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PROJECT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE — INFORMATION SYSTEMS SPECIFIC INTEREST GROUP

SUPPORTING PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN AN INFORMATION SYSTEMS ENVIRONMENT

Contents

The Strategic Role of Project Management

By Don J. Wessels, PMP

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Project management has emerged as a strong discipline practiced by highly trained, certified professionals as organizations have come to realize they cannot stay in business if they cannot manage their projects. However, many companies are still limiting the application of project management to the tactical level. Here, of course, it is vital to the very survival of enterprises to ensure products are designed, manufactured and delivered to the market efficiently and effectively. Smart organizations also recognize project management is a critical strategic tool. They practice **project portfolio management** to select, manage and support a portfolio of projects that have the best chance of moving the enterprise forward, keeping it vibrant in the marketplace and returning maximum shareholder value. As departments and divisions compete for scarce financial and human resources, strategic project portfolio management provides the rational decision framework necessary to make the right project investment decisions that enable organizations to compete and win in the global economy.

The Evolution of Strategic Project Management

Project management began as a tactical tool to facilitate the execution of individual projects and programs, such as building a new facility, installing new hardware or implementing a new software initiative. These early days of project management coincided with the business schools' push toward Management by Objectives, first popularized in 1954 by Peter F. Drucker in *The Practice of Management*. MBO is a process of agreeing upon objectives and obtaining buy-in from management and employees. However, MBO proved to be a failure. "Management by objectives works – if you know the objectives. Ninety percent of the time you don't," said Peter Drucker.

While MBO required a precise written description of objectives and timelines for their monitoring and achievement, it did not enable organizations to evolve over time by accomplishing *strategic* objectives, such as entering a new market, increasing revenues, reducing costs or returning greater value to shareholders. Soon the new rallying cry became Management by Projects, evolved after Tom Peters launched a management revolution with his book, *In Search of Excellence*. Even Peter Drucker, in his later years, jumped on the bandwagon as he realized that moving an organization forward required project management skills. Organizations adopted project management as a tactical tool to execute projects, but it was not enough.

The next step was the application of project management as a *strategic* tool. Since all projects proposed by an organization's departments and divisions compete for resources and support, strategic project management views all of the organization's projects together as components of a portfolio and makes strategic choices in their support. "While project management and program management have traditionally focused on "doing work right," portfolio management is concerned with "doing the right work," states the Project Management Institute's *Standard for Portfolio Management* (p. 3).

However, traditional strategic planning is not the right tool for project portfolio management. Strategic planning begins with initiatives and develops objectives for senior and mid-level managers who then push them down into the lower levels. While each level may accomplish its objectives, strategy remains limited to the executive level whose high-level initiative began the process while the lower levels still work according to the old, ineffective mantra of Management by Objectives.

[continued on page 3...]

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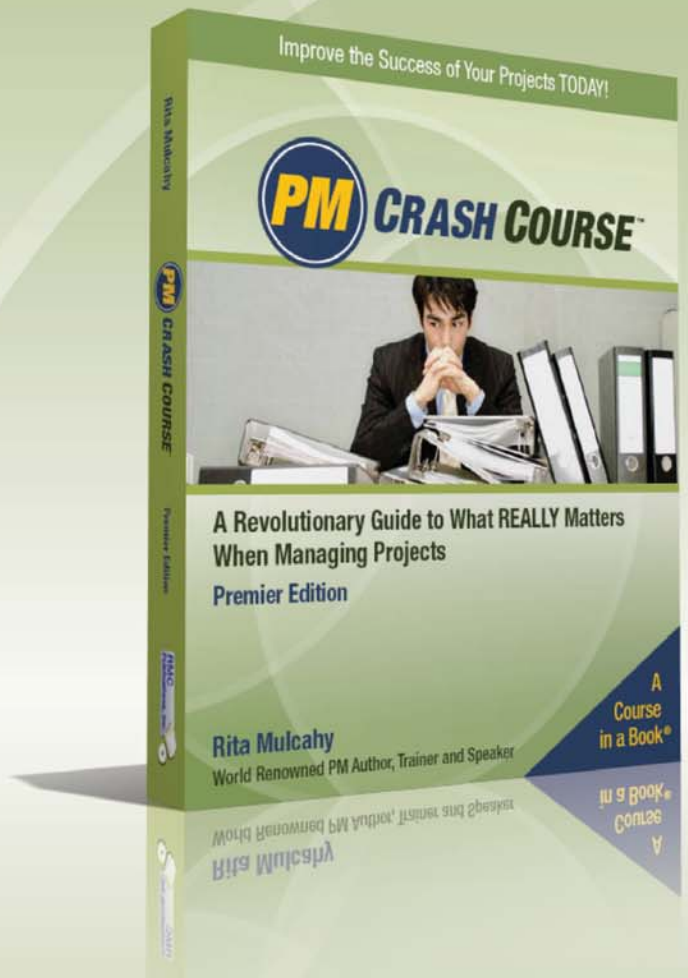

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[...continued from page 1]

Strategic project management differs from traditional strategic planning in the following regards:

- It aligns key business processes of strategic planning, strategic goal setting and enterprise project management.
- On the analogy of financial portfolio management, it allows the most effective use of constrained resources.
- Like a well-managed portfolio of investments, an efficiently managed portfolio of projects ensures a high ROI because projects can be managed together.
- Just as a financial portfolio changes over time with the short-term and long-term goals of the investor, portfolio management keeps projects aligned with the company's short-term, mid-term and long-term goals by making changes in individual projects as well as adjusting the mix of the portfolio. This focused alignment prevents the diffusion of effort that drains resources.
- Since project portfolio management improves visibility across different projects and their tasks, it also prevents resource conflicts from escalating to upper levels of management where they waste executives' time and effort.

Basics of Project Portfolio Management

The Project Management Institute (PMI) released *The Standard for Portfolio Management* in June 2006 to fulfill the need for a documented set of processes that represent generally recognized good practices in the discipline of portfolio management. According to PMI, "Portfolio management is the centralized management of one or more portfolios, an approach to achieving strategic goals by selecting, prioritizing, assessing, and managing projects, programs, and other related work based upon their alignment and contribution to the organization's strategies and objectives. Portfolio management combines (a) the organization's focus of ensuring that projects selected for investment meet the portfolio strategy with (b) the project management focus of delivering projects effectively and within their planned contribution to the portfolio" (The Standard for Portfolio Management, p. 5).

The steps of portfolio project management are applicable to any enterprise: Assess the merits of the organizations proposed projects, weigh them against each other and select and support those projects whose execution will deliver the greatest value to the bottom line.

Figure 1: An organizational context of portfolio management
(From PMI's Standard for Portfolio Management, page 7, Figure 1-2, used with permission)

The drivers of a portfolio of projects are:

1. Where the company wants to go and what it needs to do to achieve the goal (e.g., improve its return on investment, increase shareholder value or gain market share).
2. Tactical concerns, such as improvement projects individual departments need to undertake in order to become more efficient or effective.
3. Problems whose correction requires a project or program.
4. The need for organizational change management initiatives that prepare people to move in the desired direction along with the organization.

The application of portfolio management permits the sharing of goals and the allocation of resources among these drivers so that projects and programs can achieve their strategic intent. PMI's *Standard for Portfolio Management* defines the following flow of control:

1. Strategic intent and prioritization provide direction for determining the financial resources that should be allocated to the portfolio.
2. The strategic intent is mapped onto a set of portfolio components (i.e., projects and programs) including their resource allocations. These components are managed according to the portfolio management principles outlined in this standard.
3. Each program corresponds to the delegated subset of the overall strategic intent, which it will deliver by means of the allocated resources.
4. Each project is defined by its contribution to the portfolio's strategic intent, and can then be managed according to principles published by PMI.

Here is the basic process: (a) define the organization's overall strategic goals and objectives at the executive level; (b) pass these goals to the portfolio management function; (c) the

portfolio manager selects, prioritizes and approves proposed portfolio components, ensuring that they are aligned to achieve the organization's goals; and (d) the portfolio manager reviews the portfolio to ensure it is balanced (short-term versus long-term return, risk to benefit) and negotiates the contributions of relevant strategic stakeholders (e.g., executive management, operations, program management).

Once the portfolio manager has authorized a component, program or project management takes control of the component and applies the correct management processes to make certain the work is performed effectively and efficiently. The responsible project or program managers monitor planned-to-actual performance relating to time, budget, resources, quality and scope, and communicate consolidated information to portfolio management. To remain effective and aligned with organizational goals, the portfolio management function depends on updates from the strategic planning process regarding any strategic changes. This ensures that any components no longer related to current goals can be discontinued rather than wasting resources. In return, the portfolio manager reports portfolio performance to the strategic planning process as it relates to achieving the organization's planned strategy.

Challenges and Solutions

Economic pressures, such as cost-constraints or inability to raise prices without losing customers, often force organizations to focus on the tactical and leave little time to think strategically. Those new to the process of strategic project management may encounter challenges in the following areas.

1) Executive championship. Without buy-in from high-level decision-makers and their ability to give guidance and support to the portfolio manager, strategic project management will fail. Why? Even in a strategic environment, portfolio managers sometimes succumb to the politics and temptations of selecting projects that are the pet projects of mid-level and lower-level managers. Even organizations that have established a formal Project Management Office need an executive champion, particularly when the office is understaffed.

2) Business acumen. A portfolio manager needs much more business acumen than a traditional project manager because he or she has to decide which projects are necessary in order to meet the organization's strategic objectives.

3) A solid project management process. Leadership may do an excellent job of creating a strategic portfolio of projects and setting goals and ground rules. But if the actual practitioners – the project managers and their teams – are in a "just-do-it" mode or are inefficient or ineffective in managing their projects, all the strategic work is for naught. That's why strategy at the highest levels has to be paired with a consistent, repeatable process that ensures that practitioners at the project level are consistent and efficient. A repeatable approach is the strong foundation that ensures that each project is contributing to the value that was anticipated – on time and on budget within certain permissible variances.

4) Timeframes and budgets. Executing projects efficiently and effectively across the board depends on honest and realistic timeframes and budgets, so that projects are not set up for failure from the start.

> **Although some multitasking is always necessary, research has shown that it can be very inefficient.**

5) Requirements' analysis. Portfolio managers need skill in gathering accurate requirements, analyzing them and managing them properly throughout a project's implementation to ensure a value-added outcome that improves an organization's bottom line. As a project proceeds, someone must keep an eye on value and scrutinize costs in comparison with benefits to ensure the project remains sound. Again, training in business analysis for portfolio and project managers may be necessary.

6) Stay the course. One of the most common mistakes leading to project failure is not staying the course. Even organizations that get off to the right start by establishing a strategic portfolio of projects and giving marching orders to management, often toss the entire strategy out the window as soon as anything goes wrong. They simply return to a reactive, just-do-it mode. It takes a great deal of business acumen and persistence to stay the course. Set the vision and strategy and then leave it up to the portfolio manager to manage the projects for the best business value. However, while being reactive can throw off the entire portfolio, the portfolio manager and executive champion also need to be flexible to adjust the portfolio as project risk becomes too high, new opportunities arise, change occurs in the marketplace or when a serious problem arises whose correction depends on a new project not previously represented in the portfolio.

A powerful tool to get started with project portfolio management is a facilitated planning session. A trained external facilitator meets with key individuals to facilitate and outline the process. They lay goals, risks and issues on the table, assemble the portfolio and establish the strategic project management process. The facilitator should come from outside the company in order to avoid bias and politics in leading the team through the process.

Targeted Resource Management

Targeted resource management guarantees the right people and the right skills are in place to execute the selected projects. In addition to a broad base of functional employees that perform a company's ongoing, sustaining work, every organization also needs to allocate human resources for project-related work. However, since multitasking became popular over 10 years ago, organizations have hired staff for functional work and, whenever necessary, expected them to perform project-related work as well. As human resource costs grow in today's economy, the multi-tasking trend can be expected to continue.

Although some multitasking is always necessary, research has shown that it can be very inefficient. Scientific studies reveal that shifting mental gears costs time. Joshua Rubinstein, Ph.D., of the Federal Aviation Administration, David Meyer, Ph.D., and Jeffrey Evans, Ph.D., both of the University of Michigan, described the hidden costs of multitasking in "Executive Control of Cognitive Processes in Task Switching" published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, Volume 27, No. 4, August 2001, published by the American Psychological Association (APA). To better understand the human capacity for multitasking and its limitations, the researchers studied patterns in the amounts of time lost when people switched repeatedly between two tasks of varying complexity and familiarity. The measurements revealed that for all types of tasks, subjects lost time when they had to switch from one task to another. Further, time costs increased with the complexity of the tasks.

When resources are booked to the hilt and beyond, they are slow to respond when change is necessary – in other words, always. That's why progressive organizations have realized they can get better results if they stand down their resources a bit to give them time to think

and be creative. Today, more and more companies are targeting distinct human resources for sustaining project work. While sometimes it may be necessary for the same people to fill both shoes, specialized personnel allocated to the project resource pool means faster and more efficient execution of projects.

Rebirth

Introduced several years ago, project portfolio management is now emerging stronger than ever before. The market for project and portfolio management software is evolving rapidly, offering tools designed to support the entire project life cycle, from portfolio management to resource allocation and detailed project and program planning. According to Gartner research, the total project and portfolio management software market grew 12.3 percent to more than $406 million in 2004. Gartner predicts the most likely scenario for project and portfolio management software new license revenue is an 11.4 percent compound annual growth through 2009, and that revenue will reach about $696 million during the forecast period.

As high-velocity change necessitates an ever-increasing number of projects that must be executed faster and with fewer resources, the demand for strategic applications of project management is high. The key to success is a portfolio manager who can maintain a strategic, enterprise-level perspective. Unlike a traditional project manager who is tactically focused, a portfolio manager's primary concern is with the comparative business case and ROI of projects. He or she provides individual project managers with the tools, training, resources and support they require and then lets them do their job, stepping in only to help or provide course correction when needed. A disciplined project portfolio manager avoids becoming swayed by pet projects, special interests, politics or personal agendas by maintaining a strategic view of the entire portfolio while continually challenging the ability of individual projects to add value to the bottom line.

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Case Study: Constellation Energy

Constellation Energy, headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, launched an Enterprise Program Management Office (EPMO) in January 2005. The first year was spent establishing the infrastructure of people, processes and systems; getting buy-in on the process and design of the system; and getting executive support from across the company for standardizing and simplifying the way projects are managed and prioritized. "I firmly believe that project management needs to occur at a strategic level," says Darnell Singleton, Constellation's Corporate Director for the EPMO. "Since strategy is achieved via project execution, its success depends on the selection and support of the right projects and their execution according to project management principles."

One of Constellation's first steps was to create and train employees in a continuous improvement methodology. Singleton explains, "Before investing in strategic project management tools, we wanted people to understand what problem-solving, change management and project management were all about. Once they had become familiar with the methodology, they were able to provide valuable feedback on the tools it required."

Constellation's continuous improvement and problem-solving methodology, SIRIUS, is based on Six Sigma methodology and incorporates best practices of other change management, project management and problem-solving techniques. "We incorporated the best that each has to offer under a proprietary umbrella we call SIRIUS (Scope, Investigate, Reason, Innovate, Undertake and Sustain)," says Singleton. "The idea is that the product of a project actually sticks and is sustained so that we can realize its expected benefits. Over a period of two years, 1100 employees across the company have been trained in the SIRIUS continuous improvement methodology."

The EPMO oversees the enterprise project management system that is utilized across the company. "We launched the system in February 2006," says Singleton. "We involved key representatives from every business unit to help us with its design and configuration. Our ultimate goal is to replace the multitude of disparate tools with just one that can facilitate the entire project lifecycle from idea generation to project prioritization and selection, project close-out, lessons learned and ensuring that benefits are realized and tracked. The system was enthusiastically received across the business and already includes over 200 active projects."

Constellation's EPMO also oversees an internal change management practice that helps the organization manage the people risk of the company's key transformational projects. "My team provides change management consultants to support projects," says Singleton. "Not only are they less costly than external change managers, they also understand our business better." Singleton's advice for organizations new to enterprise project management is to practice patience. "Patience is probably the most difficult thing to cultivate in our fast-paced, highly competitive environment," he says, "but you cannot shortcut the difficult task of establishing a project management office, selling the methodology to employees and giving them time to adapt. It's just not realistic to expect newly trained people to hit the ground running as effective project managers. It takes practice for the culture to take hold."

A 7-Step Process for Effective Software Estimation

By Ilango Kumaran, MBA, PMP

Impact of Software Estimation skills on IT Project Failure

Many of you are familiar with the 2003 Standish group report, which found that only 1/3rd of all IT projects succeed. Out of the remaining 2/3rd, 1/3rd are "challenged" with schedule and cost overruns while the other 1/3rd are cancelled. A 2006 Standish group study on project manager's software estimation skills found that only 1/3rd of the managers felt "very skilled or skilled" in software estimation while the remaining 2/3rd felt "poorly skilled or moderately skilled."

Table 1: Standish Group Reports

Study reports	1/3rd	1/3rd	1/3rd
2003 Standish Group report on IT projects	Successful	Challenged with schedule and cost overruns	Cancelled
2006 Standish Group report on Project Manager's software estimation skills	Very skilled or skilled in software estimation	(2/3rd) Poorly skilled or Moderately skilled in software estimation	

Does this tell the story of IT project failures? Is inaccurate software estimation one of the primary reasons? Capers Jones, the inventor of the Function Point Model, says YES. According to his study, more IT projects fail because of poor cost and schedule estimation than any other factor.

The significance of creating accurate software estimation has been emphasized by most industry analysts and leaders. In spite of these warnings and study reports, many organizations still treat estimation as a "black art" and promote crude techniques such as guesstimates, SWAG, hallway or phone contracts. These projects are definitely headed for failure from the word "go"!

This article attempts to demystify the notion of "estimating art" and provide insight into the science by recommending a simple 7-step process that can be followed for greater success.

The Seven Step Estimation Process

STEP 1: Define your problem

This is an important step for the whole estimation process. Similarly to marking the land for constructing a building, any error introduced at this step could be disastrous. You may end up building your house at the wrong location. In software terms, you may end up building the wrong system.

Follow these practices to help eliminate ambiguities that can creep into the project scope:

- **Mark your problem boundaries:** Use "assumptions" and "constraints" as tools to mark your problem boundaries.
- **Itemize your problem requirements:** Capture your problem requirements as individual items. Each item must represent ONLY ONE requirement. Items can be grouped into categories for easy understanding. Any elaboration can be captured as description or detail.
- **Tag your Itemized requirements:** Provide a traceable tag to each of your itemized requirements.

STEP 2: Size your solution

Having defined the problem in step 1, it is now time to review the possible solution and the associated effort. This is the most rigorous and analytical step. There are 2 choices available for you in this step. If you or your organization have the experience, historical data, or people skilled in solving similar problems; then you can choose the "work decomposition technique" (Reference 1) to size your solution.

If you do not have this experience or if you are interested in a arriving at a higher-order estimate with limited inputs, then you can choose a "parametric based sizing technique" (Reference 2).

- **Work-decomposition technique:** If you choose this technique, proceed as follows.
  - o **Identify your Estimation team:** Identify the right candidates to become part of your estimation team. It is important to draft members who can bring in historical data. If your development team has been identified, you can use a subset of your development team as your estimation team. Keep the minimum team size at 3.
  - o **Decompose the solution:** Decompose the solution into work components and tasks until it is **atomic** enough to be estimated. Ensure that the solution decomposition is captured under each itemized and tagged requirement. You can tag the solution tasks as children of the requirements. This approach ensures that a requirement is not left out during this process.
  - o **Estimate the atomized task at Triple-Points:** Gather the Optimistic, Most Likely and Pessimistic effort estimate for completing each task from each estimation team member. Average the inputs of the 3 members to eliminate personal biases.
  - o **Sum up for the total efforts at Triple-Points:** Sum up all of the decomposed tasks to arrive at the total effort (Unadjusted effort (UE)) at the triple points - Optimistic, Most Likely and Pessimistic points.
- **Parametric model technique:** If you do not have experience in solving a similar problem or you are looking for a higher order estimate, then choose this technique.

The problem you have is the overwhelming number of parametric techniques you can choose from. You have the COCOMO family, the Function Point family (includes class points, internet points, domino points), the SEER-SEM technique and numerous others. Most of these models try to estimate the number of Software Lines of Code (SLOC) or Kilo Software Lines of Code (KSLOCs (1000 (Kilo)) that must be written to provide a solution. The difference is

in the path they follow and the input parameters they use to arrive at the SLOC. But, once the SLOC is estimated, it can be converted into an effort value by multiplying by a developer productivity factor. Use Reference 1 and/or Reference 5 listed at the end of this article to gather the parametric formulas, guidelines and productivity factor.

Unadjusted effort (UE)= Productivity factor (pf) * KSLOC

Note that parametric techniques provide you a single point estimate instead of triple points.

It is important to recognize that you do not have to choose one technique over the other. In fact it is recommended that you use multiple techniques to arrive at your size estimation as it can help to understand size variances.

STEP 3: Apply Adjustments to Effort value

Adjust your unadjusted effort (UE) estimate for known project characteristics such as the productivity and size penalty for large projects, available skill levels, team distribution, available development tools, etc. These impact factors are covered in the Barry Boehm, Caper Jones and William Roetzheim studies listed in Reference 3.

Adjusted effort (AE) = (Productivity factor (pf) * (KSLOC) $^{\text{penalty for large size}}$) * Other adjustment factors (af1*af2*af3*…*afn)

If you have computed the efforts using the Work Decomposition technique, compute the Adjusted effort (AE) at triple points – Optimistic, Pessimistic and Most-Likely points.

STEP 4: Compute Cost

Having computed the effort in step 3, compute the cost by applying your organizational cost rate at triple points or single point as applicable. Do not forget to capture other costs such as development tool licensing costs and new tool training costs, etc..

Cost (in $) = (Adjusted effort (AE) * Organizational rate (or)}

STEP 5: Compute a forecasted completion date

A forecasted date can be arrived by using the following expression.

Forecasted completion date (FCD) = (Adjusted effort (AE))/ Personnel utilization factor (uf)) + Number of known non-working days (personal vacation, national holidays, training days, sick days) (nwd) + Number of weekend days (nwed)

The personnel utilization factor is the effective hours a person can spend on "work" after attending meetings, answering emails and phones, etc. The industry average is 0.80. For finding out the number of non-working days, the team's vacation calendar may be a good resource.

STEP 6: Publish with a confidence value

Once you have computed the project cost and completion date, it is time to publish your estimate values. The ground rule for publishing your final estimates is to publish as a 2 point range. Never publish your estimate as a single value because of the ambiguous nature of software development.

Various studies have found that, based on the software development life cycle phase, your estimates may be off by –50% to +75% from the actual value. This inaccuracy has nothing to do with an estimation process. Instead it is directly related to the amount of information you have to estimate accurately at different phases of a software life cycle. The requirements get progressively elaborated over the life cycle which should be reflected in the estimation accuracy.

So you need to apply the confidence factor (a.k.a inaccuracy factor) to your final numbers and publish it as a range (low-to-high). Table 2 captures a few known confidence values based on various studies.

Figure 1: A 7-step process for effective software estimation.

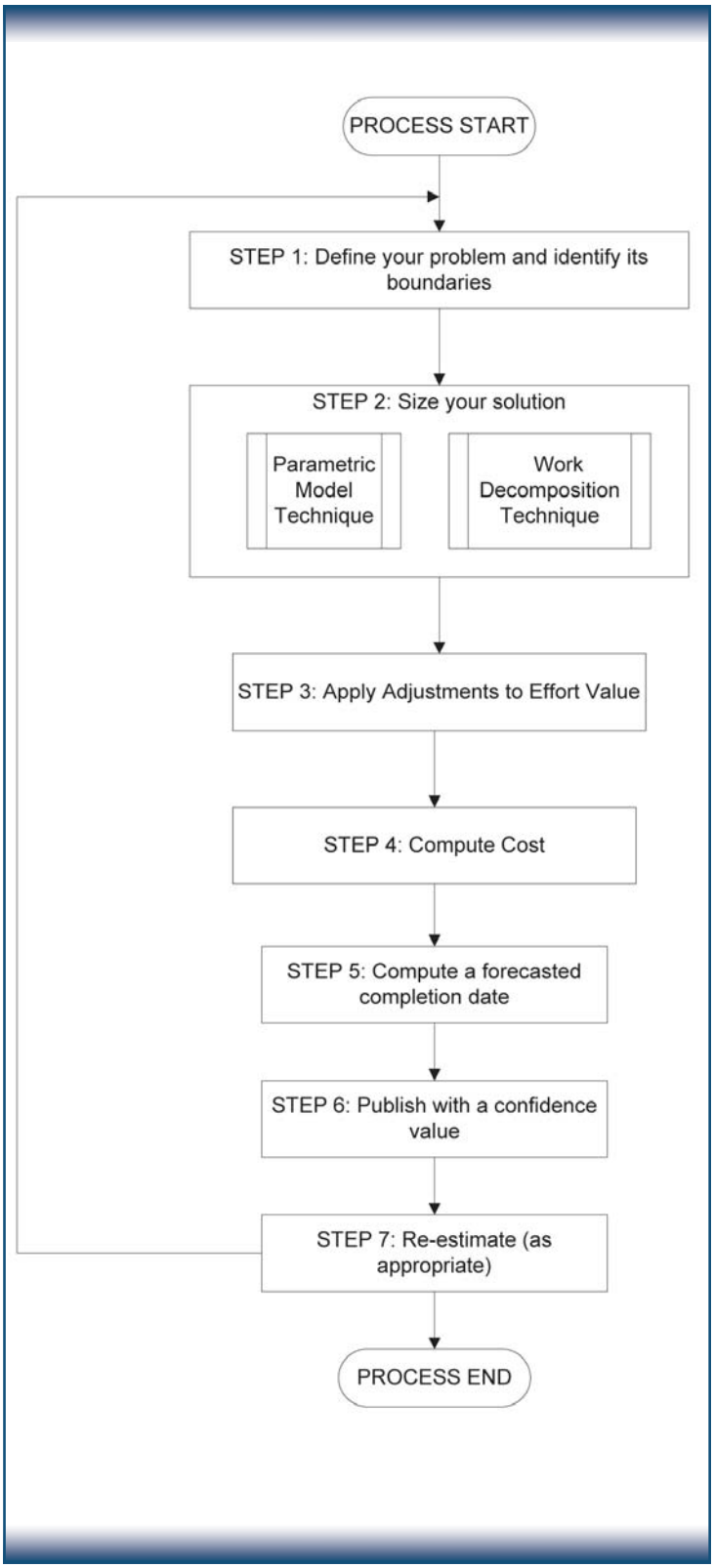

Table 2: Confidence Value Studies

Studies	Confidence Values
William Roetzheim (Cost Xpert Group) [Reference 1]	Concept Oriented Estimate = +/- 50% Function Oriented Estimate = +/-25% Implementation Oriented Estimate = +/-10%
Steve McConnell (Cone of Uncertainity) [Reference 4]	Initial Concept = 0.25 to 4 times the actual estimate values Approved product definition = 0.5 to 2 times the actual estimate values Requirements complete = 0.67 to 1.5 times the actual estimate values User Interface design complete = 0.8 to 1.25 times the actual estimate values Detail Design complete = 0.4 to 1.10 times the actual estimate values
Project Management studies	Sizing Estimates (Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM)) = -25% to +75% Detailed Estimates (Before design finalization) = -10% to +25% Detailed Estimates (After design finalization, Construction focus) = -10% to +25%

Table 2 must be used with caution as these entries are based on uncontrolled studies and could be overstating the inaccuracy. But it is a good guide to adjust your single point estimate or triple point estimate into a 2-point (range) estimate.

If you have a triple-point estimate, you can convert into a single point by computing its mean by the following expression:

Mean = (Optimistic + 4*Most Likely + Pessimistic)/6

Now apply your confidence value on this single point to convert into a 2-point (range) estimate. Remember to update your forecasted completion date ranges based on the adjustment.

STEP 7: Re-estimate (as appropriate)

As explained in step 3, it is important to re-estimate as you go through the software development life cycle (SDLC). This helps to improve the confidence measure on the estimates, as the requirements are elaborated. Repeat steps 1 to 6 as you evolve through the project life cycle.

Conclusion

Your software estimation practice can make or break your project. So avoid crude estimation practices and invest time to follow a simple estimation process, as described above, to taste more success. This seven-step process helps you navigate through the numerous theories; models and studies that exist in this domain and help you leverage the best, useful and relevant studies in arriving at an effective estimate. Happy estimating!

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Ilango Kumaran (http://www.ilangokumaran.com/) is the Amazon's best selling author of "Jini Technology: An Overview". He has been performing the dual role of a Manager-and-Architect for more than 18 years. He is currently consulting through Perot Systems Corporation. He can be reached at writetoauthor@ilangokumaran.com.

Using Project 2007 to Assist in Managing Projects

By Kathy Schwalbe, Ph.D., PMP

Many PMI ISSIG members use project management software. Microsoft Project is still the most popular tool used today, and several of you may be interested in knowing about its features and what has changed in the latest version. This article is based on a talk I gave at Thomson/Course Technology's annual conference on February 28, 2007. Screen shots are taken from Appendix A, Guide to Using Microsoft Project 2007, in my upcoming book, *Information Technology Project Management, Fifth Edition*. This guide will also be provided with my *Introduction to Project Management* text via the text's Web site.

The Office Project 2007 family includes several different products:

- Project Standard 2007, which is a non-Web-based, stand-alone program for individuals who manage projects independently, similar to earlier versions of Project Standard.
- Project Professional 2007, which is basically Project Standard 2007 plus Project Web Access to allow you to connect to Project Server 2007, if available.
- The Microsoft Office Enterprise Project Management (EPM) Solution, which combines Project Server 2007, Project Professional 2007, Project Web Access, Project Portfolio Server 2007, and Project Portfolio Web Access to form a business solution for organizations, departments, and teams. As its name suggestions, this version is meant for use across an enterprise and provides project portfolio management capabilities. Organizations should develop and apply many standards, templates, codes, and procedures before using the enterprise version of Project 2007 to make the best use of its capabilities. Consult Microsoft's Web site for more details on all of the versions of Project 2007.

Each version of Project 2007 can help users manage different aspects of all nine project management knowledge areas. Most users, however, focus on using Project 2007 to assist with scope, time, cost, human resource, and communications management. This article, and the guide in my text, uses these project management knowledge areas as the context for learning how to use Project 2007.

Backward Compatibility/User Interface

You must be running *Windows XP or Vista* to use the latest version of Project. Project 2007 can open files created in previous versions of Project, such as Project 98, 2000, 2002, or 2003. Any features that do not map to prior file formats will be discarded when a project is saved in that older file format. Project 2007 also saves to file formats including XML (extensible markup language), CSV (comma-separated values), text (tab-delimited), Excel workbook, Excel PivotTable, Web page, Project 2003, and Project 2002. Project 2007 no longer supports OLEDB.

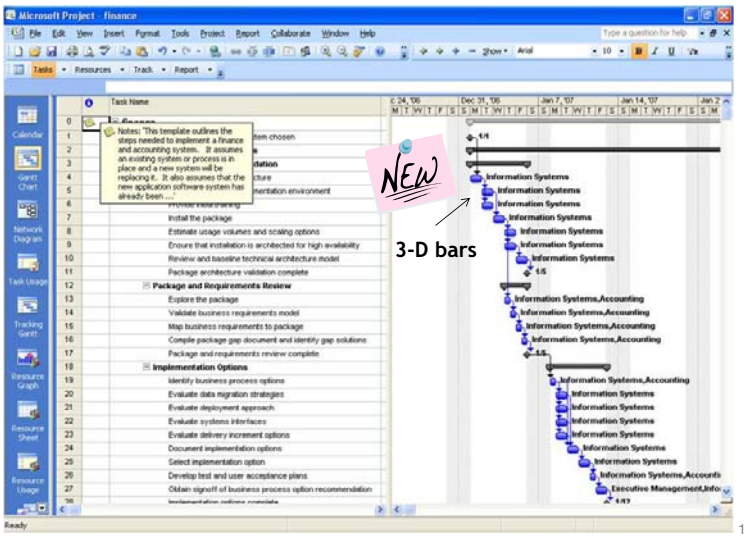
Unlike the Office 2007 versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access, *Project 2007 does not have the new interface with ribbons and groupings*. It still uses menus and toolbars as Project 2003 and other Office 2003 products do. This may make using the new version easier for many current users.

New Features of Project 2007

Because there have been several previous versions of Microsoft Project, it is useful to understand some of the new capabilities of Project 2007, especially if you are working with people who are upgrading from a previous version. There are several new or improved features available in Project 2007, such as the following:

- The Review Tasks Drivers feature lets you show prerequisites and resource constraints that drive the start date of the selected task. Simply click these drivers to link to relevant information.
- The Visual Change Highlights feature allows you to determine the impact of each change you make on all other dependent tasks.
- The Multiple Level Undo feature allows you to reverse the most recent series of changes: undo and redo changes to views, data, and options. This functionality also lets you undo actions or sets of actions from macros or third-party applications.
- You can now apply pre-defined financial fields, such as cost codes, and improve mapping to the financial fields tracked in your organization's project accounting systems.
- The Budget Tracking feature allows you to define a budget at a high level so you can allocate funds and track costs against the budget.
- The Cost Resources feature allows you to assign planned and actual costs to a task, not just Work or Material, which also supports integration of Project with accounting systems.
- You can now use Excel and Microsoft Office Visio Professional to produce charts, graphs, and diagrams based on Project

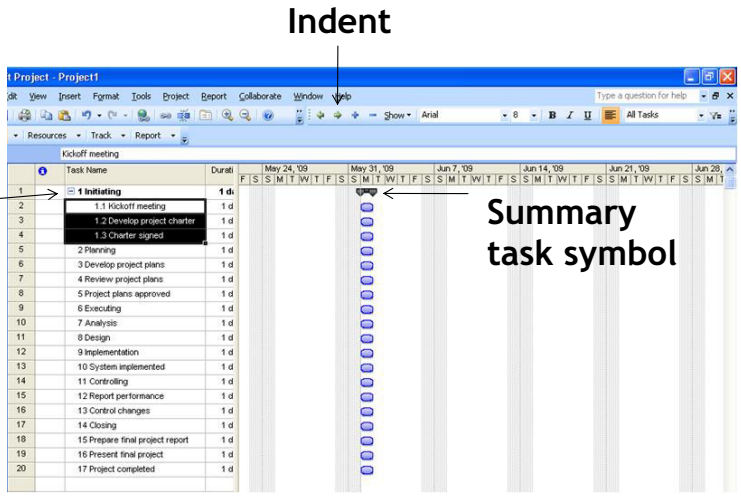
Figure 1. Template File Showing the New 3-D Gantt Bars



data by means of the Visual Reports feature. For example, you can now create earned value charts using Visual Reports.

- You can now define custom report templates and share them with other Project users. These reports include a data cube for drill downs and pivot Tables.
- The Background Cell Highlighting feature lets you shade cells, similar to Excel, in order to convey additional meaning to cells.
- Enhancements to the Calendar Interface and the addition of 3-D Gantt bars allow you to create even more visually effective reports.

Figure 2. Creating the WBS in Project 2007



Sample Screen Shots by Knowledge Area

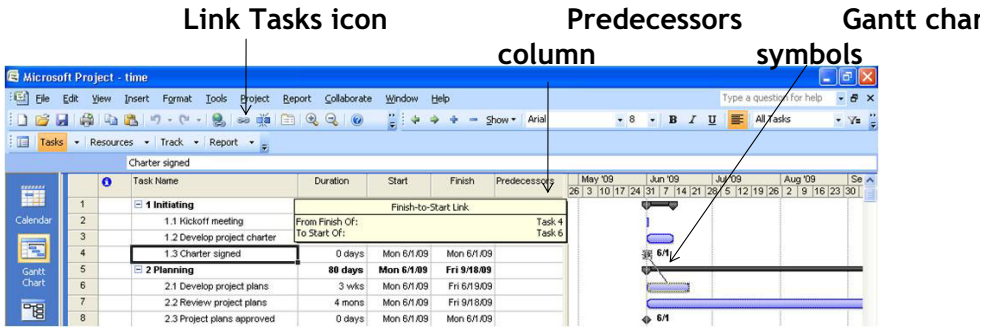
A few of these new features, as well as some old ones you may or may not know about, are highlighted by knowledge area in the following descriptions and screen shots.

Project Scope Management

As you know, creating a good work breakdown structure (WBS) is a key part of project scope management. Project 2007 comes with several new templates to help you in creating your WBS, accessed by selecting File from the menu bar, New, and then Templates On computer. For example, Figure 1 shows the Finance and Accounting System Implementation template. Note the new 3-D Gantt bars.

The WBS is entered in the Task Name column of the Entry Table in Project. To create the hierarchy, you simply indent tasks, as shown in Figure 2. You can also turn on the automatic numbering by selecting Tools from the menu bar, Options, and then clicking the option to Show outline number.

Figure 3. Creating Task Dependencies



Project Time Management

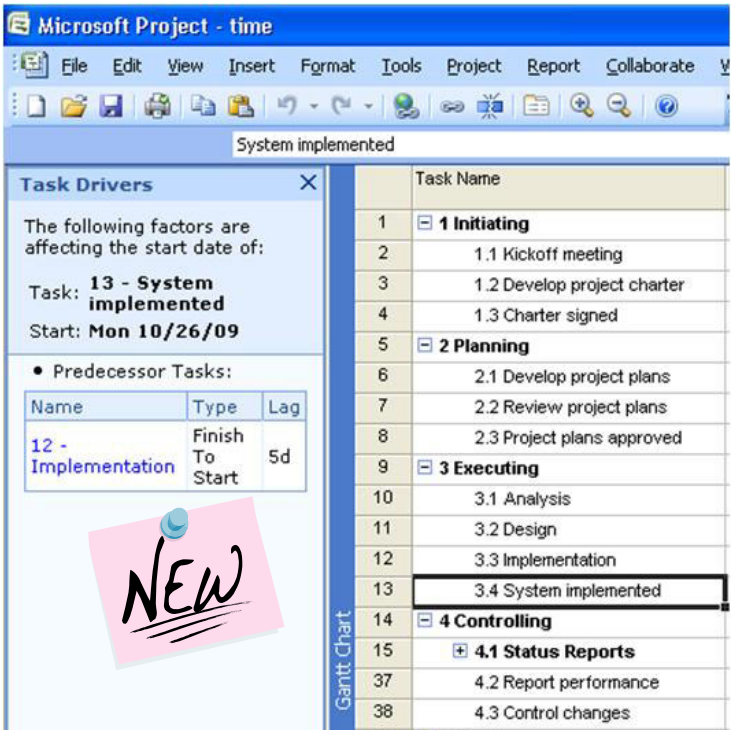
After you enter tasks and develop the WBS hierarchy in the Task Name column, you are ready to enter task durations and dependencies. Remember that you can only enter durations for the lowest level tasks. Other durations are calculated by Project 2007 based on the WBS hierarchy. Durations are entered in the Duration column. Sample entries include the following:

- 30m = 30 minutes
- 2h = 2 hours
- 1d = 1 day
- 3w = 3 weeks, and
- 4 mo = 4 months.

After entering durations, you are ready to enter dependencies. Similar to previous versions of Project, you can create dependencies by selecting tasks and clicking the Link Tasks icon on the toolbar, by entering them in the Predecessors column of the Entry Table, or by clicking and dragging Gantt chart symbols, as shown in Figure 3.

To more easily see how dependencies affect tasks, Project 2007 includes a new feature call Review Tasks Drivers, available from the Project menu. This feature clearly shows task prerequisites and resource constraints that drive the start date of the selected task, as shown in Figure 4. Notice that the Task Driver Pane shows the name of the predecessor tasks, type of dependency, and lag time information.

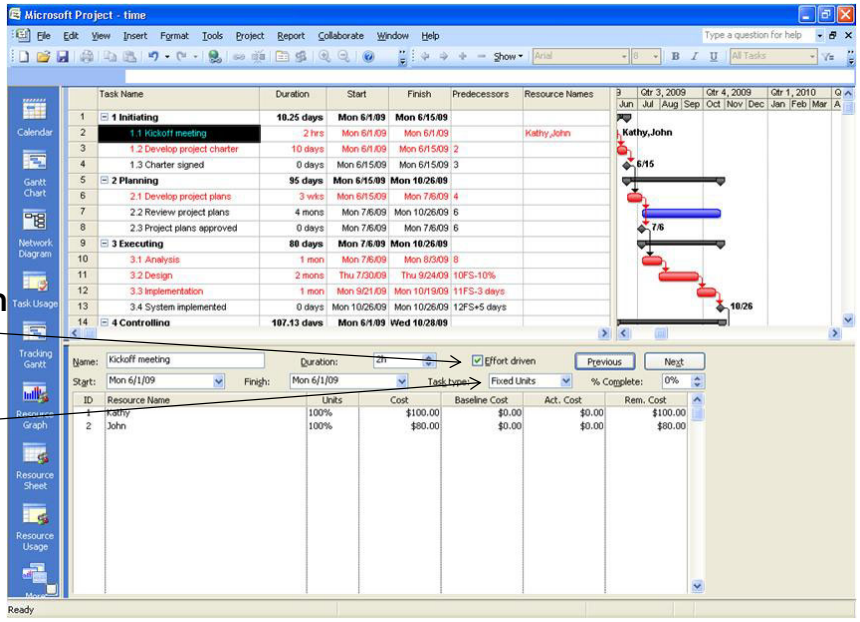
Figure 4. Reviewing the Task Drivers Pane



Project Cost and Human Resource Management

Many Project users do not understand how to enter cost information properly. It is best to enter fixed costs directly into the Cost Table (under View, Table, Cost) and resource costs in the Resource Sheet (under View, Resource Sheet). People often get confused or frustrated when they start assigning resources to tasks and Project automatically adjusts task durations and costs. To ensure that Project does what you intend, use the Split Window view (Under Window, Split) and then right-click the bottom window to show Resource Costs. You can then select resources from your Resource Sheet using the drop-downs and enter the hours they work on a particular tasks. You can also uncheck the Effort driven checkbox and change the Task type if you do not want Project to make duration adjustments based on your resource entries. As soon as you finish an entry, you can see the affects on the Gantt chart at the top of the split window. If anything is wrong, you can click Undo and try again. Project 2007 allows multiple levels of undo as well.

Figure 5. Split Screen View for Entering Cost and Resource Information



As described earlier, Project 2007 also includes several new cost features. You can apply pre-defined financial fields to improve mapping to the financial fields currently used in your organization. You can also assign a budget resource to the project summary task to capture the maximum capacity for a project to consume money, work, or material units. The new Cost Resource is intended for resources that do not depend on the amount of work on a task or the duration of a task, such as airfare or lodging, and they do not affect scheduling.

Project Communications Management

Project 2007 can help you generate, collect, disseminate, store, and report project information. There are many different tables, views, reports, and formatting features to aid in project communications, as you have seen in the previous sections. Many people do not realize that Project 2007 can also help you to communicate earned value information. Earned value management is an important project management technique for measuring project performance. After you have set a baseline, you can enter actual information by using the Tracking Table and Tracking toolbar, as shown in Figure 6. You can also turn on the Tracking Gantt chart view to see planned and actual information on the Gantt chart. Also notice in Figure 6 that as you make changes, affected changes are highlighted based on the new visual change highlighting feature.

Project 2007 also calculates earned value information, such as cost variance, (CV) and schedule variance (SV). You can view earned value information by selecting View from the menu bar, then Tables, More Tables, Earned Value. Note that the Earned Value table includes columns for each earned value term Note in the

Figure 6. The Tracking Table, Tracking Gantt Chart, and Visual Change Highlights.

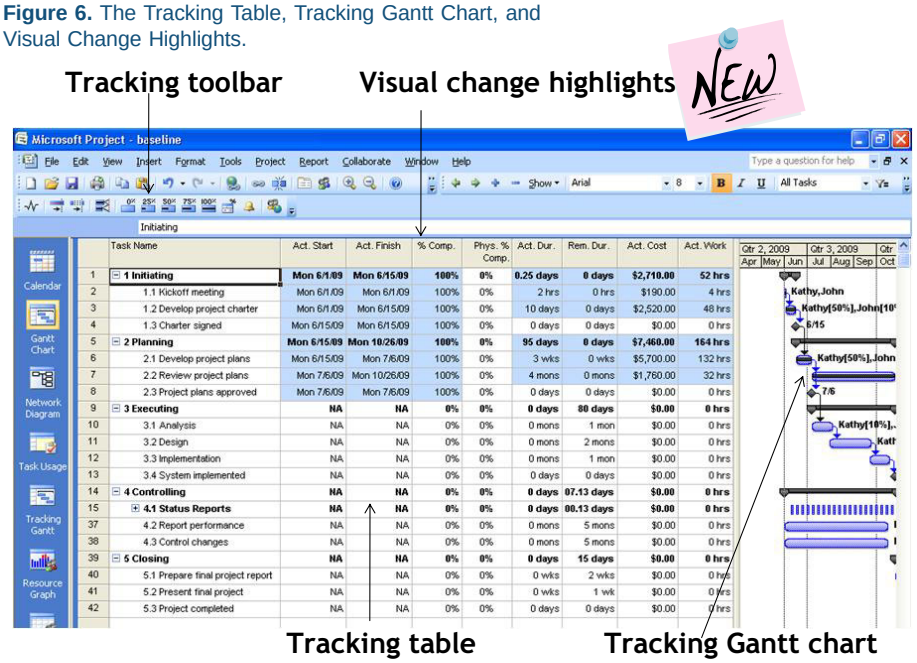


Figure 7. Earned Value Table

	Task Name	BCWS	BCWP	ACWP	SV	CV	EAC	BAC	VAC
0	**Project Tracking Database**	**$49,774.35**	**$18,090.00**	**$20,862.00**	**($31,684.35)**	**($2,772.00)**	**$52,546.35**	**$49,774.35**	**($7,627.11)**
1	**Initiating**	**$2,710.00**	**$2,710.00**	**$2,710.00**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$2,710.00**	**$2,710.00**	**$0.00**
2	Kickoff meeting	$190.00	$190.00	$190.00	$0.00	$0.00	$190.00	$190.00	$0.00
3	Develop project charter	$2,520.00	$2,520.00	$2,520.00	$0.00	$0.00	$2,520.00	$2,520.00	$0.00
4	Charter signed	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
5	**Planning**	**$7,460.00**	**$7,460.00**	**$7,460.00**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**$7,460.00**	**$7,460.00**	**$0.00**
6	Develop project plans	$5,700.00	$5,700.00	$5,700.00	$0.00	$0.00	$5,700.00	$5,700.00	$0.00
7	Review project plans	$1,760.00	$1,760.00	$1,760.00	$0.00	$0.00	$1,760.00	$1,760.00	$0.00
8	Project plans approved	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
9	**Executing**	**$30,400.00**	**$7,920.00**	**$10,692.00**	**($22,480.00)**	**($2,772.00)**	**$33,172.00**	**$30,400.00**	**($10,640.00)**
10	Analysis	$7,920.00	$7,920.00	$10,692.00	$0.00	($2,772.00)	$10,692.00	$7,920.00	($2,772.00)
11	Design	$12,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	($12,000.00)	$0.00	$12,000.00	$12,000.00	$0.00
12	Implementation	$10,480.00	$0.00	$0.00	($10,480.00)	$0.00	$10,480.00	$10,480.00	$0.00
13	System implemented	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
14	**Controlling**	**$6,564.35**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**($6,564.35)**	**$0.00**	**$6,564.35**	**$6,564.35**	**$0.00**
15	**Status Reports**	**$3,484.35**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**($3,484.35)**	**$0.00**	**$3,484.35**	**$3,484.35**	**$0.00**
37	Report performance	$880.00	$0.00	$0.00	($880.00)	$0.00	$880.00	$880.00	$0.00
38	Control changes	$2,200.00	$0.00	$0.00	($2,200.00)	$0.00	$2,200.00	$2,200.00	$0.00
39	**Closing**	**$2,640.00**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	**($2,640.00)**	**$0.00**	**$2,640.00**	**$2,640.00**	**$0.00**
40	Prepare final project report	$2,200.00	$0.00	$0.00	($2,200.00)	$0.00	$2,200.00	$2,200.00	$0.00
41	Present final project	$440.00	$0.00	$0.00	($440.00)	$0.00	$440.00	$440.00	$0.00
42	Project completed	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

example in Figure 7 that the EAC (Estimate at Completion) is higher than the BAC (Budget at Completion) starting with Task 9, where the task took longer than planned to complete. Also notice that Project 2007 is still using the former terms of BCWP, BCWS, and ACWP instead of EV (earned value), PV (planned value), and AC (actual cost).

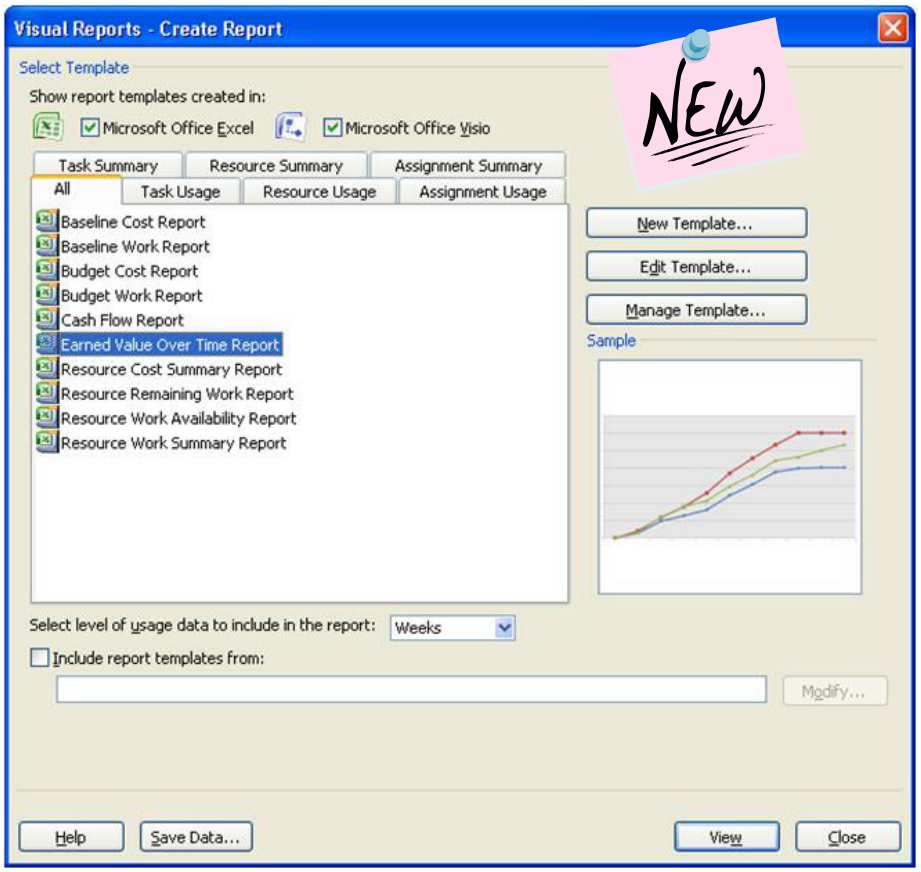
Project 2007 includes new Visual Reports, including an earned value chart, accessed by selecting Report on the menu bar, and then Visual Reports. Figure 8 shows this dialog box and the sample of the selected report on the right side of the dialog box. This new feature can save users a lot of time creating charts because Project 2007 automatically creates Excel data and a chart based on data in your Project file.

Conclusion

As you can see, Project 2007 is a powerful tool for project managers and their teams. It is a very robust, sometimes complicated tool, but mastering it can definitely assist you in managing various aspects of your projects.

Kathy Schwalbe is the Director of Communications for the Information Systems SIG, an Associate Professor at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, and the author of several books. You can reach Kathy at schwalbe@augsburg.edu or visit her Web site at www.kathyschwalbe.com.

Figure 8. New Visual Report for Creating an Earned Value Chart



Developing Project Managers in the United States: Past, Present, and Future

By Kathy Schwalbe, Ph.D., PMP

People have worked as project managers in the United States and throughout the world for many years. However, it is only recently that institutions of higher education have addressed the need to educate people for this important career. This article briefly addresses the development of project management training and education programs in the United States.

Past: Many of the tools and techniques of project management were first developed on military and construction projects. For example, Gantt charts were used in 1917 to help organize work in job shops, while network diagrams were used in 1958 to help schedule the development of submarines. Military and construction project managers learned most of their skills on the job. Some had college degrees in business, engineering, or related fields, but many simply showed the desire and skills needed to manage projects and worked their way up. There were very few books or courses available on project management. As the number and complexity of projects grew, however, organizations, individuals, and educators responded to the need to develop courses and academic programs to help more people become productive project managers and team members.

Present: In 2006, the field of project management is well-recognized in several disciplines, and formal education has grown tremendously.

- A 2001 report showed that the U.S. spends $2.3 trillion on projects every year, and the world as a whole spends nearly $10 trillion on projects of all kinds. Projects, therefore, account for about one fourth of the U.S. and the world's gross domestic product. More than sixteen million people regard project management as their profession, and even more work on projects in some capacity.[1]
- The Project Management Institute (PMI) offers certification as a Project Management Professional (PMP). The number of people earning PMP certification has grown rapidly in the past ten years, and there were 189,165 total active PMPs in more than 120 countries as of May 31, 2006.[2] PMI has specific interest groups in thirty different areas, including the automotive, financial services, international development, pharmaceutical, retail, and utility industries. One of the requirements for earning certification includes completing thirty-five hours of education in project management.
- There has been significant interest in improving the management of information technology projects. *CIO Magazine's* latest survey showed that information technology executives regard project management as the most important skill needed for new hires, followed by application development, business process management, and security.[3] It is not enough for technical people to have strong technical skills; they must know how to work with others to make projects succeed in their organizations. The PMP credential ranked fourth in CertCities.com's 10 Hottest Certifications for 2006, moving up from 10th place to fourth place.[4]
- PMI published a framework to help identify knowledge, performance, and personal competencies required for successful project managers. Competence is defined as a cluster of related knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal characteristics that affect a major part of one's job, correlate with job performance, can be measured against well-accepted standards, and can be improved via training and development.[5]
- The number of books, training courses, and academic programs related to project management has grown significantly in the past ten years. A project completed by students at the University of Minnesota in 2006 identified over 120 certificate and graduate degree programs in project management in the United States alone.[6] The majority of these programs target graduate students and working professionals, due to the complexity of project management and need for students to be able to relate their education to real-world practice. Several programs are also offered in a totally online environment, allowing students to complete work whenever and wherever they desire.

Future: The number of projects will continue to grow throughout the world, as will their complexity. Consumers will continue to demand better, faster, and cheaper products and services, competition between firms will continue, and technologies will continue to advance throughout the world. Many project managers feel that current formal training programs are no substitute for experience, but most organizations cannot afford to wait for their employees to learn important project management skills totally on the job. The challenge for educators and employers is to discover better ways to effectively find, prepare, and nurture a workforce that can successfully lead and work on projects that are crucial to our futures.

Suggestions: It is important for educators to ask several key questions to address the needs of present and future project managers and their teams:

- How is project management education different from business education?

The field of project management overlaps with general management and the application area of the project (i.e. construction, health care, information technology, etc.), but there are distinct knowledge areas and processes in project management. The Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®) Guide, Third Edition, does a good job of identifying this information, and many textbooks provide a context for further understanding this knowledge. Of course project managers need to understand finance, management, marketing, and other concepts covered in business programs, but they also need to understand the nine project management knowledge areas (project integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resource, communications, procurement, and risk management), their associated processes, and how they are applied in a project setting.

- Are our current courses and programs in project management effective?

An important concept in project management is tracking progress based on key metrics. What are the metrics that educators should use in tracking project management courses and programs? Traditional metrics like the number of students in courses or programs, average grades, numbers of PMPs, etc. do not really demonstrate if the education makes people more effective project managers. Using the concept of a lessons learned report, project managers and team members should reflect on how various educational experiences help them on real projects. Suggestions based on those reflections should be incorporated into future courses and programs.

- What can organizations do to improve project management?

Colleges, universities, and training companies are only one source of project management education. Organizations need to develop their own internal networks to help their project managers and team members share important information with each other. Learning never stops, and it is important for organizations to capture and share organizational learning. Having mentors for project managers is often an effective way to develop internal talent, as is having a career path for project managers.

- Are there any teaching strategies than can help us improve the education of project managers?

Beyond understanding key concepts, students of project management at any age and experience level need to gain practical experience by applying these concepts in various settings. All courses in project management should include opportunities for students to apply the concepts they are learning to real project situations. Students should follow the project management process groups to initiate, plan, execute, monitor and control, and close projects. They should also reflect on lessons learned from their projects and share that learning with their classmates. As the saying goes, "Experience is learning from your own mistakes; knowledge is learning from the mistakes of others." Many people learn the most from projects that failed, so allowing students to fail, as long as they understand why they failed, is a great learning experience.

- How can educators help students apply project management concepts to real projects?

Having taught project management for several years, I have used various teaching strategies in classes, including case studies, simulations, and real projects. By far, students appreciate and learn the most from doing real projects. I have found that by having *every* student propose a real project as part of a homework assignment, given certain criteria for what they propose, we have no problem finding enough good class projects for teams of three to five students. Examples of projects my students have done include organizing and running a 5K race to earn money for a charity, creating a marketing video for an organization, running an engineering design competition, developing a Web site for an organization, and researching project management education programs (a virtual class project). Applying project management concepts to these real projects helps students really understand the value of what they are learning and gain experience working with real sponsors and customers. They also learn from their classmates as they see their projects progress.

Below are a few comments from students, as posted on the companion Web site for the text, Introduction to Project Management. This site also includes some further suggestions for teaching courses in project management[7]:

- "I think the best learning tool presented to us was the class project. It challenged us to come up with a solution to a problem while implementing new project management ideas."
- "Real projects have unexpected occurrences and outcomes, and only through experience can you learn to adapt and predict these events to minimize their impact on the project. That was the value of doing an in-class project. I doubt that a single group had a project that went off without a hitch."
- "Actually doing all of these things for a real project put all of the aspects of project management into perspective and into a different part of my memory, a part I am more likely to be able to remember years down the road."

Footnotes

[1] Project Management Institute (PMI), The PMI Project Management Fact Book, Second Edition, 2001.

[2] Project Management Institute (PMI), PMI Today, July 2006.

[3] Prewitt, Edward, "2006 State of the CIO," (cio.com/state) January 1, 2006.

[4] Nagel, Becky, "CertCities.com's 10 Hottest Certifications for 2006," (certcities.com) December 14, 2005.

[5] Project Management Institute (PMI), Project Manager Competency Development (PMCD) Framework, 2002.

[6] Schwalbe, Kathy and students Scott Thorson, Dan Toft, Michele Waldner, and Brad White, "Summary of Graduate Programs in Project Management,"(www.kathyschwalbe.com under Project Management Information) May 2006.

[7] www.course.com/mis/pm/schwalbe. Note: Instructors can set up an account to access this site, and students receive an access or key code inside the front CD cover of the text.

Kathy Schwalbe is the Director of Communications for the Information Systems SIG, an Associate Professor at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, and the author of several books. You can reach Kathy at schwalbe@augsburg.edu or visit her Web site at www.kathyschwalbe.com.

The Complete PDS Experience

By Terry Warner

What is PDS? PDS stands for Professional Development Symposium, and it is the Information Systems SIG's annual premier event. **PDS'07, to be held June 2-5 at the Scottsdale Hilton Resort & Villas in Scottsdale, Arizona**, will consist of:

- two days of hands-on weekend workshops
  - 2 – two-day
  - 6 – one-day
- two days of symposium speakers, two keynotes and 23 sessions
- three networking receptions with one poolside event hosted by the Phoenix PMI chapter
- sponsor booths and presentations, with contests and prizes
- a book store offering speaker books, etc. at special PDS prices
- food, food, food – one eats very well at PDS
- eight PDUs for each day of attendance for a possible total of 32 PDUs.

However, this article is not really about PDS'07, but about the more general experience of being involved with the organizing and conduct of PDS over the last six years. For more detailed information on PDS'07 itself, the best thing to do is to go to the website, **pmi-issig.org/pds**.

I first became involved with PDS in 2001. I was on the Board of the Orange County chapter in California, and we were contacted and told that the Information Systems SIG was going to hold a symposium in Newport Beach and asked if we could provide volunteers to assist with it. Well, I ended up not just volunteering, but being the Director of Volunteers during the event, which brought me into close contact with the PDS PM, and the Core Team. The Newport event was PDS'01 West. It was an experiment. This was the first time that the SIG attempted to hold two PDSs in one year - one on the east coast in Orlando, FL in May and the Newport Beach one in August. Unfortunately, it was not a financially successful experiment. There was insufficient time allowed to market the Newport Beach PDS sufficiently and paid attendance was lighter than expected. Financially, PDS'01 West may have been disappointing for the ISSIG; but for those of us who were there, it was a great success. I was so impressed by what I saw and so enjoyed the experience, that I approached the Core Team to see how I could be involved for the next PDS. As a result, I found myself on the Marketing Team for PDS'02.

Though attendance is open to anyone, PDS is also viewed as an Information System SIG member benefit. Therefore, ISSIG members receive a reduced registration fee. PDS is not intended to be a large scale, profit making venture. The objective for PDS is to put on a relatively small, high quality, career building event and to financially break even. Since most of the labor involved is volunteered, PDS is a bargain compared to other symposiums. Because of its reputation as a high quality, well run event, PDS has developed the ability to attract top rank speakers, usually at a fraction of their normal fees. In fact, many of the speakers personally enjoy PDS so much that they will stay for most, or all, of the event, instead of just giving their presentation or workshop and leaving. This offers attendees the opportunity to interact with these experts on a one to one basis.

So, how does this four-star event come about?

The PDS organizing committee, or **Core Team**, is primarily a virtual organization, which, under the direction of the **PDS Project Manager**, is composed of the following sub-teams:

- **Logistics**-selects the location and makes the arrangements with the hotel
- **Marketing & Sponsorship**-advertises the event and solicits sponsors
- **Operations**-provides administrative support, website coordination, graphic support, etc.
- **Registration**-plans and conducts the registration process
- **Sessions**-arranges for, and looks after, the speakers/presenters
- **Technology**-introduces new or updated technology into PDS
- **Volunteers**-recruits and manages volunteer support from the local chapter

Starting in September each year, the PDS PM holds a monthly telecon during which each sub-team gives the status of their preparations and discusses open issues. Since each team contains at least one experienced person, they are able to independently work on their assigned tasks. Many of the team members will meet each other for the first time at the actual event. Usually, each year two or three people will leave the team and new members will join. Thus there is a slow turnover of team members and the required knowledge base can be transferred, while new members bring fresh ideas and perspectives to the team. The new members are usually attendees at a PDS who, like me, say, "*Hey, I really enjoyed this event. I want to get more involved,"* and approach one of the members of the Core Team.

During the actual PDS event, the Core Team, assisted by the local volunteers, is the operational staff that keeps everything running smoothly.

- **Logistics**-liaises with the hotel staff, particularly audio/video and catering
- **Marketing**- runs the book store, since their main job is completed before PDS
- **Sponsorship**-keeps the sponsor representatives happy
- **Operations**-you name it, they do it
- **Registration**-runs the registration desk
- **Sessions**-keeps the speakers/presenters happy and controls the session rooms
- **Technology**-makes sure that the new technology they recommended works
- **Volunteers**-assigns the local chapter volunteers to Core Team identified tasks

All in all, it can make for four to six long, tiring days, as the Core Team members handle small crisis and other unexpected events.

So, why do it? Well, for one thing you get your way paid to some interesting cities. So far, I have been to Newport Beach, Orlando, San Antonio, St. Louis, San Francisco and Cincinnati, with Phoenix coming up. Secondly, though conducting PDS can be tiring, it can literally be a life changing experience. It is four days of listening to great speakers, and wining, dining and talking with a bunch of really smart, insightful and interesting people. Just think, you will have the opportunity to meet over 250 fellow IS/IT professionals, including some of the best known names in project management and personal/career development. You can also have the experience of working in a truly virtual organization during the preparatory phase, coming together as a cohesive, on-site team to conduct the event. Finally, if you need them, of course there are the PDUs. Oh, when you arrive at the PDS location, you get two really cool shirts with the PDS logo on them and when it is all over, a nice 'thank you' gift. So, if I have aroused your interest, what is the first step to achieving the Complete PDS Experience? Attend PDS'07, of course. Then find me, in my cool PDS'07 shirt, and say, "*Terry, this is great. I want to be more involved.*"

ISSIG Launches Career Services Website

By Yong Li, PMP, PMI ISSIG Assoc. Dir. - Job Site Strategy

The ISSIG Career Services website is now live! This new website is another value-added service to our members and their organizations. This website was designed and constructed to help connect our members with new employment opportunities and to offer a service to organizations to help them find quality employees.

Please use the link below to guide you as you begin your job search. http://careers.pmi-issig.org.

PMI ISSIG Members

You can register and profile your ideal job today! Use our ISSIG Career Services website to create a profile of your ideal job and update it anytime. Jobs matching the profile can be viewed immediately, or they can be automatically sent via email (Job Agent) to you, so that no matching job opportunities will pass you by. You can choose how much of your identity and information to give to a potential employer. **Sign up today!**

Employers and Recruiters

You can now post jobs, search resumes and prescreen candidates using the ISSIG Career Services website. These candidates are highly skilled project management professionals or other IT technical professionals. You can also place banner ads on this site, or display advertising in the Featured Employers area.

Let the new ISSIG Career Services website help you find the best candidates faster and reduce your time-to-hire as well as lowering recruitment costs!

PMI ISSIG Wins SIG of the Year 2006!

PMI Information Systems SIG is the recipient of the **2006 PMI® Component Award for Component of the Year (SIG Category II).**

This award is given in recognition of our 2005 activities, initiatives and commitment to promoting project management. This award honors and recognizes the SIG that made the greatest contribution to the development and implementation of the strategic vision and mission of the Project Management Institute.

Our SIG was recognized at the PMI Leadership Institute Meeting in Seattle, Washington, USA 19-21 October 2006 at the Washington State Convention and Trade Center. PMI Information Systems SIG was also invited to participate in the PMI Awards Ceremony of the PMI Global Congress-North America on Saturday, 21 October 2006.

ISSIG Scholarships

The Information System SIG distributes two academic scholarships, each valued at US$2500, through the PMI Foundation. The **Wilson-Zells Scholarship**, created to recognize ISSIG founders Julie Wilson and Lois Zells, is open to ISSIG members and their immediate family members (children and spouse) enrolled in a degree granting program of higher education in information systems, information technology, project management or MBA program. The **ISSIG Academic scholarship** supports the same criteria. Visit PMI Foundation's site https://secure.pmi.org/scholarships/ to complete an application. **Deadline in May 31, 2007.**

June 2-5

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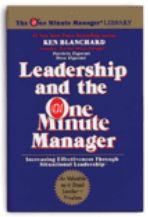
PDS'07 Keynotes

Patricia Zigarmi



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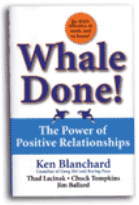

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Chair's Corner

Thank You

By Tresia D. Eaves, MHR, PMP

A few members of the PMI IS SIG Board of Directors boarded flights for a great journey to Hong Kong to take part in the PMI Global Congress in Asia. It was a great experience because we learned more about what we can do to meet the expectations of our members on that continent. We learned that virtual is everything to them and that our website, webinars and webzine "ISSIG Bits" are the best ways to reach our audience.

Many members approached our booth to say that they were very happy with our services and to keep up the good work.

Why join a SIG?

Some folks stopped to ask why they should join a SIG at all since they were pursuing their PMP or just joined PMI and didn't understand the value proposition that the SIGs offer. To this we respond that you get "customized services" for your industry from the SIGs that neither PMI nor the chapters can offer. The purpose of the customized services we provide IT/IS professionals is to make better project managers. We have to be specific to our industry because there are specific problems we face in IT/IS that others don't face in construction, medical or other fields.

We also tried to emphasize to people who came to our booth the differences between our SIG and other SIGs. Some said they had joined SIGs and never heard from anyone. We can't answer for those SIGs but could only show how the PMI IS SIG provides plenty for the $20 annual membership fee and all agreed with our statement once we made our case.

Some folks that approached our booth said they would have to join 4-5 SIGs to cover all that they do in their daily jobs and to this we said, join the ones that give you "more" of what you need. In this case, as in many, quantity does not equal quality but we tried to achieve both in our products and services offerings to our members.

We did learn that many members in Asia want us to form alliances with their local chapters and corporations in order to offer more of what they want/need in their geographical locations or in their work centers. We made many contacts and will strive to do just that.

We endorsed and introduced speakers, had dinners with potential partners and had a "once in a lifetime" experience for which this chairwoman will always be grateful. Look for us at EMEA in Budapest in May and prepare to tell us how we can better serve our European membership!

Editor's Corner

Wow and Hello!

By Richard K. Fox MS, PMP

Wow!

Imagine that! – editor of the PMI *ISSIG Review* publication! I am still finding it hard to believe my good fortune at being selected for such a position. It will certainly help to indulge my interests in software project management and in bringing news of best practices in this extremely interesting field to its practitioners.

By way of introduction to the readers of the *Review*, I have been involved as an active software project manager almost as long as I have been involved in software development. The exact number of years is not important, except maybe to my wife; but suffice to mention that my first software project for the U.S. government involved a small, slow IBM mainframe computer called the 1410. Anybody remember that one?

In my career in software development, I have had the opportunity (as many of you have) to experience firsthand the impacts of poor software management and poor software project managers. Fortunately, I have also experienced the tremendous impact of an excellent project manager and was able to learn what a difference such an individual could make!

My career history also includes a number of years of heavy involvement in teaching others the finer points of project management. This includes both industry professionals in commercial training courses and consulting, as well as in university settings with industry hopefuls. Having been a PMI member for a number of years, I remember when we would mention the existence of PMI; but it was not a major force in the software project management field. What a great difference today as many more organizations and individuals have recognized the tremendous value of the PMI organization!

This has been a very busy period for me because, in addition to the newly acquired task of Editor, I am personally involved in a relocation (due to a great promotion for my wife) from Rhode Island to the wine country of northern California!

I certainly will do my best as *Review* editor in the hope that I can live up to the fine legacy that previous *Review* editors, especially most recently William Hughes, have established. Our goal is to increase the value of the *Review* publication as a resource for you to gain value in understanding software project management and to increase your skills and your value to your organization.

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DATED MATERIAL

Editor's Corner

[...continued from page 18]

I feel extremely fortunate to have interesting and provocative articles written by a variety of authors to present to our readers in my first issue as *Review* editor.

These include a look at the vital, and often poorly done, task of estimating software projects as well as an intriguing look at strategic role of PM in the organization. This latter article is not specific to software, but does cover a very important discussion of the increasing recognition of the importance of project management.

For users and potential users of MS Project 2007, we offer a great article with an indepth explanation of its varieties, capabilities and improvements. We have also included a couple of important messages from the ISSIG Chairwoman. There is also an introduction to the new ISSIG career website and its value to our members.

Please feel free to contact me with suggestions for future articles. If you would like to consider writing an article for publication in the *Review* to share your thoughts and experience in project management, I would love to hear from you. Remember, you do NOT have to be a polished author to write for the *Review* and to see your name in print. That is what editors are for! The deadline to submit an article for the Fall edition is not until August, 2007.

I challenge all readers to share what you know about software PM.

Again, let me take the time to thank all of these authors as well as the other authors who submitted articles that we will see in upcoming editions of the *Review*. These are the folks who will determine the value and importance of the *Review!*

ISSIG *REVIEW*

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