



**June 2004
Vol 4 Issue 2**

In this Issue:

A Note To Chapter Members..... 1
 Gala Member Appreciation Night...1
 Call for Presentations1
 Realities of Project Management ...3
 Time Estimating Part II4
 Member at Large 5
 Getting Bang for Your Buck.....6
 Kudos & Congratulations 7
 Meet the Board7
 Jobs@PMICMass.....8

Next Chapter Meeting

Join us Tuesday, August 10, 2004, at Holiday Inn, Route 495 and 20, Marlboro.

Special event: Gala Member Appreciation Night! Panel Discussion: The Lighter Side of Project Management

Time: 5:30 - 8:30PM



<http://www.acteva.com/go/centralmass>

Cost: Free for chapter members; \$10.00 for non-members. If you prefer not to use our online sign up service, please make your check out to:

Central Mass Chapter of PMI and mail to:

Central Mass Chapter of PMI
 c/o Gene Valois
 4 Mount View Ave.
 Auburn, MA 01501

A Note to Chapter Members
 By Jim McGill, PMP – President

Central MA Chapter Continues Rapid Member Growth!!

It was not long ago when some of the earliest members of our chapter wondered whether this chapter would get off the ground or not. But, through the efforts of several individuals and continued participation and support of our membership the chapter has grown positively in many ways. In just over a year, our membership has skyrocketed from 30 members to 173 members. We have seen our chapter meeting attendance go from an average of 15 members to 50 members taking part in our monthly meetings. We have come from near bankruptcy with only \$35.00 in the bank to building our cash reserves to over \$7000.00. Commitment, teamwork and persistence have been our allies of the past and will continue to be our allies in the future as we work towards the advancement and development of the PMI Central MA Chapter.

In the coming months we hope to improve upon our monthly meetings by bringing you speakers who present topics that have been requested via the survey feedback you have provided us. In August, we will be having a Member Appreciation Day. We hope to offer a co-sponsored event with another professional association in December. As we bring new members onto our team we will look to bring other events and projects to life from our existing pipeline.

Gala Member Appreciation Night Highlights “The Lighter Side of Project Management” on Tuesday, August 10, 2004

Save the date! To extend appreciation to the membership that makes the Central MA Chapter the growing and thriving organization we are, members and their guests are invited to Member Appreciation Night, on Tuesday, August 10th from 5:30 – 8:30 PM, at Holiday Inn, Route 495 and 20, Marlboro.

Highlight of the evening will be a panel discussion: “The Lighter Side of Project Management: Lessons Learned and Lessons Forgotten”.

The meeting is free for Central MA Chapter members, \$10.00 for non-members and guests. Light refreshments will be served.

Past chapter sponsors, vendors and speakers will be on hand, so this will be an opportunity to network with them and with your project management colleagues in a casual setting. So come prepared to munch and mingle!

Call for Presentations

Diversified Business Communications is accepting presentation proposals for The New England Summit for Project Management and Business Analysis to be held on November 3-5, 2004 at the Hynes Convention Center.

Deadline for proposal submissions is June 30. For more information contact speakers@TheNewEnglandSummit.com.

Continued on page 2



Building professionalism in project management.™

Project Management Institute
Central Mass Chapter

NEWSLETTER

*0 to PMP in 5 Days! Guaranteed, or your money back**



Learn FAST, Compete Smart, WIN BIG

With Cheetah Exam Prep™ for the PMP, you'll get your PMP FAST. The PMP is your ticket to success as a project manager. This is the fastest way to get your PMP and quickly improve your career options! We use proven accelerated learning techniques to condense 180 hours of exam prep time into a five day program that really moves. You earn your PMP the same week—course participants take the actual PMP exam on the fifth day as part of the course.* *To take the exam on the fifth day, you must have your eligibility letter from PMI. Our free toolkit details PMI's eligibility requirements and the process to apply to PMI for eligibility. With our program, if you don't pass the exam within a month of taking the course, we pay for you to take the exam two more times, and you can retake the course at no cost. If, after three attempts, you still do not pass, we will refund your course fee. See our website or the PMP Toolkit for more information on money back guarantee.

Free PMP Exam Prep Toolkit!

You can instantly receive your Cheetah Accelerator Toolkit™ for the PMP by downloading it from our website—www.cheetahexamprep.com. The toolkit is loaded with valuable insights and tips that will guide you through the certification process from start to finish. Best of all, it's FREE. Download it today and find out why 120,000 project managers have reviewed this in the last year.



Courses held in:

Hartford: June 7-11; June 28-July 2; July 19-23;
Aug 9-13; Aug 30-Sept 3; Sept 20-24
Boston-Dorham: July 19-23

Register TODAY at...

www.cheetahexamprep.com or 888-659-2013

A Note to Chapter Members

Continued from page 1

I would like to share with you some changes regarding our Board of Directors team. Jim Walsh, our current President has decided to resign from his position due to personal and professional commitments. We wish Jim the best in his future endeavors and thank him for his numerous contributions to our chapter. Based on our chapter by-laws the Vice-President assumes the President role in the event of a President's resignation. I currently serve as Chapter Vice-President and now will serve as Chapter President through November 1st. We are currently looking to bring volunteers on in the roles of Vice President, Director of Information Technology and Director of Membership and Volunteers. I am hopeful we will be able to announce soon who will be fulfilling these roles in the coming months.

I am excited about my new role and look forward to working with you towards establishing our chapter as a leading provider of project management professional development and networking opportunities in the Central Massachusetts area.

Sincerely,
Jim McGill, PMP



Building professionalism in project management.™

Project Management Institute
Central Mass Chapter

NEWSLETTER

Make it Home in Time for Dinner



What makes the best training even better? When it's offered in your area and at a special price! ESI International, the industry leader in project management and business analysis training, is expanding its course offerings in the Boston area. In addition to Boston, we now have classes in **Burlington, MA**. Now you can get the training you need and still make it home in time for dinner.

To introduce you to our expert training, we are offering a special discounted price of just **\$995*** on all courses scheduled in **Burlington** between May 1 and August 31, 2004.

The following ESI courses are scheduled in Burlington, MA, May–August, 2004:

- How to Gather and Document User Requirements
- Introduction to Business Analysis
- Managing IT Projects
- Project Leadership, Management and Communications
- Software Testing for Better Project Management

Just \$995* for a limited time!



To register, call (888) ESI-8884 or visit our Web site at www.esi-intl.com

*This discount cannot be combined with any other offer or client discount except the 4-for-3 Promotion. The discount only applies to registrations for scheduled public courses in Burlington, MA between May 1 and August 31, 2004.

Realities of Project Management

By Barbara Karten, PMP
William George Associates

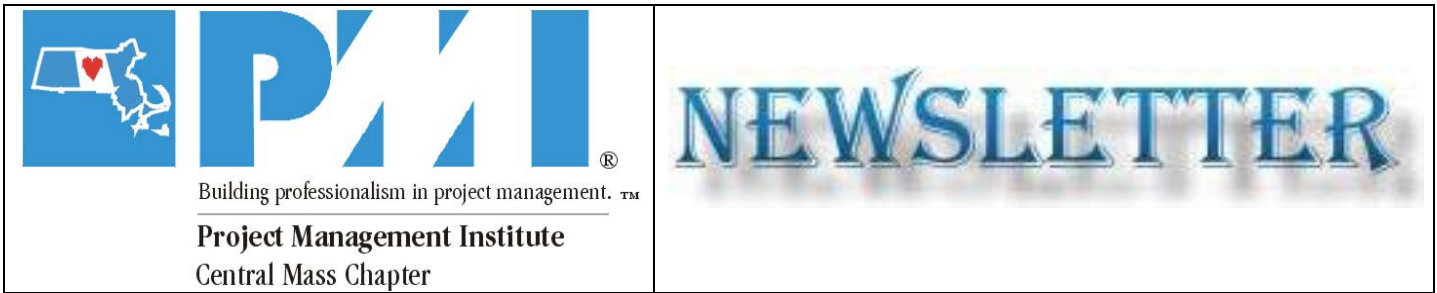
Originally presented at a Panel on Project Management sponsored by the MA Division of Employment and Training; April 29, 2004; University of Phoenix

Project Management is a set of tools, tech, skills, knowledge that transcends the product or process being developed; independent of the industry or product line being managed; it's like being a general contractor managing a host of subcontractors. The prime contractor skills of acquiring and managing the work of the subcontractors remain essentially the same.

Yet, many of us – having developed and fine tuned our project management skills in the high technology arena – are not successful in selling them into other, apparently growing sectors, such as financial services, biotechnology, medical devices, and pharmaceutical, in the Commonwealth.

The question is why not?? What is getting in the way of transferring these project management skills into other, growth, industries and sectors?? What do we need to do to successfully sell these skills into these other sectors?? Do we need more education or additional professional certifications? Or are we in a 'catch-22' where we need the experience to secure the jobs, and we can't get the experience without a job??

Continued on page 5



Time Estimating Part II: Translating Effort to Duration

By Thomas C. Belanger

Many organizations are now implementing a project management methodology aimed at improving project planning. They are standardizing. As a rule, the methodology contains a standard set of phases or stages that can be used as a starting template by a large number of its project management practitioners. Once this methodology has been implemented, actual results can be captured to help improve high-level estimates, and detailed estimates.

Because poor time estimates lead to poor scheduling, late projects, and lost customers, invest your team's time in detailed time estimating. Adding precision and predictability to your time estimates begins with accurate effort estimates. In the last newsletter, we talked about several choices, depending upon the type of project. It was also mentioned that you may use a combination of techniques, for example, historical estimates, and the PERT estimates of Optimistic, Pessimistic, and Most Likely. Once you have estimated how many hours of effort are required by all of the necessary people and other resources, you are ready to tackle duration estimating.

Isolate Effort from Duration

Project Managers often have to schedule tasks, and the people that perform the tasks, to fit a sometimes pre-defined schedule or deadline. For example, all enhancements must be made by December 31st. Improve your chances of finishing on time by improving your estimates. Be clear with your team that effort and duration are not the same. When they report actual results, ask those working on the team to let you know the amount of effort that was needed for each task. This "actual effort", when captured can be used to improve predictability in future estimates of similar work!

For most projects, duration is the number of business days that a task will consume, or what many know as "business days", or "calendar time". Many factors must be considered when attempting to predict the duration of a work package or task. Here are four:

- Number of project assignments per resource – moving from task to task slows momentum on all tasks!
- Skill level of the people doing the work – a new Analyst will use more effort than a Senior Analyst.
- Percentage of their time dedicated to the task – a full time equivalent (FTE) may only be able to contribute as little as 60% of their time! (See below.)
- The nature of collaboration needed to do the task – several people working on a task may spend more time collaborating than doing the task!

Continued on page 6

Meeting Schedule

The Central Mass PMI Chapter meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Holiday Inn in Marlboro at the intersection of Routes 495 and 20 at 5:30pm. You may register and/or pay for these meetings at www.acteva.com/go/centralmass or via the link available with the 'Acteva, Register now' button.



Chapter meetings are currently scheduled for

August 10, 2004
September 14, 2004
October 12, 2004
November 9, 2004
December 14, 2004

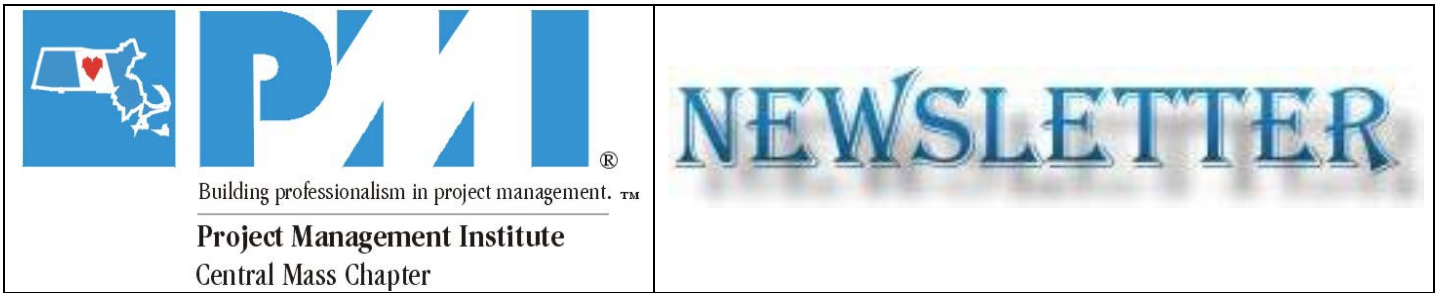
Board meetings are currently scheduled for

July 27, 2004
August 24, 2004
September 28, 2004
October 26, 2004
November 23, 2004
December 28, 2004

Please visit the Central Mass PMI Chapter Web site at www.pmicmass.com for more information on these and other events.

The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of meeting schedules is forgotten.

--Kathleen Byle,
Sandia National Laboratories



Realities of Project Management

Continued from page 3

Why is Project Management important?? The lack of (effective) project management is very costly. PMI (Project Management Institute) reports that 74% of projects fail or come in over budget; and, we spend \$75 billion on failed projects every year. They further note that the lack of project management skills is the major cause of these project failures and overruns.

What's in a job title?? There's a lot of confusion around job titles. There are many terms used by job seekers and employers to indicate a project manager skill set. We sometimes talk in terms of project managers, product managers, program managers, technical or lead project managers. Both employers and job seekers use these terms somewhat interchangeably and generate a lot of confusion as a result. We need to be clear about job titles and the job skills and capabilities that we bring to the workplace. This is a key area for clarification when talking with a prospective hiring manager.

What's the value of the PMP Certification?? PMI offers several project management certifications. The PMP (Project Management Professional) requires substantial project management work and education experience before you may sit for the examination. And the four hour examination is rigorous, including 200 questions covering the 10 knowledge areas (including Professional Responsibility) and the five process groups discussed in the PMBoK (Project Management Body of Knowledge). PMI also offers a CAPM (Certified Associate Project Manager) for folks with less project management experience.

As a job seeker, you can use the PMP credential to differentiate yourself from the many other job seekers in the market. There are just over 70,000 PMP's worldwide, so the credential provides a way to positively distinguish yourself from the other job seekers. And, we've observed that more and more positions posted either require the PMP certification, or the certification 'in process'. So, obtaining the certification removes a 'gate' in a difficult job market.

Employers use the credential as a filter to screen the top candidates from a large pool of project manager job seekers. It also provides an outside verification (the PMI review process) of the experience, education, and level of project management knowledge. Some sectors require project management certifications as a way of ensuring a base level of experience and skill/knowledge (for example, the federal government Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires that project managers be certified in order to manage projects with budgets of more than \$5 million). When companies set the PMP as a standard, they can be confident that Project Managers throughout the company (even international) can 'talk to each other in a common language'.

Continued on page 7

Member at Large: Ann Soucy, PMP

■ PMI Highlights

- PMI Member since: 1997
- PMI Mass Bay Member: 1998 – 2002
- PMI Certification: February 2001
- PMI CMASS Member: 2002 – present

■ Career Highlights

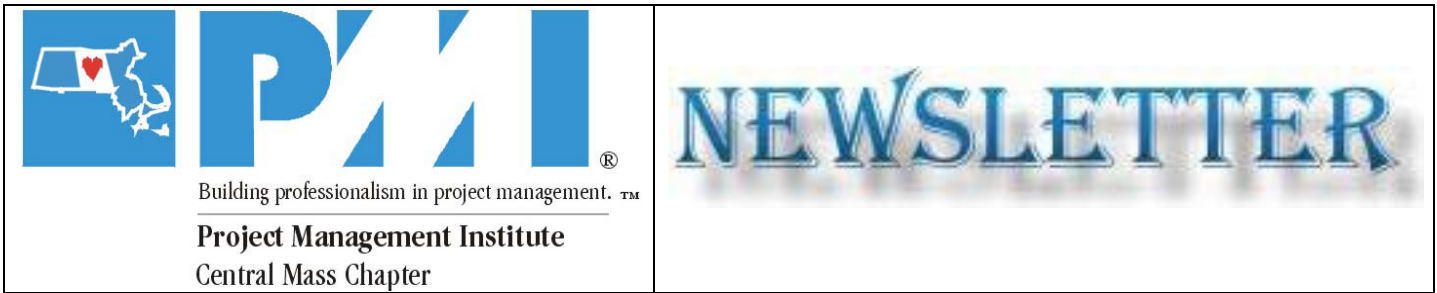
- 10+ years in finance and operations management positions in the high technology industry.
- Strategic Planning and Business Development Consultant within Digital Equipment Corporation. Instrumental in introducing and starting up software service businesses in the U.S. and Pacific Rim.
- 4 years managing and implementing process re-engineering projects for Sales and Customer Services at Boston Edison Company
- Active in the start up of a PMO office for the North America Customer Services organization for Compaq Computer Corporation.
- Since 1997, Opportunity Manager for Compaq/Hewlett Packard Company. Lead global pursuit and technical solution teams for international opportunities within strategic and enterprise accounts.

■ Education Highlights

- Bachelor of Arts Degree, (English) Worcester State College
- MBA, Anna Maria College
- Master's Certification in Project Management, George Washington University

■ Interests

- Active in Neighborhood Organization/Interest Groups
- Gourmet/Ethnic Cooking
- Interior Design
- Enjoying home, garden and family



Getting Bang for your Buck through Project Communications Management

By Chris Mauck, PMP, PE
William George Associates

Lack of communication among project team members is high on most project managers' list of common project problems. Did you know that a project manager should spend 90% of their time communicating? Look around at the project managers in your organization and see who are the most successful at their jobs. They will most likely have strong communication skills and know how to communicate with people to get them to do things that may not be a priority to them.

Projects by their nature are temporary endeavors to do something that has not been done before. Therefore, as project managers, we have to develop a plan of communications that meet our project's unique needs. Staffing requirements will change throughout the life of the project so not everyone will have the luxury of knowing everything there is to know about the project. It is your job as a project manager to make sure that the right information is being communicated to the right people at the right time.

As a project progresses, more information becomes available to help elaborate on the scope and needs of the project. A skilled project manager is continuously assessing the effectiveness of their communication plan to ensure it meets the needs of each stakeholder, and then making changes as need.

The first steps to effective project communication management is conscious planning.

Continued on page 7

Time Estimating Part II: Translating Effort to Duration

Continued from page 4

In some cases, very little effort is required for a task that has a lengthy duration. For example, once concrete is poured, there is little effort required while the cement "cures", up to 30 days later. If you are conducting a survey, there is a waiting period while the surveys are sent, and while people find the time to complete them, and then finally return them. When surveys are returned, tabulating and interpreting can begin.

There are at least a couple of ways of calculating the total duration for the pouring and curing of a foundation or for the sending and interpretation of surveys. First, you can add the effort needed to pour the concrete, or send the surveys to the waiting periods to get their respective duration. Second, you can isolate the pouring of concrete and the sending of the survey as separate tasks. Then simply record the actual effort for pouring the foundation, or sending the survey; then, estimate the duration of the lag, and place a lag after the surveys have been sent up to the point where tabulation and interpretation begins. For building a house, the lag would be the duration between the completion of concrete pouring, until the successor tasks, such as building the flooring begins. For the survey, the lag would be the duration between sending the survey, and analyzing the results. In the case of the survey, since you are likely to receive the completed surveys over time, some analysis will need to be accomplished little by little, again little effort over the span of, say, a couple of weeks. A very low efficiency factor.¹

For many professionals, only about 60% of your time is available to work on one or more projects, because you do other, routine (non-project) work in addition to project work. If you are simultaneously working on three different projects, you may only have as little as 20% of your time, or one day per week! Here are a few chores that are usually not project-related:

- Maintenance
- Minor revisions and enhancements
- Process improvements
- Project proposals
- Bug fixes
- Customer support
- Mentoring and training
- E-mail, v-mail, in-basket, meetings
- Vacation

Continued on page 7

¹ Leading the Project Revolution: Senior Manager's Role in Project Management Solutions, Meikle, K., Seidman, W., PMI® Proceedings, The Project Management Institute, 1996.

Time Estimating Part II: Translating Effort to Duration

Continued from page 6

Of course, 60% is an average for most Information Systems workers. Research for other white-collar workers indicates 65% as a reasonable number. On the other hand, someone working at a construction site, committed to one project, and there were no delays, could potentially be productive for up to 90% of the time. Other white-collar workers may be able to work as high as 80% in the short term. This means that if you cleared away all but one project for a particular teammate; and if the person did not get sick, or go to certain meetings a short term efficiency rate of 80% is entirely possible. Others may never be able to give more than 10% of their time to a project, because they manage the help desk, or are responsible for customer service.

Converting Effort to Duration

To estimate costs, and create a project budget, you will need effort and duration estimates. To prepare your project budget, you will also need the timing of all project spending. By converting effort to duration for all project tasks, adding the risk factor, linking predecessors and successors, and considering Management Reserves or Contingency Funds, you can develop a time-phased project budget. Many project management software tools are available to capture both effort and duration.

Continued on page 8

Meet The Board

President: *Jim McGill, PMP*
 Treasurer: *Gene Valois, PMP*
 Recording Secretary: *Rebecca Hagopian*
 Director of Meetings and Events: *Ray Leung, PMP*
 Director of Training & Sponsorship: *Thomas Belanger*
 Director Of Communications: *Barbara Karten, PMP*

Getting Bang for your Buck through Project Communications Management

Continued from page 6

Therefore, project managers must think about this and put a formal written plan together.

Planning Communications for projects during the initial planning phases reduces the chaotic requests for communication by 95%. This means that the scenario of "I'm catching a plane in 3 hours and I need a complete update on this project right now..." can be nearly eliminated. Imagine how much precious time, energy, and \$\$ would this save you!!

Remember: Project Behavior is guided by one primary influence -- Communications!

Opportunity is missed by most people because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like work.

--Thomas Edison

Realities of Project Management

Continued from page 5

So, what are the realities?? How can we advance our project management careers in a difficult job market??

- Consider getting the PMP Certification, or additional project management education. Check with your local DET as there is some funding for education and training available.
- Affiliate with a local PMI chapter for networking and education.
- Attend relevant events, such as Project World.
- Understand the jargon: companies use the terms Project Manager, Technical or Lead Project Manager, Program Manager, Product Manager, differently. You need to understand what the company is really looking for with respect to the underlying skill set that they want to acquire.
- Use your project management skills in your job search. Treat your job search as a project, with the planning, discipline, and positive outlook that you use in the management of a project in the work environment.

And, get involved. There are many opportunities that are 'stepping stones'. Take advantage of whatever is available, and use it as a platform to showcase yourself and your skills. This is a journey, and we need to make the most of the trip.

Kudos and Congratulations

Congratulations to Gene Valois, PMP, who recently attained his PMI professional designation.

Kudos to Tom Belanger who co-authored (along with Jim Highsmith) a chapter titled "Another Look at Life Cycles" in the upcoming book: *The Field Guide to Project Management, 2nd Edition*, edited by Dave Cleland, for Wiley Brothers.

Kudos to Barbara Karten, PMP, who is teaching "Information Technology Project Management" for WPI.

Congratulations to Mark Muir, PMP, who is newly employed at Telica, as a Product Manager.

Please send your successes to Newsletter Editor Catherine Walters (walters_catherine@pmicmass.com) for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Jobs@PMICMass

One of the free services our chapter provides is the jobs@PMICMass distribution list, which allows employers to gain access to our membership of skilled project management professionals.

If you have a project management opening, email position information to jobs@pmicmass.com, and it will be forwarded promptly to the chapter job information distribution list.

If you are a member interested in new opportunities, email jobs@pmicmass.com and ask to be added to our job information distribution list.

Time Estimating Part II: Translating Effort to Duration

Continued from page 7

Depending upon their roles in your organization for accomplishing non-project tasks, your team members have a certain portion of their forty-hour week available for project work. This portion is often converted to an efficiency factor, which means the portion of the week that is realistically available for project tasks. Said another way, the number of hours that are available for project work. If a task is estimated to require 80 hours of effort, and a person will be working on the task for approximately 25 hours per 40-hour week, an efficiency factor of 62.5% results in the following duration estimate:

$$\frac{80}{.625} = 128 \text{ hours} = 3.2 \text{ weeks duration}$$

.625 (represents 25 hours of 40)

If two people of equal skill are assigned to the task, and if the task does not require additional time to coordinate their work, the duration is likely to be about half of 3.2 weeks, or 1.6 weeks.

*Another technique when using Microsoft® Project, is to assign a unit value of, say, .6 to a person, to estimate that she is available to work on a task for 60% of her time. With Project Workbench®, you may express the number of hours in a day that you expect a resource to be productive for a particular project, such as 6 or 7 hours.



Seasonal Periods

Consider seasonal periods. For some IT projects, consider periods in which no network testing can occur. In financial services and other organizations little or no system testing can occur during the last several weeks in a fiscal quarter. In construction projects in the Northern United States, account for the cold weather seasons, during which the type of work is limited. For most projects, extend duration during July and August to allow for vacations and general slowdown.

The Last Word

Standardize. If you are serious about improving time estimating, record both effort and duration estimates, and actuals. Explain the difference between effort and duration to team members. Build and maintain a database of actual results for your organization's phases or stages.