A project's critical path is the sequence of activities that add up to the longest overall duration – which determines the shortest time possible to complete the project.

Focusing on the critical path can help you deliver a project on time – or even cut its duration and complete it ahead of schedule.

HOW TO DETERMINE THE CRITICAL PATH:

List All Necessary Tasks:

Include estimates of the work needed to accomplish each task to help you get a sense of the overall time needed to complete the total project.

KEY TIP

DON'T BE TEMPTED TO ENTER THEM DIRECTLY INTO A GANTT CHART.

Prioritize the Tasks:

Each task will fall into line according to what needs to happen first. Decide which tasks have the highest priorities and continue through the entire list.

Make a Gantt Chart:

Be sure to use the time estimates you listed previously and adjust tasks based on priority.

Determine the Critical Path:

The longest path of tasks on the Gantt chart is your critical path. Keep in mind you may have more than one critical path in your schedule.

DON'T OVERLOOK ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE CRITICAL PATH(S).

KEY TIP

BUILD SLACK TIME INTO THE SCHEDULE



A normal part of project management, slack time allows you to delay a task when necessary, without affecting the rest of the project schedule. In other words, slack time means that holding off on Task A will not prevent the on-time launch of Task B.

3 CRASH WHEN NECESSARY



WHAT IS CRASHING?

Crashing is a powerful project time management tool in which you reduce the time to completion for tasks in the critical path.

KEY TIP

IT'S HELPFUL TO KNOW THAT REDUCING TIME TO COMPLETE NON-CRITICAL TASKS – THOSE OUTSIDE THE CRITICAL PATH – WILL NOT REDUCE THE PROJECT DELIVERY TIME. SO, FOCUS ON CRASHING TASKS IN THE CRITICAL PATH.

BE CREATIVE WHEN CONSIDERING CRASHING METHODS, SUCH AS:

- Overtime
- Allocating additional resources to specific activities
- Hiring additional resources
- Incentive payments for early completion
- Outsourcing portions of the project

DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAST TRACK TASKS



WHAT IS FAST-TRACKING?

In fast-tracking, the project manager rearranges the project schedule so that tasks that were planned for completion in sequence are reassigned to be worked on simultaneously.



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