



HEAVY EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURING COMPANY RELIES ON PMALLIANCE TO REPAIR A DIVIDED TEAM AND REVIVE A TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT ON THE BRINK OF CANCELLATION.

PMAlliance helped to manage the stalled development process for a piece of new technology. The project team faced several significant challenges including conflicting goals, numerous scheduling delays, and ineffective reporting to the project's stakeholders.

CHALLENGES

A DIVIDED TEAM

By the time PMAlliance was engaged, the manufacturing company's project management team was suffering from overwork, poor communication, and the lack of a common goal. With their marketing department viewing the new technology project as a strategic competitive advantage and their engineering department seeing it as a significant challenge, there was significant in-fighting, creating high levels of stress. This challenging environment impeded the ongoing progress of both the project management team and the project.

SCHEDULE DELAYS AND POSSIBLE CANCELLATION

In its first two years of operation, the technology development project had already incurred five months of delays due to multiple resourcing challenges, including various expertise, design, and new vendor issues. Several key dates were missed. Additionally, unexpected expenditures were incurred and the new technology itself failed to perform to specifications during the initial prototype test. With so many schedule delays, the company's management was considering the option of project cancellation.

INSUFFICIENT REPORTING

In addition to the project's insufficient progress, key stakeholders were not receiving regular, accurate analysis and reporting. Team members were actively engaged in putting out urgent fires versus anticipating potential problems before they occurred. The project schedule lacked opportunities for the advanced warnings of any potential delays that the managers needed to make sound business decisions.

SOLUTIONS

TRAINING

Our customized, structured approach for this company started with our two-day Duration-Driven® Planning & Control course for all team members. The course, based on PMAlliance 's proven methodology, provided the team with an understanding of the basic concepts of Duration-Driven Project Management and the tools utilized to control its technology development project effectively. It also provided an opportunity, during the development and update of the project's plan, to reinforce the importance of teamwork, strong communication, and collaboration for project success. When training was complete, the previously divided team was able to focus on a common goal with individual accountability for the plan's success re-established.

DURATION-BASED ESTIMATES

With team members now trained and re-energized, PMAlliance 's project management consultant went to work with the cross-functional team to create a project charter. This charter defined the project's remaining scope and objectives and served as the foundation for a top-level schedule to identify major phases, project duration, and deliverables. Once completed, the project charter aided in the forecasting and assignment of resources and project activities.

PMAlliance 's consultant worked directly with the project team to determine duration-based estimates for each member's in-progress and future activities to be included in the project plan. These estimates allowed the team to see how activities were connected and how each activity could impact the project's milestones and deadlines. The estimates also provided the necessary information for PMAlliance 's expert facilitator to determine the level of granularity (detail) to be included in the completed plan, and drive decisions concerning single points of responsibility for plan activities.

PMALLIANCE EMPLOYED OUR DURATION-DRIVEN® CONTROL PROCESS TO MONITOR ACTUAL PROGRESS IN A STREAMLINED AND PROACTIVE MANNER.

CONTROLLING THE PROJECT

PMAlliance employed our Duration-Driven® project control process to monitor the project's actual progress in a streamlined and proactive manner. This dynamic control process recalculated the expected finish date of the project based on activity updates, requiring the team to take specific actions if the project's calculated, expected finish date did not align with its targeted finish date. It also allowed our consultant to assist the team with quickly identifying potential issues that might arise along the way, and determining the corrective actions that would be required to keep the project on-schedule. 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.

COMPRESSING THE TIMELINE

Once granularity and responsibility had been defined, commitments were now incorporated into a dynamic, network-based project plan that used activity durations, in combination with activity precedence relationships, to calculate the expected finish date and the critical path. This project plan showed the team that multiple tasks could be carried out simultaneously, allowing for significant compression of the original schedule. The compression process used the critical path to align the calculated, expected finish date with the targeted finish date without sacrificing team member commitment and accountability.

ABOUT PMALLIANCE

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ADD-IN TOOLS

In addition to the initial Duration-Driven® Planning & Control course, PMAlliance's expert consultants trained team members how to use our proprietary project management software along with its customized add-in tools for Microsoft Project to create an easy schedule updating process. With this new software and training the project team now had the ability to 1) see the 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) provide timely, detailed reports to the team and project stakeholders.

FACILITATION

From the very first meeting, PMAlliance's project management consultants served as the primary facilitators for the implementation and ongoing control process of this new technology project. With their expertise in facilitation and our Duration Driven Methodology, our consultants served as a neutral party able to see the big picture and level of granularity necessary to create and implement a successful project plan. Through weekly project status updates utilizing our Duration-Driven® project control process, they kept the project team and stakeholders informed of real time activity progress, thus driving team member commitment as well as accountability to the elapsed time activity durations throughout the project.

THE FIRST IN A NEW LINE OF CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS WAS DELIVERED ON TIME, WITH NO COSTLY DELAYS WITH NO COSTLY DELAYS

RESULTS

With a highly productive project team and comprehensive Duration-Driven® project control process in place, this heavy equipment manufacturing company was able to disregard the possibility of project cancellation. Through PMAlliance's Duration-Driven® methodology, training and facilitation, they successfully delivered on their project plan and met the objectives for their new technology. Today, this manufacturing 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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