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Plan to make a difference

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User Poll

**Do You use Earned Value
Analysis?**

- Always
- Sometimes
- No

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Plan to Make a Difference

The quality of your project planning is directly related to the tool you use. Our tools are focused on helping you develop a complete, accurate plan. A plan that can be implemented and our tool can handle the unforeseen changes almost every plan experiences. To find out more about our product use the links to the left and tabs at the top to navigate.

If you are considering new Project Management software, below we discuss some important issues that you should consider.


Hidden

1. Visual Plan Development

Gantt charts are great... for reporting. Gantt charts should not be used for plan development. PERT charts or Network Diagrams were specifically designed for plan development while Gantt Charts were specifically

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Software Releases

Current version of Micro Planner X-Pert for Windows is v3.5.1

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designed for reporting.

Network Diagrams focus the planner on the relationships between chunks of work. Understanding and representing those relationships is the cornerstone of good project management. With Gantt charts, you rarely get those relationships right and so your plan is constantly changing and unpredictable. You can not execute that kind of a plan.

If you are not using the Network Diagram for planning, then start. If you tool does not have one, then switch tools immediately!

Hidden

2. Real

World Modeling

You have to be able to represent how your organization works. Most tools give you one diagramming technique, a few tasks and a handful of relationships. Is that really enough? We support two different diagramming techniques that can be used together in the same project, in the same subproject. We support many different types of tasks/activities with lots of options to define how it will be scheduled.

Resource Analysis is where most tools fail. In fact, most planners do not even use it. Is it because organizations are unconcerned about

how much time and money the project will take? Fat chance. The real reason is that most tools' resource analysis provides little value. The reasons start with their inability to model correctly and end with inconsistent, hard to understand, unpredictable results. So one of the most important tools of project management is unused.

If you're not using resource analysis, we recommend investigating where your tool let you down.

Hidden

3. Earned Value

Earned Value is taking the world by storm. It is becoming required on almost all major projects and is even part of the definition of good corporate governance.

Earned Value answers the question what it took to produce the achieved results. More importantly it shows much, much earlier when a project is in trouble. In fact, with Earned Value, an experienced project manager can tell if the project will succeed before work is even started.

Start using it immediately

Hidden

4. Believable Results

Enron. WorldCom.

Adelphia and many more produced wonderful results as long as you believed them. But then someone looked a little deeper and the results became unbelievable.

Do you believe your PM System? Should you? Well, we hate to be the bearer of bad news but maybe you shouldn't.

This is a simple issue that everyone makes complex. The question shouldn't be can I make your product produce the right answer. Instead, it should be can I easily make your product produce the wrong answer.

And the answer for most packages is absolutely. Some have it build right in to the system like rounding everything to the nearest hour. Some have default behavior that no real project manager would allow. Some lack the sophistication to handle the most common situations and therefore produce terrible results. There are countless examples and even more vendor justifications.

Bottomline is check your tool and make sure it is believable.

Hidden

5. Adaptable Software

Projects take place over time and wherever

time is involved so is change. Cost rates, personnel, equipment, inventories, plans all change but does your project plan?

Lots of plans are developed and never looked at again. Why does that happen?

We think it is because your software can't handle change. Oh, we're sure a lot of of it has to do with plans that were developed in the Gantt charts but it doesn't stop there. The software has to be able to handle changes over time by design. Everywhere you type in a cost rate you should be able to describe how that rate is going to change over time. Everything that works to its own calendar should have its own calendar and so on.

Software has to support the entire life cycle of the project.

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Network Diagrams

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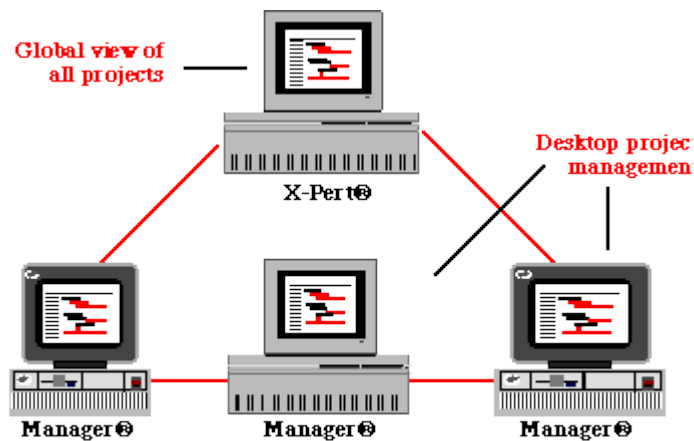


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Overview

Our products are designed to support the entire organization for the complete project life cycle. Whether you're a full-time project manager or an occasional user of project management techniques, Micro Planning has the right product for you.

When choosing an appropriate project management solution, it is important that the software support all levels of the organization. In the graphic below you can see how Micro Planning's products work together to give project managers, project participants, and senior management the appropriate information. While participants and junior managers work with Manager to plan and manage their projects, the project manager can have data flow from that schedule into the overall plan. Meanwhile, senior management can receive customized reports and link an enterprise-wide schedule that allows them to manage project performance without the unnecessary detail of the overall plan.



MPI's products are designed to work together. Easy affordable products for use at the project level pass information up to higher capacity products for consolidation and corporate level analysis.

The main difference between Micro Planner X-Pert and Micro Planner Manager is the size of project that can be supported. The functionality is the same, so as managers move up the organization or learn new techniques, they can continue to use our products with no change in productivity.

Micro Planner X-Pert can handle up to 10,000 operations (tasks, milestones, etc.) and up to 50 subprojects per file. X-Pert is used primarily at higher levels in an organization

Articles

Intuitive User Interface

The most important element of any enterprise-wide project management system is a consistent and easy to use interface. [read more...](#)

5 Steps to Success

MPI's research indicates that 90% of all projects undertaken fail in that they are not completed within the original target completion date or budget. [read more...](#)

Resource Management

Independent testing shows that when using the identical data, the results from various project management

by Vice Presidents, Directors, and other executives to consolidate and report on the progress and cost performance of many projects, and to better manage the allocation of scarce resources among the highest priority projects.

software products vary by as much as 400%! [read more...](#)

Micro Planner Manager can handle up to 1,500 operations and up to 5 subprojects per file. Micro Planner Manager files can be dynamically linked to X-Pert files, or Manager subprojects can be merged into X-Pert project files for consolidation and multi-project resource analysis.

Data Entry

While the difference in the size of a project does determine which of our products is appropriate, they both provide optional views for data entry. You can enter data into any of the following:

- Network Diagram (PERT)
- Gantt Chart
- Linked Gantt Chart
- Table or Spreadsheet
- Work Breakdown Structure (Outliner)
- Reports

All of these views are interactive, and all data changes are propagated so that a change in one view automatically updates all other views with up to ten views open at a time.

Brainstorm Solutions

"What-if" simulations in Micro Planner allow you to experiment with and discover real answers for your project problems. Examining alternative constraints along with their associated cost and resource implications is the most effective way to generate a realistically achievable solution for your company. You may store analyzed results, complete with budget, as a Master Archive or Baseline schedule for later comparison.

Multi-Project Scheduling

Projects don't exist in a vacuum. Every new project must co-exist and compete with existing projects for your organization's limited resources. Micro Planner handles multiple projects as easily as one. Executives can easily analyze resource requirements across all projects to get a true picture of potential shortfalls throughout the organization. You get the status of all projects as well as current and forecasted resource utilization. Proactive decisions can then be made about which projects can realistically be expected to complete and when and how to employ resources more effectively.

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Corporate Information



Based in Melbourne, Victoria Australia, Micro Planning International has been committed to providing full-service project management products to the world since 1978. MPI provides state of the art planning systems for the Macintosh and Windows platforms as well as post-sale services such as training, consulting, and custom development.

After its formation as Micro Planning Services, the company developed Micro Planner, the first PC-based project management software for the Apple II. IBM and Macintosh versions followed in 1982 and 1984. By 1985, Micro Planner for the Macintosh was the fourth best-selling Macintosh software.

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Micro Planning International Ltd

John Cornish, Chartered Marketer, MBA, FCIM, MAPM
Micro Planning

In 1987, Micro Planning Services expanded from its base in England and became Micro Planning International, headquartered in San Francisco. Then in 1995 moved to Denver, Colorado, and later to Australia

During 1988, MPI released identical versions of Micro Planner for Macintosh and Windows.

In a continuing effort to provide leading-edge software, MPI released Micro Planner X-Pert in 1989, proving that high-end planning tools do not have to be complex. X-Pert's younger, Manager, was added in 1991. Both X-Pert and Manager received numerous editorial awards as easy-to-use, full featured tools.

More recently, MPI has released enhanced versions of both Micro Planner X-Pert and Manager and broadened its market by offering Windows versions.

In the future, MPI will be offering a complete client/server solution, integrating its current products as clients with a new server product.

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1. What is the difference between Manager and X-Pert

There are two main differences. The first is the size of the project that can developed. Micro Planner Manager is limited to 1500 operations per project and supports 5 subprojects. Micro Planner X-Pert supports 10,000 operations and 50 subprojects.

Next is the number of projects. Micro Planner X-Pert can integrate many concurrent projects. Projects can be linked by dates so if a external project's date changes your project is automatically updated. They can also be combined or merged together and an accurate cross project resource/cost analysis performed. Micro Planner Manager does not support these advanced features.

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2. Do you have printed documentation

Yes, we a printed version of our almost 600-page User's Guide that can be purchased from our Anytime, Anywhere Customer Service Center. The price is \$49.95 plus shipping and handling. To order go to <http://microplanning.com/support> and either login using your existing account or create a new account.


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3. Does your products support Earned Value

Yes, and they have from the beginning. We have always been strong supporter of Earned Value Analysis. In fact, both of our products, Micro Planner Manager and Micro Planner X-Pert, support 4 types of Earned Value Analysis with or without accruals.


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4. Do you offer

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competitive upgrades?

Yes, if you purchased one of our competitor's products and, like so many others, have outgrown their abilities. Or maybe you are just sick and tired of trying to get it to produce correct answers? Either way, we will make it easier for you to move to a complete solution - Micro Planner. Contact us for a quote about replacing your current project management system.

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5. What is included in your Premium Support

Well, the simple answer is everything. Our goal is to provide complete, comprehensive customer support without always asking you for a little more money. So we include unlimited toll-free support hot line with a 3 hour guaranteed response. All updates and upgrades are included at no cost. No matter how significant the release, if you are covered by our support package you receive it for free. Even if you are changing platforms, there is no charge.

Finally, you receive unlimited access to our Anytime, Anywhere Customer Service web site. On it, you can search our knowledgebase, ask us and/or your peers questions, download everything we offer and view your case and order history. Everything you need in one spot <http://microplanning.com/support>.

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6. What is the difference between Micro Planner and Microsoft Project

This is a long and detailed discussion that we can summarize into a couple of basic ideas:

1. An organization's PM

abilities evolve. You might first start out as simply trying to develop a solid plan and then later worry about managing to that plan or considering resource/costs and many, many other issues. Microsoft Project is geared to the beginning of that evolutionary process but does not support or encourage your organization's continued evolution.

Micro Planner does.

2. Gantt versus Pert. The Gantt is a great report. We use them all of the time, but Gantt's should not be used to PLAN projects they should be used to MANAGE projects. When planning the most critical data to be gathered is the logic of the project. Duration estimates are also important, but timelines are not. Once you have all the logic then timelines become important. Microsoft Project and all Gantt based programs miss this critical point. Micro Planner focuses you on the logic which, simply put, yields better plans.

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