

Scheduling in a Defence Environment

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Scheduling in a Defence Environment



Agenda

- The Usefulness of Scheduling
- The 'State of Play'
- Emerging Trends
- Conclusions

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This Section - Usefulness

- Schedules: define / underpin / support
 - Most project management functions
- Primary uses of a schedule
- Threats to the schedule's usefulness
 - 'Contracts'
 - Excessive detail and attempts to 'control'

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Schedules are 'good for'

- Developing and testing the optimum delivery strategy for a project
 - Sequencing the WBS 'work packages'
 - Coordinating & optimising the flow of work
- Providing a valid time baseline for
 - Earned Value
 - Earned Schedule

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Schedules are 'good for'

- Assisting in day-to-day decision making
 - Resolving dilemmas
 - Evaluating the consequences of change
 - Testing ideas
 - Communicating strategy & setting objectives
- OR at least
'good schedules are good for...'

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Schedules are 'not good for'

- Accurately predicting end dates
 - Schedules do not 'scale' remaining durations based on performance to date
 - Earned Schedule solves this problem
- Controlling work at the 'coal face'
 - You need people to do this
- Measuring productive efficiency
 - Earned Value does this

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Scheduling's 'Client'

- The Project Manager should be the primary user of schedule information
 - To decide on the project's strategy
 - To coordinate workflows and balance resource demands
 - To test decisions and resolve dilemmas
- Uses that distract from this primary purposes damage the project

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Damaging Influence #1

- Making a detailed schedule into a 'contract document'
 - This distorts the schedule as parties manipulate data to 'political' ends
 - Adding links to 'lock in' anticipated delays
 - Manipulating the location of the 'Critical Path'
 - Prevents sensible changes as 'reality' unfolds
 - Changes de-value the 'credibility' of the unaltered schedule jeopardising 'claims'

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Damaging Influence #1

- Many contracts prohibit or restrict changes to the schedule
- Making the 'best of a bad job':
 - See the 'Delay and Disruption Protocol'¹
 - Separate the 'real' schedule from the contract version
 - Recognise 'float' is an artificial construct of CPM²

1. See: <http://www.eotprotocol.com> (Free download)

2. See 'Float - Is It Real?': http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/Resources_Papers_043.html

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Damaging Influence #2

- Excessive detail - Schedules may have:
- Adequate detail for a collaborative 'coordinated' approach to scheduling **OR**
- Finite detail to 'control' the work? **BUT**
- 'Project Control Systems cannot control anything' (they can only provide guidance)

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Damaging Influence #2

- Excessive detail
 - Hides useful information and slows information flows
 - Prevents the easy testing of ideas by 'what if' changes
 - At best shows where people are 'failing' to meet the program (even if it is wrong)
 - Does not improve 'accuracy'³

3. See 'The cost of Time': http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/Resources_Papers_009.html

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Damaging Influence #2

- The human brain can manage around 7 pieces of data at one time (typically between 5 and 9)
- Command and Control is an outdated philosophy (McGregor 1960)
 - The only purpose for excessive detail is to attempt to control the uncontrollable

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Summary

- A focus on 'using' the schedule should emphasise
 - Collaboration
 - Coordination
 - The ability to adapt to changing circumstances
 - Supporting the PM Team
- But this needs 'alliance' type contracting

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This Section - State of Play

- PMI's Practice Standard for Scheduling
- The Scheduling Excellence Initiative
- Scheduling Certifications
- Scheduling Interest Groups

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PMI's Contributions

- The 'Practice Standard for Scheduling'⁴
 - Places scheduling in the context of the PMBOK Guide 3rd Edition
 - Describes 'good scheduling practice' (Ch. 3)
 - Defines the components needed for any schedule (Ch. 4)
 - Offers a 'conformance scoring' system for evaluating schedules (Ch. 5)

4. To order: <http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/Books.html>

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PMI's Contributions

- College of Scheduling and the Scheduling Excellence Initiative (SEI)⁵
- SEI is working on the 'Scheduling Enhancement Series' (SES)
 - A multi-volume reference for scheduling:
 - Concepts
 - Methodologies
 - Best Practices

5. See: <http://www.pmicos.org>

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Certifications

- AACE's 'Planning & Scheduling Professional Certification'⁶
 - 7 Hr examination
 - 8 Years scheduling experience
- PMI's Scheduling Credential
 - Under development⁷

6. See: <http://www.aacei.org/certification/certExplained.shtml>

7. See: <http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/Planning.html>

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Local Groups

- AIPM / DIPMC initiated: Planning & Scheduling Community of Practice (PSCP). Contact: mmiller@sms.com.au
- Proposed PMI COS 'Campus' in association with the PMI Canberra Chapter. Contact: canberra@pmichapters-australia.org.au

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This Section - Emerging Trends

- The great scheduling debate:
 - Command and control or
 - Collaboration
- Murray Woolf's new book:⁸
 - The ideas around 'momentology'
 - The primary source of delays
- A recognition of the 'scheduling problem'

8. To see more: <http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/Books.html>

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This Section - Conclusions

- Scheduling is in a mess:
 - Chronic shortage of schedulers
 - Too much focus on the tools
 - The 'art of planning' largely lost
 - Too much focus on data and 'the claim'

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Conclusions

- The trends are positive:
- The new Practice Standard for Scheduling
- SEI and SES developing best practices and guidelines
- Practical certifications coming
- We can now rate the technical competence of a schedule

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Conclusions

- Still to come:
 - Rating the 'usefulness' of the schedule
 - Working local SIGs and 'Campuses'
- The challenge:
Recognising scheduling is a modelling process to aid decision making
(not a controls process) and

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Conclusions

- Accepting “Every model is wrong, but some models are useful” G. Box 1979
 - Scheduling is a modelling process that helps communicate and coordinate ideas about what might happen in the future
 - It is not a cartographic process mapping what already exists
- After 50 Years⁹ we still have a long way to go.

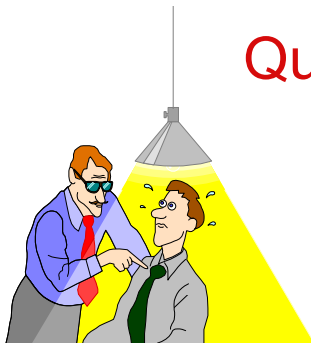
9. See 'A Brief History of Scheduling': http://www.mosaicprojects.com.au/Resources_Papers_042.html

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Questions Please



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Download this paper from the '**Breaking News**' section of the Mosaic site

The '**Papers & Resources**' section of the Mosaic site has:

- Direct links to all of the project management associations
- A large number of free PM papers and useful scheduling references

The '**Planning**' section of the Mosaic site has the latest information on the PMI Standards, SEI and the proposed Scheduling Credential

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