

***Capacity – The Silent Killer of Projects***

*by*

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## ***Introduction***

### **What's this Guide about?**

This Guide shows you how knowing your team member's real capacity is crucial to the success of your project. It gives you a tool for calculating real capacity.

### **How is the Guide structured?**

*Section 1* of the Guide illustrates why knowing capacity is so important.

*Section 2* describes the tool to calculate capacity.

## *1 The Importance of Capacity*

Here's a simple piece of project estimation.

A job is estimated to be 10 person-days, Charlie's going to do it and Charlie's available full-time (i.e. 5 days per week). Then the job will take – its duration is – 2 weeks.

Now, supposing it happened that Charlie was only available 1 day per week. Then

- (a) The job would take 10 weeks
- (b) It's fair to say that it would take *at least* 10 weeks, since we would now also have to factor in the put-down-pick-up overhead that would be occurring as well.

But even assuming the job stayed at 10 weeks, notice what has happened: Something that didn't seem that serious – Charlie available 1 day per week rather than 5 and which on a large project, we mightn't even notice - could potentially cause the project end date to move by *2 months*. And that's one job belonging to one person. Imagine if that was happening on other jobs that belong to that person – and is happening to other people. The stretching of the end date could be colossal.

And we can easily see how such shortfalls in peoples' capacity can occur. It's one thing if people are assigned full-time to our projects, but many people aren't. They are multitasking – they are spread across several projects – or they have a 'day-job' to do and the project is only a sideshow for them.

This is why knowing real capacity is important.

## ***2 Calculating Real Capacity***

To calculate a person's real capacity you need to look at a given period and see

- (a) How much time that person has available in the given period
- (b) How much work they have to do in the same period.

The Capacity Calculator does exactly that. The Capacity Calculator is a spreadsheet that comes with this Guide. It contains full instructions for its use.

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