

Project Planning • Gantt Charts

Using Gantt Charts

In 1917 Henry L. Gantt, an American engineer and social scientist, developed a production control tool that subsequently has been named the Gantt chart. Gantt charts are useful tools for planning and scheduling projects.

Gantt charts allow project managers to:

1. Assess how long a project should take
2. Lay out the order in which tasks need to be carried out
3. Help manage the dependencies between tasks
4. Determine the resources needed
5. Helps monitor progress

The Gantt chart provides a graphical illustration of a schedule that helps to plan, coordinate, and track specific tasks in a project. Gantt charts may be simple versions created on graph paper or more complex using project management applications such as Microsoft Project or Excel.

	Time			
Tasks	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Task 1				
Task 2				
Task 3				
Task 4				

A Gantt chart is constructed with a horizontal axis representing the total time span of the project, broken down into increments (for example, days, weeks, or months) and a vertical axis representing the tasks that make up the project (for example, if the project is outfitting your computer with new software, the major tasks involved might be: conduct research, choose software, install software).

	Time			
	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon	Evening
Computer 1				
Computer 2				
Computer 3				
Computer 4				
	Legend			
In Use				
Idle				
Maintenance				

Gantt charts are also used by supervisors and team leaders to schedule and track the use of resources. This data can help the project manager determine schedule the optimal use of a technology.