

**11th Edition**

**4PM**

800.942.4323

7 Sample Pages

Buy the eBook  
At Amazon.com

# Essentials of Project Management

**By Dick Billows, PMP. GCA**

Copyright 2011 by Richard A. Billows All rights reserved.  
Published by The Hampton Group, Inc.

To order        The Hampton Group, Inc.  
                  5031 S. Ulster Street Ste. 240  
                  Denver, Colorado 80237  
                  303 756-4247  
                  Credit Card orders 800 942 4323  
                  Or, at <http://www.4pm.com>

Other Books Published by The Hampton Group, Inc:

*Project Manager's KnowledgeBase*  
*Managing Complex Projects*  
*Managing Cross-functional Projects*  
*Managing Information Technology Projects*  
*Managing Engineering and Construction Projects*  
*Managing Healthcare Projects*

Microsoft is a registered trademark and Project and Windows are trademarks of Microsoft Corporation.

Screen shots reprinted with permission from Microsoft Corporation.

All other product names and services identified throughout this book are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. They are used throughout this book in editorial fashion only and for the benefit of such companies. No such uses, or the use of any trade name, is intended to convey endorsement or other affiliation with the book.

All rights reserved. The text of this publication, or any parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher.

ISBN: 0-9679761-6-2  
Printed in the United States of America  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

**Table of Contents**

**OVERVIEW OF THE 5 STEP ADPM™**  
**METHODOLOGY ..... 6**

5-STEP ADPM™ PROCESS ..... 6  
KEY OUTPUTS FROM THE 5-STEP ADPM™ PROCESS..... 8

**STEP ONE: BROADBRUSH PROJECT PLAN..... 9**

TOP DOWN PROJECT PLANNING ..... 10  
TECHNIQUE #1 SCOPE & MEASURE OF SUCCESS ..... 11  
ACTIVITY TRAP ..... 13  
TECHNIQUE #2 REQUIREMENTS & HIGH-LEVEL ACHIEVEMENT  
NETWORK..... 14  
COMPLETED ACHIEVEMENT NETWORK ..... 16  
TECHNIQUE #3 CHARTER: PROBLEM AVOIDANCE ..... 17  
BROADBRUSH PLAN APPROVAL ..... 19

**STEP TWO: WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE ..... 20**

TECHNIQUE #4 USING PROJECT SOFTWARE..... 22  
START DATE..... 22  
SUMMARY & SUBTASKS ..... 24  
GETTING TO OUR DATA ENTRY SCREEN ..... 24  
THE TASK ENTRY SCREEN..... 26  
TECHNIQUE #5 DECOMPOSITION OF THE WORK BREAKDOWN  
STRUCTURE ..... 27  
WBS & OUR ACHIEVEMENTS ..... 28  
ASSIGNMENTS & MICRO-MANAGEMENT ..... 28

**STEP THREE: DYNAMIC SCHEDULES ..... 30**

TECHNIQUE # 6 TASK SEQUENCE..... 31  
ENTERING PREDECESSORS..... 32

OUR FIRST PREDECESSOR..... 33  
FINISH-TO-START ..... 34  
FINISH-TO-FINISH ..... 35  
START-TO-START ..... 36  
BACK TO OUR PROJECT..... 37  
SECOND PREDECESSOR..... 38  
DANGLERS IN THE NETWORK ..... 39  
PERT CHART ..... 40

**STEP# FOUR: ASSIGNING PEOPLE TO TASKS..... 42**

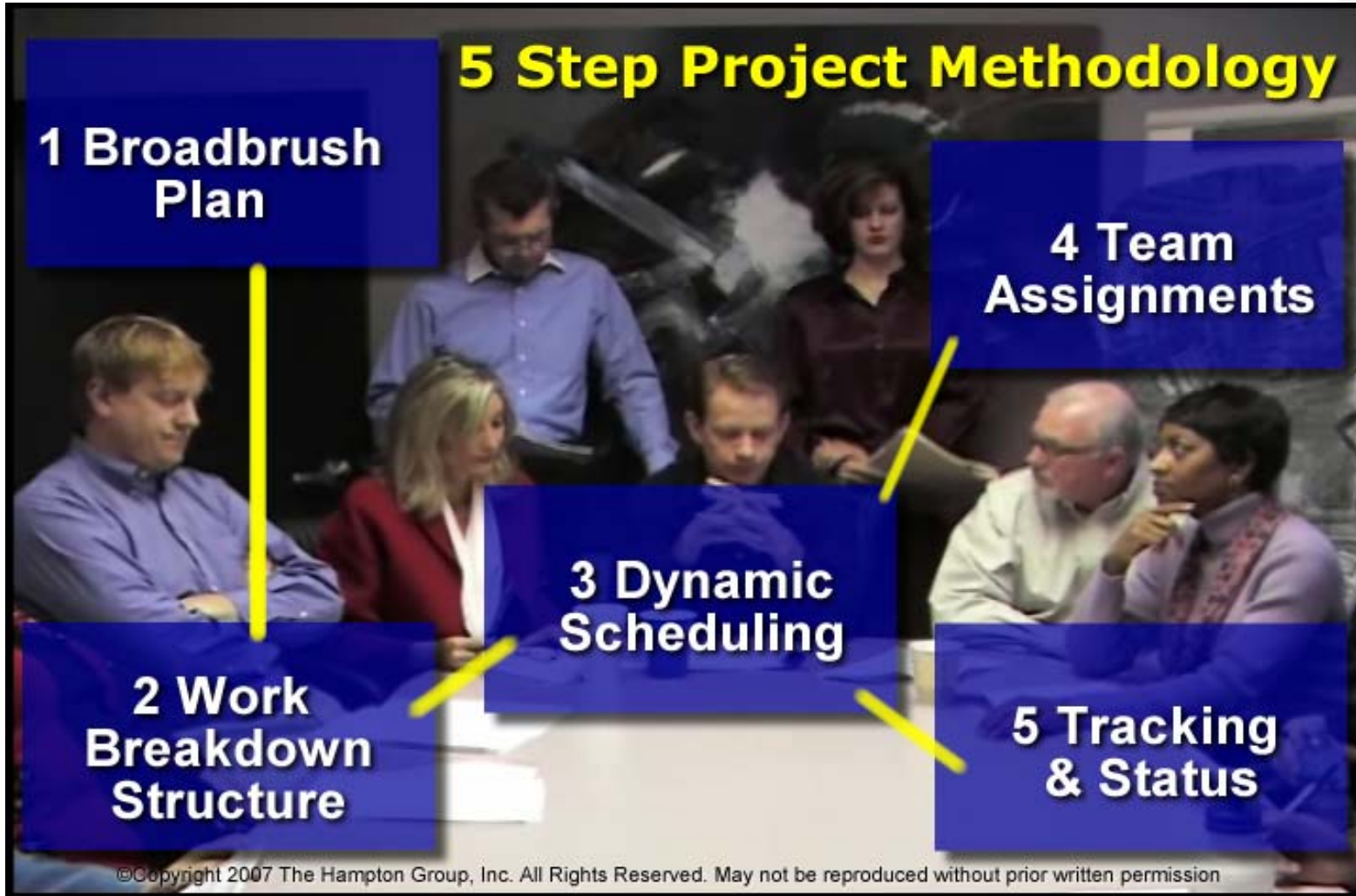
TECHNIQUE #7 CLEAR ASSIGNMENTS WITHOUT  
MICROMANAGEMENT ..... 42  
FIRST ASSIGNMENT ..... 43  
SECOND ASSIGNMENT ..... 44  
THIRD ASSIGNMENT ..... 45  
MORE ON THE THIRD ASSIGNMENT ..... 46  
ADJUSTING THE TIME SCALE ..... 47  
MILESTONES..... 48  
COMPLETED GANTT CHART ..... 49  
SCHEDULING AND CALENDARS ..... 50  
TECHNIQUE #8 CRITICAL PATH ..... 51  
OUR CRITICAL PATH ..... 52  
FINAL REVIEW & APPROVAL..... 53  
TECHNIQUE #9 TEAM LEADERSHIP..... 54  
TEAM CULTURE & CONFLICT ..... 55

**STEP # FIVE: TRACKING RESULTS ..... 58**

TECHNIQUE #10 TRACKING ACTUALS VS. BASELINE..... 59  
SAVING THE BASELINE ..... 59  
STATUS REPORTS ..... 60

---

ENTERING ACTUAL RESULTS..... 61  
MORE ACTUAL RESULTS ..... 62  
TECHNIQUE #11 PROBLEM SOLVING AND REPORTING TO THE  
SPONSOR ..... 64  
TECHNIQUE #12 PROJECT CLOSING & MAKING THE NEXT  
PROJECT EASIER ..... 65  
STEP #1 BROADBRUSH PLAN KEY POINTS ..... 67  
    *Key Ideas* ..... 69  
STEP #2 WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE..... 72  
    *Key Ideas* ..... 73  
STEP #3 DYNAMIC SCHEDULES ..... 74  
    *Key Ideas* ..... 75  
STEP #4 ASSIGNING PEOPLE TO TASKS ..... 76  
    *Key Ideas* ..... 77  
STEP #5 TRACKING RESULTS ..... 78  
    *Key Ideas* ..... 79  
**SUPPLEMENTAL READING..... 80**  
FRAMING PROJECTS WITHIN MEASURABLE BUSINESS  
OUTCOMES ..... 80  
PROJECT CHARTER: SUCCESS FROM TOSSING GASOLINE ON  
SMOLDERING EMBERS ..... 84  
"MICRO-MANAGE? NEVER! BUT HOW ELSE WILL EVERYTHING  
GET DONE?" ..... 87  
THE FIVE DUMBEST THINGS A PROJECT MANAGER CAN SAY  
..... 91  
CRITICAL PATH – THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: OPTIMIZING  
PROJECT PLANS ..... 94  
SOWING THE SEEDS OF PROJECT TEAM CONFLICT..... 98  
CRITICIZING POOR PROJECT TEAM MEMBER PERFORMANCE  
..... 102



---

## Overview of the 5 Step ADPM™ methodology

---

This book is titled the "Essentials of Project Management" and it's just that. We're going to take you through a five step process for planning projects, developing a work breakdown structure, building a dynamic schedule, assigning people to tasks and tracking results.

There are many things this book will not teach you. We won't deal with the statistics of risk or the alternative ways to develop work estimates or the cost accounting required for project budgets. You'll learn the essence of project management but not all of the detailed information in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK™). This book is intended for people running smaller projects with most of the project team coming from their own work unit.

We'll also use project management software in a very straightforward, simple way. This book has many illustrations of applying this simple methodology in Microsoft Project®. Using project management software with this simple methodology is a big time saver so we recommend that approach. Our objective is not to spend a lot of time in the software. The methodology is designed for you to spend an hour or two developing the plan and then 10 or 15 minutes a week using the software to update it. You'll spend the rest of your time managing the project.

In sum, *Essentials of Project Management* addresses first level project management tools. It's appropriate for smaller projects and teams with few cross-functional resources whose business purpose has a tactical focus. Our more advanced publications like *Managing Information Technology Projects*, *Managing Healthcare Projects*, *Managing Cross-functional Projects* and *Managing Engineering & Construction Projects* address more complex projects.

### **5-step AdPM™ Process**

The 5 steps in our process are listed in the following in order on the chart on the next page along with the 12 best practices techniques you will learn. We're going to take you through a five step process for planning projects, developing a work breakdown structure, building a dynamic schedule, assigning people to tasks and tracking results. Those steps are the core of the AdPM™ or Achievement-driven Project Management. As we move through those five steps, you'll learn 12 best practices techniques for delivering projects on time. We'll go through a process of working with your boss, user or customer (we'll call this person the project sponsor) and other interested parties who will be affected by your project (we'll call them project stakeholders). The 12 best practices techniques you'll learn are:

1. *Defining the Project Scope As a Measured Business Result*

2. *Decomposing the Scope into an Achievement Network*
3. *Avoiding Problems with the Project Charter*
4. *Using Project Software in 10 Minutes a Week*
5. *Decomposing Deliverables into a Work Breakdown Structure*
6. *Sequencing Your Tasks to Finish As Early As Possible*
7. *Making Clear Assignments to Your Project Team*
8. *Using a Critical Path to Optimize Your Schedule*
9. *Leading a High-Performance Team*
10. *Using the Baseline to Spot Problems Early*
11. *Solving Problems and Reporting to the Sponsor*
12. *Closing Projects to Make the Next One Easier*

## **Key Outputs from the 5-step AdPM™ Process**

### **Broadbrush Project Plan - 1½ page Document for Project Initiation**

The AdPM™ Broadbrush Plan is a concise 1½ page plan that allows executives to make decisions and exercise strategic control over projects and the business value they produce. It also provides them with hard-edged metrics for measuring performance and the quality of deliverables.

### **Work Breakdown Structure Decomposition - Crystal-clear Accountability & Scope Control**

Rather than creating mindless "to do" lists, project managers, or PMs, craft AdPM™ work breakdown structures by decomposing the scope into a high-level achievement network of measurable results that become peoples' accountabilities. Every team member's assignment is in the form of a measurable business outcome. The resulting WBS is compact so PMs can update it quickly but each entry is supported by a work package that makes everything clear so nothing is missed. Both the PM and executives have unambiguous checkpoints to measure progress.

### **Dynamic Project Scheduling - Update Schedules in 10 Minutes a Week**

PMs use dynamic AdPM™ project scheduling techniques that let them update plans in minutes each week and quickly model alternatives for managers to cut duration, lower budgets and adjust the business value a project produces. These techniques give executives the hard data they need for decision-making and consideration of alternatives.

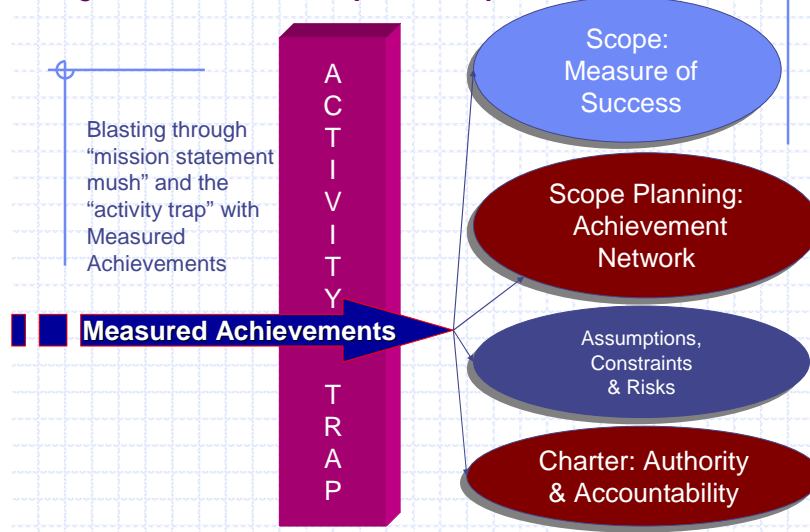
### **Status Reporting that Spots Problems Early - Clear Checkpoints to Identify Problems Early**

With AdPM™ tracking, PMs and sponsors have hard-edged checkpoints to measure progress. They can anticipate problems and implement corrective action early when it costs the least. PMs make concise status reports on projects and always offer a range of alternatives for executives to consider.

## Step One: Broadbrush Project Plan

We start our project management work by defining the scope of the project with the sponsor. That is, we define the business objective the project sponsor wants. When we set about defining the scope during project planning there are a number of traps to avoid.

### Project Plan: Scope/Requirements



One trap is thinking about what we have to do rather than the project's "end results." Thinking about the activities we need to complete is much easier than thinking about the business outcome the project should produce. This is the activity trap where we become consumed with detailing all the "To Do's" in the project. Sometimes we get so consumed with those delicious details that we lose sight of the business purpose. In the activity trap, a project manager (PM) receives a project assignment, thinks about the first thing that has to be done and starts work, figuring that they'll think about the next step when they come to it.

Sometimes, we cloak our descent into the activity trap by writing a long and flowery mission statement for the project. This does no harm unless it is a substitute for politely pushing the sponsor to make the hard "end result" decisions up front. We need to specify exactly what the project will deliver and what it will not deliver. Being that explicit at the beginning may cause some discussion and disagreement but it is far better to work

through those conflicts before we start work rather than discovering them when we are almost done. Unfortunately, the activity trap snares so many PMs that it is one of the two leading causes of project failure. The activity trap wastes resources and frustrates project team members with continuously changing assignments. The lure of the activity trap, that bottomless pit, has ruined countless projects.

## **Top Down Project Planning**

### **Broadbrush Project Plan**

1. Scope: Measure of Success (MOS™)
2. High-level Achievements (HLA™)
3. Charter
  - Assumptions & Constraints
  - Risks
  - PM Authority
  - Change Control
  - “Rough-cut” Resource Requirements

This is a 1-2 page strategic decision-making document used to initiate the project

We'll avoid the activity trap with a 1-2 page document, called the Broadbrush plan which covers the big-picture decisions that are required before we can start our project. When the project sponsor and stakeholders approve the Broadbrush plan, the Initiation phase of the project is complete. The key to this process is to avoid those delicious technical details that quickly drag us into the "activity trap." Our focus during a Broadbrush planning process is to provide the sponsor with the opportunity to make decisions about the end results the project will produce. Our focus is on the measured business-relevant outcomes not the details of how we will achieve them. We also want to secure the project executive's decisions on cross-functional authority that support the way we'll manage the project team. We keep the document short and high-level so we engage the executive's attention. We can develop long formal plans or contracts later when the strategy is approved.

A Broadbrush project plan is never long but requires thought, decisions and agreement on three things:  
*The measure of project success (MOS™) - an*

*unambiguous measurement of the project's outcome. For example “Answer 90% of our customers’ inquiries in 120 seconds or less with no more than 5% callbacks on the same problem. (Scope)*

*A High-level Achievement Network (HLA™) - a hierarchical network of measured achievements that leads to the MOS™. (Requirements)*

*Project Charter – a short narrative covering risks, assumptions, constraints, resource requirements, change control, and PM authority.*

Collectively, these elements define our project scope, requirements and charter. Your organization may also require other narrative documents but the above elements are critical for controlling projects and achieving success. They are the strategic foundation for a project.

## **Technique #1 Scope & Measure of Success**

We need to drive projects from one, quantifiable MOST™ (measure of success). Driving a project plan from the success measures keeps the focus where it should be; on achieving the end result. By working with the sponsor to define success before the project starts, the PM is in a much better position to control the project.

### Scope: Measure of Success

An objectively verifiable business outcome

- ◆ Clarity on what the sponsor wants
- ◆ Scope change control
  - Clarifies what is included in the project
  - What is excluded because it's not necessary
- ◆ Clear team performance expectations

As an example of a project situation that will be familiar, let's say your sponsor, the Director of Human Resources for a medium sized company, assigns you a project by saying, "Our personnel records are out-of-date. Employees are getting cursory quarterly performance reviews, if they get them at all. I want you to straighten out that whole mess so when a line manager calls we can find up-to-date employee personnel records on the system and quickly give them the data they want. And we want the employee reviews to have solid, detailed feedback on their performance. You can use anyone you need to get this done. This is a high priority. You'll probably have to involve five or six people from your group, some line managers and someone from IT so we get a lot of good input. Decide on how to organize the files and what standards the performance reviews should meet. A good place to start is probably by updating all the records. Then maybe you can draft a memo, for my signature, telling managers that they have to do performance reviews on time and give their people really good

feedback on their performance and developmental needs. Get the team put together and we will figure out the rest of the project from there."

The sponsor has given you a lot of information about this project and what you're supposed to do. It would be very easy to start work on the files and draft that memo. However, all of the information is in the form of activities. The sponsor hasn't told you what end result he or she wants. To succeed with this project, we have to know how the sponsor is going to measure the success of the project when it's done. That definition gives us a tool to control the scope of the project and decide what should not be included in the project.