

What type of MS Project user are you?

This Training Needs Analysis document will help us understand your current level of Microsoft Project knowledge, and identify those areas of it's use which are important to you.

It's designed to be completed as a phone interview with us rather than as a standard document to be filled in and posted back.

This is because many areas associated with Microsoft Project require clarification. . By using this document as a basis for understanding your own current use (if any) and your requirements, we'll get a much clearer picture of your training needs.

How to use this document.

We suggest that you distribute this document among course attendees and others involved in your project management area, and use it as a discussion tool. This will help you focus on the areas you will find most beneficial during the course.

We'll then talk with you by phone or at your premises, and help you to determine your exact requirements. The result will be a training course aimed to meet your needs.

Content

The document is divided into two sections – the first, *How we wish to use MS Project*, deals with key areas of application within your business, and will help us paint a picture of your requirements.

The second, *Specific tools within Microsoft Project*, deals with particular aspects of the software.

Please note that these questions in no way constitute an entry requirement for course admission, nor is there any required prior experience in Microsoft Project needed. We require only that participants are comfortable with the Microsoft Windows environment. Any frequent Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel user will feel comfortable attending the course.

This document will help us to make the training course relevant to you, and focused on your needs..

Section 1 - How we wish to use Microsoft Project

1. If not Microsoft Project, what software are you currently using to track projects?
Are you using manual systems?
2. Do the majority of your users already have Microsoft Project installed on their computers?
3. What versions of Microsoft Project are installed throughout the company (for example Microsoft Project 98, 2000, 20002/XP, 2003, 2007)?
4. How would you describe your user's Microsoft Project skills?
 - a. The majority of our organisation's Microsoft Project users have little experience with the software, or are largely self-taught.
 - b. We have a small core of advanced or experienced Microsoft Project users who are able to assist others, or create projects for colleagues.
 - c. Many of our colleagues are currently looking at (or have previously looked at) Gantt Charts and have an understanding of how they represent a project.
5. Do you want to modify existing projects, rather than develop them?
6. Do you have a project methodology in place within the organization and if so what is it?
7. Do you currently have a project office?
8. Do your projects often run over-time or over-budget?
9. Do you run projects nationally or internationally?
10. Is your team reasonably computer-literate, e.g. intermediate-level Excel users?
11. What type of projects do you run?
12. Have you any existing models or examples of work breakdown structures for your current projects? This can include lists of tasks whether in Excel or Word format or manually written.
13. What is the main advantage you are looking for in using Microsoft Project in your business?

Section 2 - Specific tools within Microsoft Project

Starting the Project

1. Microsoft Project can schedule either from a start or finish date. Are you aware when each would be appropriate and how to do this?
2. Microsoft Project has a base calendar representing a standard working week and non-working days of Saturday and Sunday. Do you know how to modify a base calendar to include general holidays and other non-working days?

Creating and Joining Tasks (Task Relationships)

3. Microsoft Project develops start and finish dates for your tasks by allowing you to estimate durations and link task activities. Do you understand how to link tasks?
4. There are four ways to link tasks (*Finish to Start, Start to Start, Finish to Finish* and *Start to Finish*). Are you familiar with these and where each should be used?
5. Microsoft Project is primarily a modeling tool. Have you seen examples of task sequence modeling (real-life task sequences) and how they're represented in Microsoft Project?
6. As well as joining tasks together you can have some tasks starting part way through another (lead) or a delay (lag) between tasks. Are you familiar with how to apply lead and lag to tasks, and where they should be used?
7. How do you decide when a task will occur? For example, do you choose a date to determine when a task will begin and end? Are your tasks driven by tasks that come before them?
8. Are you familiar with the term "critical path" as used in project management and if so, do you need to show critical path?
9. There are 8 constraint types within Microsoft Project, which give you the ability to control start and ending dates. Applying "finish no later than" dates to tasks can often result in a "You have a Scheduling Error" warning box appearing. Are you familiar with this message? Are you aware of the effects of constraints and deadlines on a schedule?
10. Do you know how to create specialised calendars and how to assign them to individual tasks? As an example you may have an IT team in Perth that has different public holidays and working hours to yours. Microsoft Project can show you their availability and the impact this will have on your schedule by assigning the Perth calendar directly to their tasks.

Resources and Project Costings

11. Do you want to track the human effort expended on your project or are you interested in seeing who is responsible for completing or overseeing the task?
12. Do you need to track plant and material costs using Microsoft Project?
13. Do you need to track your labour costs using Microsoft Project?
14. Do you need to track overtime hours worked, whether costed or uncosted?
15. Do you work with unionized contractors?
16. Do you need to incorporate fixed costs or standing costs?
17. Microsoft Project can show you when a resource is trying to do two full-time tasks on the same day. This is referred to as the resource being overallocated. Is it important for you to understand resource availability, and to identify when resources are overallocated?
18. In addition to general holidays (eg Christmas Day and Boxing Day) an individual resource can have their own unique holidays, such as annual leave and RDO's. Do you know how to create resource calendars and how to assign holidays to individual resources?

Creating Baselines

19. Baselines show a comparison between a planned schedule and actual progress. By viewing them we can see if we're on-schedule, behind or in front of schedule. This can be measured in variance of time and money. Do you need to view this information?
20. Do you need to see multiple baselines for a single project?

Reports

21. What reports would you like to generate using Microsoft Project?
22. Have you viewed any reports in Microsoft Project that are similar to those you need?

Tracking Projects

23. Microsoft Project allows you to track the actual work that has been completed. This may be in increments of percent complete, or you may use a more exact measurement by specifying task finish dates and precise percentages. How do you wish to track the progress of your project?
24. Microsoft Project allows you to review projects on completion to determine what went right and what went wrong. Do you need to archive statistical data about your projects so you can refer to this information during future projects as benchmarking tools?
25. Are you interested in developing customized templates or reports using Microsoft Project?

Combining Multiple Projects

26. Do you run multiple projects at the same time?
27. If multiple projects are run concurrently, do they have tasks in common?
28. If running multiple projects at the same time, do these projects share common resources?