Simplified Scheduling with Microsoft Project

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- Covenant Technology Partners
  - ☐ Project Manager
  - ☐ "Every project matters"
    - People + Process + Tools

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Microsoft Project Downside

- ☐ Why is Microsoft Project so hard to use!?
- ☐ I spent more time working on the plan than on the project!
- ☐ MS Project has a mind of its own!
- ☐ No one could understand the project plan, not even me!
- ☐ Excel is much easier!

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Microsoft Project Downside

☐ Many abandon MS Project and revert to Excel, or…?

☐ How many companies have paid for Project, only to leave it on the shelf?

☐ Those who use Project to start a project often leave the plan in the dust

☐ Many project fail, but many attempts at using MS Project also fail

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Simplifying

- ☐ 5 tips for simplifying use of MS Project

- ☐ …for most of us
  - ■ Most of us aren't building skyscrapers or facilities for the Olympics
  - ■ We're dealing with projects that range from a few weeks to a few months, involving small teams

#1 – Simple WBS

☐ Fewer Tasks
- ■ The "1 & 10 Rule"
  - ☐ Tasks shouldn't be less than 1% or more than 10% of duration/work
- ■ Nouns vs. Verbs
  - ☐ More Deliverables, less activities
  - ☐ Do not use as a Task List

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#1 – Simple WBS

- ☐ Use PERT
  - ■ A "3 point" estimation technique
  - ■ Simple, but flawed
  - ■ Balance with experience
- ☐ Task Types
  - ■ Understand Task Types
    - ☐ Fixed Work, Duration, Units
- ☐ Create your own views

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#2 – Block Scheduling

☐ Add durations for *groups* of tasks.

- ■ Add dependencies
- ■ Avoid constraints
  - ☐ Manual vs. Automatic scheduling
  - ☐ Forcing too many dates = schedule inflexibility

#3 – Use A Baseline

☐ …before you enter any Actuals

☐ Use Resource & Task Usage views
- ■ Or Time Sheets

☐ Update Remaining Work
- ■ Use TFS

☐ View Variance with indicators

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#4 – Use Timeline View

☐ A quick and clear way to communicate project schedule

☐ Add key summary tasks to timeline

☐ Beware extended summary tasks

☐ Add to Status Reports

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Summary

- ☐ MS Project is powerful and complex
- ☐ Simplify your use
- ☐ Avoid micromanaging schedule
- ☐ Study and get certified
- ☐ Join MPUG

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