

Solve Milestone 3: Develop a Project Plan

Key Outcome:

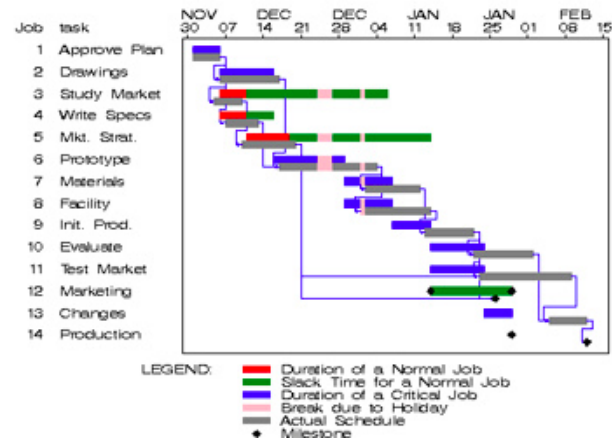
Everyone on the project team has a month-by-month (or week-by-week) understanding of what the team will accomplish.

Examples:

- A table of milestones, dates, and leads
- A step-by-step breakdown of activities for the team
- A Gantt chart

How will we know when we've completed this step?

- We have a clear start and end date, and steps along the way
- We know how the steps depend on each other
- Our plan is flexible, so we can adjust to unforeseen circumstances
- All our key people have back-ups, and maybe even understudies
- Our plan has preliminary outcomes before the final output, so that something useful still comes out of the project even if we have to wrap up early.
- Our plan includes when people are unavailable.
- Everyone on the team can look at the plan and know what they need to do and by when.



Key Questions to address

- When is the earliest the community could possibly need the output by? The latest?
- Are there any hard deadlines (i.e. city summit, city council vote, etc.) before the final output?
- What else is going on in the community or in the project participants' lives during this time and how will you accommodate that?
- Are there any steps that can be done in parallel?
- Are there critical points – places where small delays could have big impact on the final project?
- What networks should be in place to obtain necessary data?
- How can a student or group of students add value to the project (see TEX Community Science Training Program document) aside from students the scientist might already bring in?

Suggestions from Successful Projects

- Allow time for mistakes, accidents, and miscommunication. To account for this, some projects have used a 1/3 rule – add on a third of the time you think it will take to every step.
- Try to develop your plan so that even if things end early, you have something useful.
- Ask about vacations, travel, big projects, and other things that could influence the timeline
- Your plan is not a static document – a good plan is one you can adjust as you learn more, experience setbacks, or surge forward. Don't design your plan in a way that makes it hard to update.

- Think about multiple ways to obtain data in case your first option isn't feasible or becomes difficult (i.e. first option is to obtain 911 call data about heat related calls; but second option is to interview first responders about heat-related responses).

TEX Support

TEX can provide examples other projects have used and can facilitate a planning session.

Relevant Resources TEX can connect you to

TEX staff can help you with project planning and even walk you through a sample planning processes.