PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: *Dynamic Scheduling With Microsoft Project 2010*

Author: Rodolfo Ambriz and John White

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Introduction to the Book

This book is a good tool for schedulers and non-schedulers that use Microsoft Project 2010. It indicates all the additions that have been made to the newer version of Microsoft Project. It will help users get up to speed quickly with the new features of Project 2010 and enables them to create effective schedules more efficiently by using the best practices, tips & tricks, step-by-step instructions, and practice exercises.

Overview of Book’s Structure

The book consists of 14 chapters. The naming of the chapters shows well the content contained therein. The 14 chapters are divided into 5 stages of understanding a schedule 1) Concepts; 2) Initiating; 3) Planning; 4) Executing, Monitoring & Controlling; and 5) Closing, this is followed by a summary in Chapter 14 and case Studies in the Appendix.

Highlights: What I liked!

The first chapters show how to get started with the software, opening files, saving, printing and exiting; helping to break the software down for first time users. The Figures are very illustrative, making it easy for non-schedulers to follow the book.

In Chapter Two, (Setup), I really liked the table that shows some of the more popular commands and shortcuts. They help the user utilize the software with greater ease.
Also, the section that explains the different views is wonderful. It explains in detail how to navigate the views by switching them, combining them and then switching back. In Chapter Three the checklist to evaluate the WBS covers the basics of creating a WBS in a schedule and addresses the schedule’s needs.

In Chapter Seven, the authors show how to use an Outlook address book as a resource. In the same chapter, there is also an explanation on how utilizing the Varying Availability of Resource helps in modeling the profile of each resource based on their time availability. In Chapter 9, the explanation of the Monte Carlo simulation was really neat because most schedules are now stochastic, especially large complex ones. Using MC simulations assists in estimating the contingency needed.

Chapter Eleven is the one I liked the most because it simply presents the work I have been putting in the schedule for hours as “Reporting.” The ability to copy and paste data in other office programs is a real plus too. Also, the authors made a good comparison between the different Reporting Options. A concept that was really new to me was building and inserting Macros, a practice that has various benefits. The checks at the end of the chapter are very useful for checking a correct model against the one that is being made.

**Shortfalls: What was Missing!**

As the authors dedicated a whole chapter to defining what project management is in “Concepts of Project Management”; they missed mentioning anything about the concepts of scheduling PERT and CPM scheduling or AOA and AON.

Some of the diagrams were too small and needed to be enlarged to show the indicators. In Chapter 4 the authors only discussed time estimation although the title is “Entering Estimates,” which should also include cost estimates. In Chapter 5, while entering multiple predecessors and successors, the author should clarify its effect on the “float” of activities.

**Who might benefit from the Book**

This book should be a really useful for Project Managers and Project Engineers who are using Microsoft Project to illustrate and show their schedules. It gives them the capability to update and manage them. Although I think Primavera P6 is a stronger tool for scheduling, this book will be helpful for Microsoft Project 2010 users.
Conclusion

This book was interesting to me because it greatly expanded my perception of using Microsoft Project 2010 as a scheduling tool. Project managers and schedulers reading this book should apply these techniques to a real schedule in order to receive the maximum benefit of using the best practices, tips & tricks, step-by-step instructions, and practice exercises found in this book.


About the Reviewer

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Moatassem Ghoniema holds a degree in Civil Engineering and has 10 years of experience in the Design and Construction fields in the US, the Middle East and Eastern Europe where he gained estimating and scheduling experience. Mr. Ghoniema has also prepared and reviewed hundreds of Critical Path Method (CPM) schedules and delay analyses on behalf of owner agencies. He finished his MSc in 2007 and is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park in their Project Management Program.