Project Scheduling

You've developed your work breakdown structure and your task list is now sequenced and outlined, but you don't have a schedule...yet. A critical component of effective scheduling is a strong understanding and use of base calendars. You choose a base calendar to become your project calendar. Your project calendar establishes working day and time as well as manages resources which are fundamental for project scheduling. Microsoft® Office Project 2007 allows you to utilize specifically designed base calendars, or you can customize your own. Once your base calendar has been set up, you can determine your task list and set its duration and dependencies and then you'll begin to see a true project schedule emerge.

A base calendar is much like a calendar template that you can apply to a set of resources, tasks, or the project as a whole. Office Project 2007 provides three base calendar options: Standard, 24-Hours and Night Shift. You also have the option to customize any of the three base calendars to fit you need.

The Standard base calendar is the default option. To select a different calendar, click Project, Project Information. In the Calendar box select the base calendar you want to use.

Modifying a Base Calendar

You can modify your project calendar to reflect your team's regular working times and days off, including holidays and other one-time calendar exceptions. Recurring exceptions in your working times calendar can also be specified. Additionally, you can:

- Specify the normal work week for a base calendar
- Set up alternative work weeks
- Set up holidays and other one-time calendar exceptions
- Set up a recurring calendar exception Â
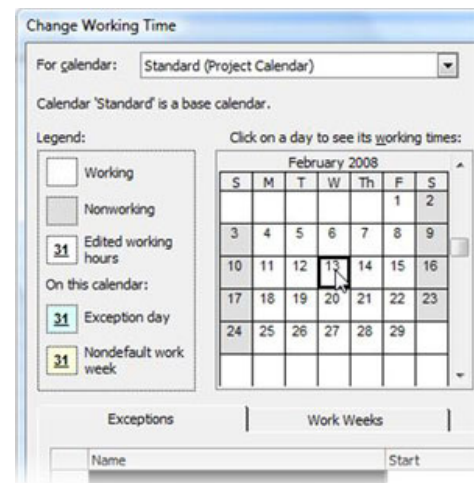
Most modifications occur within the Change Work Time option under Tools on the main menu bar.

Although there are many knowledge areas that contribute to successful project management, time management is mostly related to the development of the project schedule--your roadmap for completing tasks, handing off deliverables, passing milestones, and achieving project goals in a timely manner.

To develop an accurate and workable schedule that truly reflects how your project will run, you need to do the following:

- Enter task durations
- Identify the relationships or dependencies among tasks
- Schedule certain tasks to achieve specific dates when necessary

When these three things are accomplished, you will begin to see the basic outline of a real project schedule.

Setting Task Duration

Hint: Any value in the Duration field that's followed by a question mark is considered a duration estimate. They simply serve as an alert that a duration is still more of a guess.

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To create a realistic schedule, you can start by entering the length of time you believe each task will take to complete (the task duration). Once a task is entered, Office Project 2007 assigns it an estimated duration of one day, just to have something to draw in the Gantt chart.

Task Name	Duration
Brainstorm Content Categories	3 days?

It is important to enter accurate duration estimates in order to create a reliable project schedule. Gather information on the task duration from your team's knowledge, expert judgment, past projects, and industry standards

To enter Duration follow these steps:

- Display Gantt chart
- In the Duration field for each task, type duration, for example, 1w or 4d
- Press Enter. The Gantt bar will recalculate to the duration

Establishing Task Dependencies

Although certain tasks in a project are likely to begin on the project start date, most other tasks cannot begin until another task has finished. Sometimes, multiple tasks are dependent upon the completion of a single task. This is why identifying task dependencies are a crucial element of project scheduling.
The next step is to create links between tasks determining predecessor tasks and successor tasks. A task dependency is also referred to as a task relationship or a link.
When your task dependencies and task durations are in place, your project plan begins to look like a viable

schedule. You can begin to see possible start dates and finish dates. When you create a link between two tasks, Office Project 2007 calculates the successor's start and finish dates (based on the predecessor's start or finish date), the dependency type, the successor's duration, and any associated resource assignments.

Learn to create better project plans by learning how to use task dependencies. Online Training for Office Project 2007

Microsoft Office Enterprise Project Management Solution

The Office Enterprise Project Management (EPM) Solution is an end-to-end collaborative project and portfolio environment. With an EPM Solution, the administrator has the capability to customize team collaboration tools for work on tasks. This includes allowing resources to re-assign tasks to other resources, and how team members report on task completions. With an EPM Solution, you can:

- Set up e-mail notifications and reminders
- Request progress updates
- Identify levels of progress you want reported
- Automatically incorporate team members progress reports into the project plan

If you are using Microsoft Office Outlook® 2007, you can keep track of your assigned tasks in your Outlook Calendar. You can update progress on your project assignments in the Calendar and report the status back to Office Project Server directly from Office Outlook 2007.

Microsoft®