



# AN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) COMPANY ENGAGED PMALLIANCE TO DEVELOP AN IN-HOUSE PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE TO REINVIGORATE ITS SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND INCREASE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.

An information technology company asked PMAlliance to provide project management training and certification to create an internal project management office that would lead its system development projects. The company's projects historically suffered from several significant challenges including staff and resource constraints, unclear project objectives and scope, and frequent schedule delays and interruptions.

## CHALLENGES

### STAFFING AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

The timing and quality of the company's IT projects suffered significantly from inadequate staff and other resources as well as poor planning. As customer satisfaction levels continued to decrease, the company recognized that it had overestimated the project management skills of its staff. While proficient at their assigned IT tasks, staff members were demonstrably inexperienced with project planning software and project management techniques.

### UNCLEAR OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The company's IT employees clearly lacked the necessary knowledge and experience to develop realistic, accurate project objectives, scope, and detailed plans. Project teams were frustrated at the lack of explicit expectations, task assignments that changed unexpectedly, and the high levels of stress. This stressful environment impeded the ongoing progress of projects and negatively impacted staff morale.

### FREQUENT SCHEDULE DELAYS AND INTERRUPTIONS

By the time PMAlliance was engaged, the IT company's systems projects were consistently experiencing schedule interruptions and delays ranging from several days to several weeks or more. Project team members were actively engaged in putting out urgent fires versus anticipating potential problems before they occurred. Company management needed advanced warning of any potential problems, unexpected expenditures, or delays in order to make sound business decisions.

## SOLUTIONS

**TRAINING**

Our customized, structured approach for this IT company started with hiring new internal project managers who immediately attended our two-day Duration-Driven® Planning & Control course based on PMAlliance's proven methodology. The new project managers learned the basic concepts of Duration-Driven Project Management and the tools utilized to effectively implement and manage projects. The course also provided an opportunity to reinforce the importance of teamwork, strong communication, and collaboration for the success of any project.

**DURATION-BASED ESTIMATES**

In addition, PMAlliance's project management consultants worked with the new project managers to understand how to create a project charter that clearly defines a project's scope and objectives as well as to avoid scope creep as the project progresses. The completed project charter would act as a top-level schedule to identify major phases, deliverables, and project duration. It would also help the new project managers see a project's "big picture" to forecast and assign resources and project tasks.

The new project managers learned how to determine duration-based estimates for a team member's assigned tasks to visually display how all project activities were interconnected. Project team members would be able to clearly see how each project activity impacted the project's milestones and deadlines. The duration-based estimates would also be used to determine the level of granularity (detail) needed in a completed plan and simplify decisions for assigning single points of responsibility.

# PMALLIANCE'S PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS WERE ABLE TO SIGNIFICANTLY COMPRESS THE PROJECT SCHEDULE.

**COMPRESSING THE TIMELINE**

PMAlliance's Duration-Driven® project control process allowed team members to monitor the project's actual progress in real time. Each task update triggered a recalculation of the project's expected finish date, requiring the team to proactively take specific actions to re-align the targeted and expected finish dates. The team and our project management consultant could identify potential issues in advance and determine the necessary corrective actions. PMAlliance's consultants kept team members and key stakeholders informed of real-time activity as it progressed via weekly status reports. Our Duration-Driven® project control process provided the necessary, higher-level data company management needed to make sound business decisions throughout the remaining lifecycle of the project. Members and stakeholders with weekly status reports, keeping them informed of real time activity as it progressed.

**CONTROLLING THE PROJECT**

PMAlliance's project management consultants were able to significantly compress the project schedule by scheduling simultaneous project tasks using the team commitments, activity durations, and activity precedence relationships. The dynamic network-based project plan calculated the expected finish date and the project's critical path, showing the team and key stakeholders that multiple tasks could be carried out simultaneously and the project completed on time. Our compression process used the project's critical path to dynamically align the calculated, expected finish date with the targeted finish date while maintaining team member commitment and accountability.

**ABOUT PMALLIANCE**

Corporate Headquarters  
Phone: 770.938.4947  
Fax: 770.234.6997  
2075 Spencers Way - Suite 201  
Stone Mountain, GA 30087

[PM-ALLIANCE.COM](http://PM-ALLIANCE.COM)

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## SOLUTIONS

## ADD-IN TOOLS

A major focus of our customized approach for this IT company was to ensure that the new project managers became experts in our proprietary project management software along with its customized add-in tools for Microsoft Project. The software became a valuable resource that allowed the project management office to 1) see a project's controlling path, 2) review team members' updated activity durations, 3) identify and resolve critical areas in the project (including potential problems and delays), and 4) generate timely, detailed reports for the team and project stakeholders.

## RESULTS

With a certified, well-staffed project management office and comprehensive Duration-Driven® project control process in place, this information technology company has significantly reduced its staff costs (by \$7.2M in the first year) and increased its overall customer satisfaction rate to 94%. Through PMAlliance's Duration-Driven® methodology, training and facilitation, the company's project management costs now average only 4% of overall project cost, compared to the industry-standard of 7-12%, and its percentage of on-time deliveries exceeds 80%. Today, this IT company continues to use PMAlliance's proven process and proprietary Duration-Driven® methodology, software, add-in tools, and web update system to sustain an efficient, self-sufficient project management office that is recognized as best-in-class within the company.

## FACILITATION

From the very first training session for the new project managers at this IT company, PMAlliance's project management consultants served as the primary facilitators for the implementation and demonstration of formal project management techniques and technology. With their expertise in facilitation and our Duration-Driven® Methodology, our consultants helped the company's new project managers understand how to create and implement a successful project plan by simultaneously seeing the big picture and level of granularity. The project management staff also mastered the necessary communication, collaboration, and reporting tasks for the office to serve as an information clearinghouse to keep all stakeholders informed and accountable for the progress of a project. PMAlliance's consultants and the new project managers worked together to develop and document established procedures for the operation of the project management office and facilitation of the company's system development projects.

**PMALLIANCE HELPED THE COMPANY HIRE, TRAIN, MENTOR, AND CERTIFY PROJECT MANAGERS IN ADVANCED PROJECT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES TO REVIVE ITS FLAGGING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATE.**

## ABOUT PMALLIANCE

## PM Alliance

Corporate Headquarters  
Phone: 770.938.4947  
Fax: 770.234.6997  
2075 Spencers Way - Suite 201  
Stone Mountain, GA 30087

PM-ALLIANCE.COM

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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