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Why it's time to take your resource planning seriously

In today's highly competitive business world, the need for efficient resource management is greater than ever. It's imperative that you optimise your business to match the current market situation.

In professional services companies, for instance creative agencies, consulting firms, accounting firms and law firms, people are by far the most valuable asset. Hence, planning their resources up to six months in advance enables these businesses to get the most out of their employees.

Astonishingly, not all professional services companies have implemented an enterprise-wide resource planning solution. If your company is among them, it's time to put resource planning on the agenda.

Seven Sure Signs that a Company is Neglecting Its Resource Planning

There are many adverse effects from neglecting your resource planning. Over the years we have observed that lagging companies display one or more of the seven sure signs that you need a resource planning solution

- 1) People appear busy, but utilisation rates remain low
- 2) Some people are always overloaded while others often have available capacity
- 3) Project planning is based on guesswork
- 4) You often over-service clients because you have no baseline budget overview
- 5) You are not getting the most out of your people's talents because you haven't mapped their skills

- 6) You can't compare your long-term project pipeline to your planned capacity
- 7) Resource planning is based on local spreadsheets because you don't have an enterprise-wide solution to manage your most important asset – your people.

If some of this sounds familiar, your company could make great profitability strides by implementing a full-blown resource planning solution.

Make It Easy for Your Precious Resources

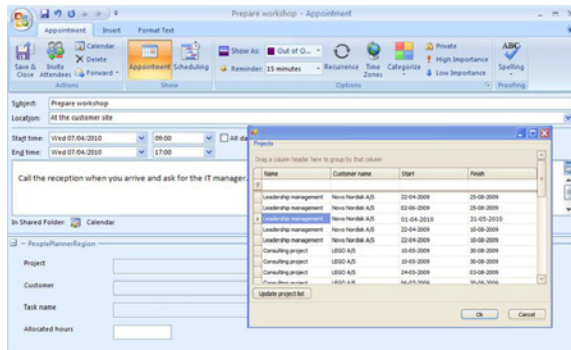
Through recent years most companies have rationalised in every single area of their business. This is no different for professional services companies. However, these businesses face a radically different challenge than manufacturing companies.

When your key resources are people, it's imperative that you make it easy for your employees to register time and other relevant data into your business solution. One way to do this is by letting your employees complete their registrations from familiar applications such as their email or intranet.

To help clients implement best practices for resource planning across the organisation, Deltek offers Maconomy People Planner. This resource planning solution has been designed for professional services organisations looking to optimise their planning and management of resources and projects.

Industry Article

People Planner makes it easy for users to view and update their work assignments. It can be integrated to a myriad of other interfaces, including widely used platforms such as Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft SharePoint.



Maconomy People Planner, project list. Specialists can view a list of all current projects directly from Microsoft Outlook

Resource Planning in Practice

People Planner provides project-focused companies with a set of best practices for resource planning. But how does this work in practice? Let's have a look at an example.

Imagine that a project manager assigns a specialist to a project for a number of hours. The assignment is entered in People Planner by the project manager. From People Planner the assignment is automatically pushed directly to the specialist's task list and calendar in Outlook. The assigned hours are spread evenly across the duration of the assignment.

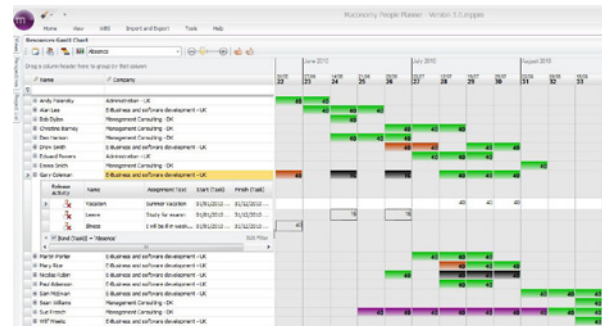
The specialist now has the freedom to rearrange the hours to match his own schedule directly from Outlook. All his updates are instantly synchronised with People Planner.

Mounting Interest in Resource Planning

Resource planning is becoming a hot topic at the executive level in many project-focused companies. And for many of them, this matter should be treated with a sense of urgency. In fact, an astonishing 75 percent of surveyed PR and communications agencies (The Aberdeen Group) have no overview of their resource situation more than one month ahead.

Why it's time to take your resource planning serious?

This may cause bottlenecks as well as idle resources in the longer term, which can prove costly for companies. Hence, make sure you adopt a solution that gives you full control of your resource planning on multiple levels. A solution that only lets you plan on a project-by-project basis won't do.



Project managers have a full overview of resource assignments in Maconomy People Planner

Massive Potential for Bottom-Line Improvements

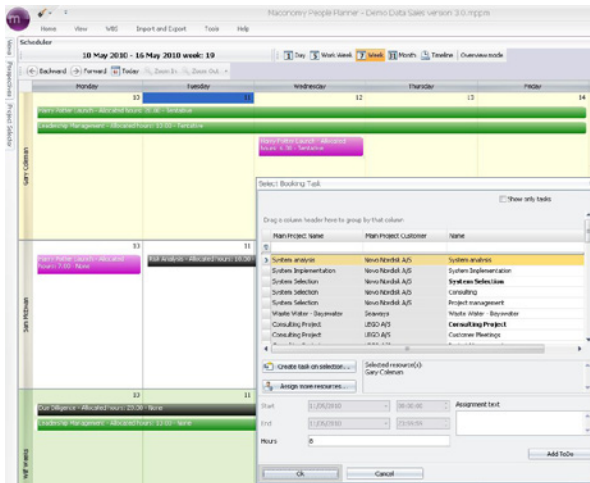
It's crucial for project-focused companies to have a full overview of their entire resource situation. Today, tomorrow and six months from now. When you have this kind of overview you can base your decisions on facts rather than on a myriad of different Excel spreadsheets from local managers.

There is another compelling reason why companies are starting to realise the benefits of fully integrated resource planning. Money.

Many established companies have not even considered enterprise-wide resource planning. It is a particular paradox that many professional services companies do not have a resource planning solution when their raison d'être is to sell the time of their employees. These companies are missing out on significant income each and every year.

If you operate a company of 100 employees and you are able to find just one extra billable hour each month from every employee, you can boost your bottom line by more than €150,000 a year. This could be more or less depending on the hourly rates of your company.

Accordingly, there is a large untapped potential for improved profitability in many project-focused companies. But it takes the right resource planning solution to unleash that potential.



Maconomy People Planner offers intuitive scheduling and planning features

Plan Your Resources and Prosper

Tomorrow’s winners within the professional services verticals will be those capable of getting the most out of their resources.

Of course, this is easier said than done. But by integrating a resource planning tool to the rest of your operational workflow, you can get a full overview of your resource situation now and in six months. And you can make sure all your work is billed correctly to your clients based on accurate time registrations.

The benefits from taking your resource planning seriously are abundantly clear. Your company will be less prone to the shifting moods of the business cycles. And you can tap into the hidden profitability potential as you start billing more hours to clients with greater accuracy without having to hire more staff.

Resource planning will be one of the differentiators to determine who will prosper in the project-focused verticals in the future.

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