

Assigning People to Tasks

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

An important aspect of project management involves the assignment of tasks to team members. This tutorial discusses how a project manager assigns people to tasks by using:

1. [Assigning Resources](#)
2. [Task Chart](#)
3. [Resource Agreement](#)

1. Assigning Resources

Once defined, a project manager assigns tasks using the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). Each project task in the WBS will then have people assigned to it.

The assigned resource will either be a member of the project team or an external contracted resource.

In either case, an assigned resource becomes part of the project team, which means the project manager will track the assigned resource's progress on the task.

The project manager assigns people to tasks in order to build out the project schedule. They also use the assignments to confirm that all tasks have adequate coverage by resources.

2. Task Chart

To create task assignments, the project manager uses a **task chart**, which displays the activities and their associated tasks from the WBS. The project manager can then link individual resources with the tasks. Some charting software even provides resource balancing, so you can see which resources have too many tasks to complete, and which have too few.

Activities may also be linked to people resources, for example, in the case where one person has oversight of an activity. But in most cases, the project manager will be responsible for the completion of the activities.

TASK CHART	ASSIGNED TO:	TIME:
ACTIVITY: Prepare and install voicemail server	RESOURCE: Project Manager	
TASK: Build computer server	RESOURCE: Eric Blair	2 Days
TASK: Connect computer server to network	RESOURCE: Ted Geisel	
TASK: Install voicemail software	RESOURCE: Alice Sheldon (vendor)	
TASK: Program functions of voicemail	RESOURCE: Mary Ann Evans	
TASK: Test functions of voicemail	RESOURCE: David Cornwell	

Assigning tasks prior to creating the schedule also ensures that individuals can provide comments and estimates on their assigned tasks. This results in more accurate schedules and, more importantly, buy-in from those actually involved in the work.

Tasks are assigned to people before the schedule is created so that it is easy to identify tasks where the resources aren't available. Gaps can be filled with additional internal or external resources before the schedule is finalized.



HINT

A work breakdown structure focuses on what needs to be done (deliverables, tasks) while a task chart focuses on who (individual team members) the tasks are assigned to.



TERM TO KNOW

Task Chart

A chart that represents the assignment of people to each activity or task included in the WBS.

3. Resource Agreement

A **resource agreement** is one method that project managers use to achieve buy-in from team members about their assigned tasks. It is an agreement between the project manager or management and a team member. The resource agreement includes:

- Project tasks assigned to the team member
- Percentage of the team member's total time that is assigned to the project
- Time allotted to complete the task
- Parameters for completing the assigned tasks such as any additional resources that can be used to complete the work.

Below is an example of a resource agreement related to preparing and installing a voicemail server:

Agreement on the Assignment

Employee	Task	Percent Allocated	Hours	Parameters
Eric Blair	Build computer server	100%	16 hours	May use IT intern

Agreement Between Parties

Name	Position	Department	Signature
Eric Blair	Network Engineer	IT	
Rodney Whitaker	Project Manager	PM	

This document would be formally signed by the team member to show the project manager that the individual is committed to the details contained within the agreement. The document also serves as management's approval of the duration of time the team member can spend on the project. This process of assigning people to tasks continues until all tasks are assigned.



TRY IT

What assignments still need to occur before the project manager can create a schedule?

Recall what you learned about resource procurement and planning in previous lessons.

If a task must be assigned to a resource outside of the team, which aspects of the project plan will this affect?



TERM TO KNOW

Resource Agreement

A document that describes the responsibilities of each member of the project team.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that a work breakdown structure is used when **assigning resources** and tasks. A **task chart** displays activities and resources, which helps a project manager identify any gaps. The **resource agreement** identifies the percentage of commitment time from each team member to help achieve buy-in.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia Tutorial Author Jeff Carroll.



TERMS TO KNOW

Resource Agreement

A document that describes the responsibilities of each member of the project team.

Task Chart

A chart that represents the assignment of people to each activity or task included in a WBS.