

# Seven Habits of Highly Effective Construction Project Schedulers

When superstar schedulers are at the helm of a construction project, it has very good odds of being delivered on time and within budget. But what's their secret to success? What approaches, practices, and experiences set these schedulers apart?

## 1 Minimize schedule complexity

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The best critical path method (CPM) schedulers know that a larger contract schedule doesn't necessarily mean it's better. When too many details are added at the contract schedule layer, the schedule becomes overly complex and confusing. The focus is outlining the lanes of the project, the scope, and how the schedule should get broken down. In addition, great schedulers look for ways to include more voices by extending the planning and scheduling community throughout the planning and project delivery process.

With the scope and contract activities/milestones now outlined and available, it's time to detail production. Schedulers should give field teams an approachable experience that makes it easy for them and lets them plan the way they are used to planning—with tasks that reside in shorter-interval production windows. At this stage, the focus should be on high-frequency collaboration and the predictability of production workflow.

## 2 Bring in field teams to provide production details

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## 3 Drive consistent alignment between the contract schedule and the field production plans

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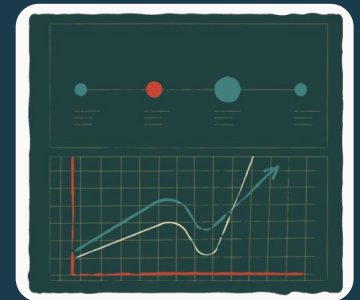


Now it's time to determine whether the field production plan is aligned to the contract schedule. To do this as efficiently and effectively as possible, it is helpful to structurally connect these plans—and the teams managing them—in a technology environment that brings the data and processes together. This unification of people, process, and information helps drive alignment both at the outset and as work progresses throughout the project.

Effective schedulers measure and track progress on every project—and document everything. They first create baselines—or predetermined goals—but they don't treat the original baseline as the only picture worth capturing. Instead, they capture progress and changes that occur at every reporting cycle. And they pride themselves on being able to provide detailed answers when asked how and why projects got off track. With the right approach, they can pull up any point in time to review past circumstances with speed, focus, and accuracy.

## 4 Set baselines, measure progress, and document

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## 5 Assess schedule health regularly

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Planners rely on accurate project schedules, so that means their schedules need regular health checkups. Are rules being followed? Logic ties, open ends documented? Constraints being used properly? Where are the risk areas? The best schedulers use the schedule to mirror what reality is. They use it to tell a forward story, to draw attention to critical work, decisions, risks, bottlenecks, etc. Ultimately, they use it to always be moving toward a better plan.

Risk is everyone's business in construction, so everyone needs a way to say something when they see something (going wrong). Providing a centralized log, or risk register, for the identification and tracking of risks on a project gives everyone on the project the voice they need. All project stakeholders can work collaboratively to spot, log, track, and manage risk. Using such an approach throughout a project helps to reduce confusion and errors across teams and can help mitigate risks when they do inevitably arise.

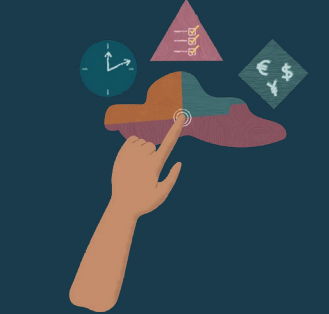
## 6 Give everyone a voice in risk management

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## 7 Link risks to schedule activities

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Once risk information is centralized, it's important to link risks to schedule activities to perform impact analysis. Because let's face it, risk events generally will have an impact on the schedule. When risks are directly linked to schedule activities, schedulers can begin to quantify the impacts of those risk events. Will these impacts delay the overall project timeline? Will they cause a project to go over budget? Making those critical connections helps improve decision-making, so schedulers can help complete projects on time and within budget—and maintain their superstar status.

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