

Project Management

Project Management - Not Just for Construction Giants

Demanding projects are not only encountered in the construction industry. The more complex a project is and the longer it lasts, the more difficult it is to plan and execute.

Almost every business experiences situations where traditional short-term planning methods are simply inadequate; for example, for the introduction of a new product line or the re-engineering of business processes. Complex goals demand powerful planning tools that provide visibility to managers at all times.

Generally, projects involve several functional areas and must be organised and delivered through inter-disciplinary project teams. A stand-alone project management tool cannot perform effectively in isolation from the rest of a company's systems.

The proALPHA® Project Management Module delivers all of the functionality necessary to control a complex project. This fully integrated e-Enterprise solution permits interdepartmental processing. As a multi-user application, each project team member always has the data needed to perform his or her specific tasks.

Effective Scheduling and More Visibility

Projects are generally characterised by complicated relationships between objectives, participants, resources, schedules and other variables. It is important that a project team maintain focus. In this respect, Project Management offers a variety of support functions that provide the degree of detail desired.

The first step normally consists of breaking down the entire project into manageable sub-tasks. This is where the project definition tool is useful providing a graphical representation of the whole project.

You can select a functional or object oriented view or even a combination of both and the plan can be displayed either in a tabular or graphical presentation.

Having identified all the tasks in a project, scheduling now becomes the focal point for project management. proALPHA's network planning tool creates a detailed time based representation of all tasks. Each task is shown with dates, resources and costs.

Gantt charts are used to obtain an overview of the progress of a project and the capacity loads at a given time. A combined view of all ongoing tasks or an individual project schedule can be displayed. This can highlight potential bottlenecks or give an indication of possible problems in meeting the schedule, allows time for any remedial action to be taken.

Easy to use graphic support features in Project Management reduce and simplify the effort required to plan complex projects. Information as to whether a specific project can be undertaken and whether the desired schedule is feasible is now already available at the stage where a quote is created.

Detailed Resource Planning

With Project Management, you can achieve the highest efficiency in scheduling your labour, capacity, and other resources. You will be able to identify and react to bottlenecks and conflicts with other projects early in the planning process. The required resources can either be created from existing proALPHA master data or can be defined on the spot.

Planning demands, purchase orders and work orders are prepared in the project. This means that it is possible to initiate purchases early in the planning phase for parts with long ordering cycles. Existing orders can be applied to other projects. Estimated costs from materials and capacity resource planning flow directly into the project's costing.

Avoid miscalculation - Use proALPHA Project Costing

Accurate project costing, particularly for large projects, is essential, keeping in-project costs from spiralling out of control. Project Costing contains the functions for pre-costing, actual costing, and even a closing deadline costing method for use with balance sheet assessments. Individual periods may be reviewed in any number of variations and, of course, a comparison of standard to actual costs is available on demand.

Accounting data needed for actual costing are automatically posted to the project from work orders, purchases and invoices. Actual project data is passed to the accounting modules. Financial accounting documents, e.g. travel expenses, can be recorded directly in a project account.

In addition to automated entries, manual postings can also be made. This is practical, for example, when recording labour hours against a project, e.g. design, consulting, etc., or for warranty service parts and assembly costs.

In proALPHA Project Management, even supporting service departments can be included. This is only possible because of the high degree of integration among all areas of a company using proALPHA.

The Advantage of Integration

Project Management is an integrated component of a total business software package - proALPHA. This means that the application is directly linked to all the other business areas: sales, materials management, resource planning, purchasing, production management and management accounting.

Access to all project data in the system is guaranteed. Cost flows, important for the accounting and controlling functions are available through the proALPHA Information and Controlling System. For example, all information about the status of a manufacturing process or a purchase order can be called up for analysis. Managers can use the Information and Controlling System to prepare detailed information on schedules, costs and resources for all projects.

A fully integrated module, proALPHA Project Management can benefit from the system-wide WorkflowAutomation Module. This provides an active flow of information among all project participants. For example, the team leader can receive an automatic notification whenever a certain operation is completed. In the case of a potential scheduling change, those departments that will be affected are given advance warning. Every team member can see what work remains to be performed just by checking their action monitor.

The proALPHA Document Management System (DMS) can also add considerable value to the Project Management Module. Project-specific administration guarantees the availability of all documents, design drawings, specifications, contracts etc., to all team members internally, or, via the Internet.