

How can SmartWorks Project Planner Personal Edition improve your personal productivity?

I always believed that any metrics on my productivity during work was not of much help, because if I were genuinely interested in the work, my productivity would be high. And if the work were not interesting, my productivity would come down. I was very sure that metrics and graphs generated by any tool used during work would not be able to reflect the above-mentioned fact. Neither would it give any indication as to whether the task was difficult, whether an individual's time management during his work was poor or certain external risks like recession, bad health or long delays in response from clients etc occurred.

But very soon into my career, I underwent this paradigm shift. I got to understand that even if my work were interesting, there were other ways to improve my productivity during work. This occurred after I used Smartworks Project Planner tool for a major task whose duration was around 6 months.

Let me point out few excellent ways as to how your productivity can be improved while using Smartworks personal edition of the Project Planner.

1. How to eat an entire elephant? Answer is one piece at a time.

I figured out that dividing a task to smaller sub tasks provides better clarity to the overall task. Project Planner helps an individual to break down the bigger task to smaller tasks. This helps one to get better idea about the complete schedule and also makes it easier for him to complete each smaller task and thereby the major task eventually. This enhances overall productivity.

2. Lets say a task is scheduled for 6 to 12 months duration and the entire task is divided into hundreds to smaller sub tasks. Now in the middle of the schedule, I found it very difficult to gauge as to currently, how much is the total slippage.

Project graph in the Project Planner comes to the rescue and provides details about the complete status of my work. In addition to this, making the major task as summary task helps in seeing the progress. Project Planner calculates the % of completion of summary task based on the subtask completion statistics. Hence an individual will be able to see the overall status of a major task.

3. I wanted to figure out as to how many tasks are behind schedule, how much has the current cost escalated compared to the already planned cost for amount of work that is already done. Project Planner takes care of such concerns with ease.

Individual can use Effort Distribution metrics in Summary view information about how he is faring with his tasks. The lagging hours metrics points out if he needs to improve his productivity unless any risk has occurred during the work.

To gauge the cost slippage, the EVM and Cost graph helps an individual to track his own productivity and also keep close eyes on the cost. The cost graph also gives an

understanding as to how the current cost is faring against the planned cost. This helps the user to bring out measures to control costs if the current costs indicate that the final cost would exceed the planned cost.

4. Sometimes during an ongoing process of a task, when I go on for a few days leave, I sometimes lose the track of how am I faring in regards to overall schedule. Will the current speed be good enough to complete the entire task in time? How would my leave affect the schedule? How can the affect be compensated? Right then, Estimation View feature of Project Planner comes very handy.

Estimation View helps the individual to track the health of the work. This is done by comparing the flow of planned graph against other graphs like actual graph, optimistic graph, estimated graph etc. This comparison enables the user to figure out whether he needs to speed up his work or his current productivity would be adequate for completion of these tasks within schedule. Hindsight this also helps the user to keep the cost under control.

5. I also found out that I could send myself a warning when the completion date is nearing for a particular task. Project Planner can also be set to send a warning when I missed any of my targets. This is a wonderful feature to keep myself focused and also provide wakeup call when needed.

6. Finally I would like to share as to how the productivity as well as cost is kept under check. Risk database that helps the individual to obtain the contingency plan and mitigation plan already present in the risk database does this. So when the foreseen risk occurs (ex: Unavoidable leaves mentioned on point number 4), measures are taken to meet the schedule and keep the final cost within the planned cost. This helps the individual to perform effective cost savings, which otherwise could not have been achieved when there is no preplanned mitigation for an unseen risk.

Conclusion:

Smartworks Project Planner Personal Edition is a one of the best tools one can use not only because of the benefits listed above but also because of its user friendliness and simplicity. At times of global recession, every individual is looking to perform cost savings. He is also looking for solutions, which would be cost effective and recession proof. Smartworks Project Planner is one such solution because it provides inherent mechanisms and features, which would help an individual, especially in the current situation of global recession, by meeting his targets with ease and would provide relevant and practical cost savings measures.

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