



AN ENERGY GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION COMPANY ENTRUSTS PMALLIANCE WITH A COMPLEX, HIGH-STAKE PROJECT CHALLENGED BY A TIGHT SCHEDULE, ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS, AND UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER.

An energy generation and distribution company enlisted PMAlliance to manage the development and implementation of a contingency system for a high-profile oil pipeline terminal. The project team faced multiple challenges including significant penalties for delays or downtime, changing weather conditions, and a mobile team in different locations.

CHALLENGES

HIGH-STAKE CONSEQUENCES

The high-stake consequences of delays, equipment downtime, or disruption for this terminal retrofit project required careful consideration and detailed planning. It was imperative to maintain the operational capacity of the facility to minimize potential issues experienced by the downstream end users. In addition, environmental regulations for a retrofit project required continuous oversight to forestall any spillage or leakage that would result in significant fines and other penalties.

TIGHT SCHEDULE AND UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER

By the time PMAlliance was engaged, the financial services company's project management team was divided into sub-teams, from different areas of the company, operating independently of each other. Each team tracked its own status and objectives with no higher-level management or tracking of the project's progress. Consequently, team members wasted valuable time trying to cross-reference sub-team progress, further delaying the project.

MOBILE TEAM AND ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The project team for this oil pipeline terminal retrofit consisted of a small group of highly mobile team members who were rarely located in the same geographic area. The team's location in the field required careful planning to avoid delays in communication and reporting. In addition, the pipeline terminal facility served many different companies whose personnel (suppliers, contractors, and workers) were working in the facility at the same time. Capacity and maintenance scheduling for the facility's equipment and other assets had to be considered at every stage of the project.

SOLUTIONS

TRAINING

With the project's small team and aggressive time constraints, training and project planning required an intensive week-long boot camp. Our customized approach started with our Duration-Driven® Planning & Control course, based on PMAlliance's proven methodology, that quickly provided an understanding of the basic concepts, technology, and tools of Duration-Driven® Project Management. Because the team would be primarily working from the field in separate locations, our project management consultant also worked with team members to devise a plan for ensuring teamwork, strong communication, and collaboration despite the impracticality of face-to-face meetings.

DURATION-BASED ESTIMATES

The intensive boot camp also incorporated the development of a project charter to define and refine the project's scope and objectives. The charter became the foundation of the top-level schedule that identified major phases, project duration, and deliverables. PMAlliance's project management consultant used the project charter to forecast and assign resources and project activities.

The team members worked closely with our project management consultant to calculate duration-based estimates for all project activities. The team members could see how project activities interconnected and how milestones and deadlines could be impacted by any delays or issues. PMAlliance's expert facilitator used the duration-based estimates to determine the level of granularity (detail) needed in the completed plan and the single points of responsibility for plan activities. By the conclusion of the week-long boot camp, the project team was operating under a single methodology with a well-developed, detailed plan.

PMALLIANCE HELPED THE PROJECT TEAM OPERATE UNDER A SINGLE METHODOLOGY WITH A WELL- DEVELOPED, DETAILED PLAN.

FACILITATION

PMAlliance's project management consultants served as the primary facilitators throughout the implementation and ongoing control process of this terminal retrofit project. Strong communication and collaboration were essential, as the project schedule and plan did not allow for any fluctuations or delays. Team members were spread across the Midwestern United States and parts of Canada and forced to work together remotely. Our consultants and project team members met weekly via teleconferencing to review details of all current and future project activities and address potential issues. Through real-time progress reporting utilizing our Duration-Driven® project control process, our expert facilitators acted as an information clearinghouse to keep all stakeholders informed and accountable for the progress of the project.

ADD-IN TOOLS

In order to create an easy-to-update scheduling process, project team members also received training in our proprietary project management software and its customized add-in tools for Microsoft Project. The new software and training allowed the project team to see, in real-time, the project's controlling path and updated activity durations. They could then identify and resolve critical areas or delays in the project and provide timely, detailed reports to team members and project stakeholders.

ABOUT PMALLIANCE

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COMPRESSION AND CONTROL

PMAlliance's project management consultants were able to significantly compress the project schedule by scheduling simultaneous project tasks into a dynamic network-based project plan using the team member commitments, activity durations, and activity precedence relationships. The compression process used the calculated expected finish date and critical path to align with the targeted finish date without negatively impacting the ongoing work at the pipeline terminal facility. Multiple tasks could be carried out simultaneously and the team could use the critical path to align the expected and targeted finish dates as needed.

Throughout the retrofit project timeline, PMAlliance's Duration-Driven® project control process allowed team members to proactively monitor real-time progress. Each activity update triggered a recalculation of the expected finish date, requiring the team to take specific actions if the expected and targeted finish dates did not align. This dynamic control process also allowed PMAlliance's project management consultant to assist the team with quickly identifying potential issues and the appropriate corrective actions. With the control process in place, PMAlliance's consultants were able to update all team members and stakeholders with weekly status reports, keeping them informed of real-time activity as it progressed.

PMALLIANCE HELPED THE COMPANY RETROFIT A NEARLY 40-YEAR-OLD FACILITY WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART EQUIPMENT TO HANDLE INCREASED PRODUCTION NEEDS, WITHOUT NEGATIVELY IMPACTING OPERATIONS.

RESULTS

With a highly productive project team and comprehensive Duration-Driven® project control process in place, this energy company was able to overcome serious challenges to complete the terminal retrofit project on time and under budget. In addition, through PMAlliance's Duration-Driven® methodology, training and facilitation, the project did not interrupt the ongoing work at the terminal facility and the company did not incur any penalties for negatively impacting terminal operations or the surrounding environment. Today, this energy generation and distribution company continues to use PMAlliance's proven process and proprietary Duration-Driven® methodology, software, add-in tools, and web update system to manage additional tactical and strategic projects as they arise.

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PMAlliance is a team of certified project management professionals who have years of real-world experience. We provide training, consulting, and project management office development services for our clients worldwide, from Fortune 1000 companies, to multi-national businesses, to entrepreneurial ventures.

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