CHAPTER 8
What Is Resource Management? Is It the Forgotten Link to Achievability of Actionable Plans?

Ideally we should manage portfolio triple constraints strategic alignment, value/benefits delivery, and resource capacity simultaneously; however, in the corporate world it is a huge challenge to balance these three constraints. I believe that this chapter provides us a relevant framework and best practices to help organizations manage these triple constraints which fit the purpose of their operations.

When you read “Resources”, think Humans. The textbooks define resource management (RM) as the management of humans, cost, and materials. While this is true, our experience says that 60–70 per cent of the resources for a project tend to be of the human variety.

While other types of resources – cost, systems, material – are project ingredients too, the human resource (HR) is more elusive and more laden with variables. What are the planning and forecasting abilities? Do we have the skills needed? What are those resources working on right now? How good are they at achieving their deadlines and deliverables?

As we think of answers to the above questions asked, we may realize that effective RM and portfolio management go hand-in-hand. What’s difficult about RM is that most organizations don’t have the information they need to do it in one place. In order to evaluate demand against capacity, we need a portfolio view of projects, current and future. Unless you have a view of what you need to deliver over the next 6 or 12 months, it becomes virtually impossible to do effective planning or know what capacity you have.

A lifecycle for RM can be broken into four key areas:

- **Definition**: HR/resource policies, rates, and supporting fiscal periods, as well as the definition and identification of the key components and levels of the organization/resource breakdown structure.
• **Development**: Entry and ongoing maintenance of resource plans and assignments, including baselining and versioning, as well as support of a top–down or bottom–up planning approach.

• **Delivery**: The collection, either manually or automatically, of the actual; and, conversely, the provision of configurable reports and views to support the entire process.

• **Drive**: A series of what-if modeling scenarios and variance analysis to drive ongoing decision-making and performance tracking, involving resource demand versus capacity analysis.

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**Have a view of your project portfolio: define resources upfront**

Say someone has an idea for a new project that he/she believes business should embark upon. At that point you’ll start to do a high-level assessment about what it’s going to cost you to deliver this. That encompasses a high-level estimate of the total resources you might need. Note that I say “estimate”. This means you simply identify the generic roles required. If you have a view of your portfolio of projects and their respective resource role requirements, you’ll be able to assess whether the organization can take on the new project or not.

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**How easy is it to gain visibility as a resource manager?**

Visibility into what a resource is currently scheduled to work on, what the person is actually working on, and what he/she should be working on is a complex matter and depends on the relative maturity level of the organization and the processes enabled to support it. Being able to effectively track time and expense, as well as overall progress, is the key to ensuring the capture and aggregation of performance metrics. Moreover, this data provide real-time visibility into how much capacity an individual or group of individuals have at any given time so that informed decisions can be made about re-assignments and re-prioritization of work.

Execution and tracking begins at the most basic level with the assignment of team members to project tasks. The RM solution should provide visibility into the current capacity and allocations for resources across all work, including projects, work items, administrative tasks, and so on. Integration with other systems such as timesheets and Visual Studio may warrant additional investigation, in that effective RM must take into account all work (demand) and all availability (capacity).